

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 25, 1981

BOARD OF CORRECTION

A regular meeting of the New York City Board of Correction was held on February 25, 1981 at the offices of Fox, Glynn and Melamed, 299 Park Avenue, New York City.

In attendance were Chairman Peter Tufo, Vice Chairman John Horan, Mr. Angelo Giordani, Mr. David Lenefsky, Mr. Jack Poses, Mr. David Schulte and Mrs. Rose M. Singer.

The excused absence of Mr. Wilbert Kirby was noted.

Board staff present were Michael Austin, Michael Cleary, Judith LaPook, Sherry Goldstein, Fr. Harrison, John Pagan, Thomas Prendergast, Rolando Torres, Jeremy Travis, Barbara Treen and student intern Abigail Horan.

Also in attendance were Deputy Commissioners Mark Corrigan and Ellen Schall, Chief of Operations Jacqueline McMickens and Classification Director Janie Jeffers of the Department of Correction.

Peter Tufo chaired the meeting and Barbara Treen was secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 2:45 P.M. Mr. Horan moved to amend the minutes of January 13, 1981 to state that the absences of Angelo Giordani and Wilbert Kirby were excused. This motion was approved.

The amended minutes of the January 13, 1981 meeting were adopted unanimously.

Chairman Tufo announced that the Mayor had received Rev. Samuel Holder's written resignation from the Board and that the vacancy will be filled by a Mayoral appointee. He also announced the personnel subcommittee's formal decision to hire David Johnson as Director of Field Operations.

Discussion ensued with regard to the overcrowding in New York City jails. Chairman Tufo stated that a task force had been formed by the Mayor to consider proposed solutions to overcrowding. Ms. LaPook reported on the housing situation at each facility, noting the utilization of non-housing areas as dormitories, the overcrowding of existing dorms and the inter-facility transfers of adult and adolescent male detainees. She described the impact of the overcrowding on minimum standards compliance and on security and services in general.

Mr. Austin stated that the overcrowding also has impacted on the entire criminal justice system by clogging court calendars, creating problems in transportation which causes late production of defendants in court and unnecessary adjournments of cases.

A discussion followed about the reasons for the increased jail population and possible short and long-term solutions for alleviating overcrowding. The impact of overcrowding on institutional operations and the difficulties in working in such an environment were highlighted.

Deputy Commissioner Corrigan described the Department's crisis strategy. He added that the Department has now exhausted its options for space conversion within the facilities and that at this rate, within 2 to 4 weeks conditions will deteriorate if temporary housing is not found. He urged the Board to speak out and make it clear to the public that to accommodate the increasing population will require resources beyond the Department's current capacity.

Commissioner Schall confirmed that that statistics show 60% of new admissions are released within one week and that 34% of new admissions have a bail of \$500 or lower. She stated that the Department could produce the names of all detainees who have a bail of \$500 or less.

Commissioner Corrigan reiterated his feeling that at this time the population is manageable and relatively calm although conditions are substandard. He highlighted the need for increased use of desk appearance tickets, early case assessment, a change in bail setting practices and the need for additional space to relieve overcrowding.

Commissioner Corrigan also spoke about the Department's transportation problems. He added that these problems were currently being assessed by consultants and that improvements were anticipated within the next three to six months.

Deputy Commissioner Schall began the discussion of the classification project by stating that she was well aware of the Board's requirements for a written classification plan; however, the current overcrowding crisis and a desire to implement the Bronx project as soon as possible precluded the Department from making a written submission at this time. She promised that the Department would meet this requirement in the near future.

Ms. Janie Jeffers, Directors of Classification, then addressed the Board concerning the classification pilot now operating in the Bronx House of Detention. She described the process, philosophy and goals of the program. Ms. Jeffers reported that the pilot, which was implemented February 9, 1981 is proceeding successfully. She indicated that the Department had approached OMB with plans for system-wide implementation. Mr. Tufo assured her that the Board will continue to evaluate and assess the program and support it, if warranted, with OMB. Jeremy Travis reported that he was encouraged by what he had seen of the Bronx pilot to date.



Deputy Commissioner Corrigan withdrew the Department's variance requests which were before the Board so that a more complete submission could be prepared.

The Board discussed various steps that it could take to assist the Department in addressing the overcrowding crisis. There was a consensus that a public statement should be issued and that a meeting with City judges to discuss the situation might be helpful.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P.M. by the Chairman and members agreed that if the Board received the Department's new variance requests, the Board would reconvene March 3, 1981 at 2:30 P.M. in the conference room of the law offices of Tufo and Zuccotti.