

MINUTES

June 15, 1982

Board of Correction

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on June 15, 1982 at the Board's office at 51 Chambers Street.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peter Tufo at 2:20 p.m.

Board members in attendance in addition to Mr. Tufo were Vice-Chairman John Horan, David Lenefsky, David Schulte and Rose Singer. An excused absence was approved for Angelo Giordani.

Board staff in attendance included Michael Austin, Michael Cleary, Judith LaPook, David Johnson, Sherry Goldstein, Father Robert Harrison, Barbara Treen and summer student intern Stuart Baer.

Sherry Goldstein served as secretary for the meeting.

David Lenefsky made a request that all Board meetings begin on time.

Wilbert Kirby stated that Board minutes should reflect the specific comments of each of the Board members.

David Schulte suggested that a professional stenographer might be hired to provide a transcript of each meeting if Board members felt strongly that an exact record of each meeting should be maintained.

Michael Austin stated that stenographic services were very costly.

Peter Tufo stated that the minutes should reflect all reports and actions taken by the Board but should not include opinions nor all discussion.

Mr. Kirby felt strongly that his position and questions should be recorded and attributed, particularly during questioning of individuals from outside agencies, especially the Department of Correction.

In response to a question from Mrs. Singer, Judith LaPook reported that no decision has been handed down by the court in the Burns-McCreary case. Commissioner Ward has, however, granted Ms. Burns access to the facilities, but Mr. McCreary continues to be denied access.

Mr. Schulte then inquired into the status of conditions at the Department's work release facility which he felt constituted a fire hazard.

Michael Austin reported that the Board and the Department of Correction jointly requested the Fire Department to reinspect that facility to insure that it was in compliance with the City's fire code and that the one outstanding violation cited in an earlier inspection had been properly corrected.

Father Robert Harrison then reported on the issue of access to inmate housing areas by the Department's chaplains. A committee of Department chaplains and wardens has been formed to develop a policy which will allow chaplains access to inmate housing areas within certain security constraints.

Peter Tufo mentioned that he had met with the leadership of area churches and offered the Board's support to their efforts to have the current Department policy denying civilian access to housing areas modified as it applies to Department chaplains. At the moment, these religious leaders were optimistic, according to Mr. Tufo, that this policy would be modified and were appreciative of the Board's support.

Peter Tufo then reported on a meeting he had with Kevin McNiff Chairman of the State Commission of Correction regarding the overlapping jurisdiction of the Commission and the Board in New York City. Mr. McNiff agreed that the Commission would give primary jurisdiction in New York City to the Board. The Commission would maintain interest in the New York City correction system but would limit its activities in New York City.

Judith LaPook reported that the Department had just submitted variance requests regarding lockers for each prisoner and contact visits for Nathaniel Burns. Ms. LaPook's recommendation that these variances not be considered until the Board receives additional information was accepted.

In response to a question from Mr. Schulte, Michael Austin reported that the current inmate census was 9,564.

David Johnson and Judith LaPook reported that evidence of the serious overcrowding in the City's jails could be seen in the sentenced dormitories at CIFM, many of which are housing almost 100 prisoners.

Mr. Schulte stated that this current overcrowding was creating a very dangerous situation and recommended that housing areas to be used for the work camps not be used for that purpose but rather as a safety valve to relieve present overcrowding.

Dr. Frank Schneiger, consultant to the Board, then summarized the results of a study conducted for the Board by the Human Services Management Institute, Inc. regarding occupational stress confronted by Captains at AMKC. This study was the initial phase of a joint effort by the Board and the Department to develop a stress reduction program for Department uniformed staff. Mr. Schneiger's comments are reflected in the attached:

"Report on Stress in a Correctional Setting:
Anna M. Kross Center Case Study" June 1982.

The Board commended Dr. Schneiger for his valuable contribution and indicated that it was looking forward to working with the Department on the next phases of the project.

At this time First Deputy Commissioner Richard Koehler, Chief of Operations Jacqueline McMickens, Deputy Commissioner Sharon Keilin and Assistant Commissioner Peter von Bergen of the Department of Correction and Kevin Frawley of the Criminal Justice Coordinators Office joined the meeting to brief the Board on the City's plan for operating work camps on Rikers and Hart Islands for offenders convicted of "quality of life" crimes.

The attached letter dated August 12, 1982 from Sharon Keilin to Peter Tufo details the City's plans for these work camps and summarizes the Department's oral presentation at this meeting.

Following the presentation, Peter Tufo asked if the Department was applying for variances from the minimum standards where these standards could not be met in the work camps.

Deputy Commissioner Koehler stated that the Department had been advised that minimum standards would not apply to the work camps.

Peter Tufo disagreed with this proposition and advised the Department to submit in writing to the Board its position regarding the applicability of the standards at the work camps.

Mr. Kirby asked if the courts were aware of this program and who would determine who would go to the work camps.

Deputy Commissioner Koehler stated that the courts will sentence individuals to the work camps but once they are within the Department's jurisdiction the Department will screen these individuals for suitability for a work camp assignment based on security, medical, mental health and other programmatic considerations.

Mr. Kirby expressed concern that the Department of Correction might be usurping the authority of the courts in screening out individuals as unsuitable for the work camps who had been specifically sentenced to that program.

Mr. Frawley stated that screening by the Department was not inappropriate since in its screening Correction might develop information that was not available to the courts in making their sentencing determination.

Peter Tufo asked whether the location of Hart Island work camps and its staffing level would allow for appropriate security in the event of an emergency, particularly one requiring a medical response.

Chief McMickens stated that the emergency response for Hart Island would be provided by the Bronx HDM. Arrangements have also been made for medical emergencies.

David Lenefsky expressed concern over the amount of square footage per prisoner of living space on Hart Island.

Sharon Keilin stated that prisoners on Hart Island will be working all day, and would only be in the dormitories in the evenings and on Hart Island for only seven days.

David Schulte asked if the Department has extra emergency housing space if the inmate population continued to rise.

Deputy Commissioner Koehler stated that the Department was identifying existing space which might be converted into housing areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.