

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION

October 7, 1974

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Monday, October 7, 1974, in the 14th floor conference room, 100 Centre Street, New York, New York.

Present at the meeting were Mr. Lehman, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kirby, Father Rios, Mrs. Singer, Mr. Tufo, and Reverend Wilson. Present by invitation of the Board were John M. Brickman, Executive Director; Marc Rosen, Assistant Executive Director; Greg Harris, Director, Clergy Volunteer Program; Eileen Shanahan, Co-Director, Investigation and Reporting Unit; Michael D. Cleary, Executive Secretary; Arden Culver, Administrative Assistant, Investigation and Reporting Unit; Stephen Fisher and Charles Hamiel, Staff Assistants; Barbara J. Armstrong, Deputy Director, Clergy Volunteer Program; and Caroline Kearney, Law Interne.

Also present by invitation of the Board were Jeffrey Siger, Special Counsel to the Board; Lawrence Siegel, Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Anthony Pisano, Executive Director, Private Concerns, Inc.; Carol Nemeyer, Association of American Publishers; Sandra Paul, Random House; Edwin Holmgren, New York Public Library; and Milton Byam, Queensborough Public Library.

Present from the Department of Correction were Benjamin J. Maloclm, Commissioner, Jack Birnbaum, Deputy Commissioner; and Alphonso Ford, Assistant Commissioner.

Mr. Lehman served as Chairman and Ms. Culver and Mr. Fisher as Secretaries of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 12:50 p.m.

The Chairman declared that he had been present at the Saturday, October 5, 1974, meeting of the "Operation Threshold" program. He asked Mr. Harris for a copy of the training manual given to volunteers, and asked Mr. Harris for additional information on the program.

Mr. Harris informed the meeting that the program had been developed by Dr. Milton Burglass, who considers inmates to be social victims and teaches them how to make decisions and live intentionally for themselves. He stated that Walter Armstead was the Director in New York, that Correction Solutions, Inc., was the parent organization, and that it was nonprofit. Mr. Harris added that the recently-begun program was the first training program by "Operation Threshold" for the New York City prison system. He said that 40 to 45 people had volunteered and that they would be required to complete seven weeks of in-service training before they could begin working in the institutions.

At 1:13 p.m. Mr. Jackson entered the meeting.

Mr. Brickman declared that two staff members, Sylvia Kronstadt and Jay Fasold, were leaving the Board. He then announced several new staff assignments. Eileen Shanahan had been promoted to Co-Director of the Investigation and Reporting Unit; Charles Hamiel was now a full-time permanent staff member; and Jose Sanchez, a student at Fordham University, had been hired as a college aide, he said that there was need for additional personnel in the Clergy Volunteer Office. He also informed the Board that he was without a secretary and explained the civil service procedures which prevented him from bringing someone on until December.

The Board then discussed briefly several matters of old business. The Chairman stated that he felt the Board's relations with City Hall had been good, citing a recent meeting he had had with Deputy Mayor Judah Gribetz. He asked Ms. Shanahan if chairs had been received at the Brooklyn House and Ms. Shanahan informed him they had. Mrs. Singer brought up the recent acquisition of a City car, and Mr. Rosen told Board members that if the car were needed, an advance call to Michael Cleary would reserve it.

The Chairman then brought up the question of prison health and the need to decide whether to conduct a full-scale investigation, particularly into mental health.

The Chairman described certain aspects of the medical facilities. He stated that Rikers Island Hospital had no resident psychiatrist; that Bellevue was the best and had full staffing; that Elmhurst worked fairly reasonably; and that although Kings County had two psychiatrists, inmates remanded there were sent only for competency exams. He suggested that Board members visit and inspect these facilities.

The Chairman then described certain aspects of Prison Health Services. He stated that all prison health responsibility in Hanna Rostain, M.D. was divided among three divisions: dentistry, which works best, medical and mental health. Exceptions to this were Bellevue Hospital, Kings County Hospital, and Elmhurst Hospital, which had standard hospital staffs; and the Women's House and ARDC on Rikers Island which had Montefiore Hospital staffing (one of the best in the world), he said.

Mr. Jackson suggested that the Board update the findings of the 1971 hearings. Mr. Brickman stated that there had never been a final report; that the results of the hearings was the transfer of prison health to Health Services Administration; and that in the last three to six months, Prison Health Services had fallen off in the quality and breadth of its services.

At 1:40 p.m. Mr. Tufo entered the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the Board needed to know how Prison Health Services works; that he saw several problems within the central office, including the Acting Director; no recruitment efforts; turnover at the top; reduced budget. He said that there was no particular planning as to which types of medical units existed at which institution, and that in some there was double coverage, and, in others, no coverage.

The Chairman expressed his belief that the Board would have to reduce its fact-finding to several particular areas to get some indication as to whether public hearings were desired or how else to handle the matter.

At 1:45 p.m. Lawrence Siegel entered the meeting.

Mr. Rosen described the intentions of the prison health study. He stated that work would be divided into four phases, the first two of which could be begun immediately; the others would take place later. In Phase No. 1, a decision would be made as to what should be focused on, what framework should be used to conduct the study, and a determination should be made of how money is spent. Phase No. 2 would consist of a series of interviews with the Unit chiefs to discover the whereabouts of the operational problems. Phases Nos. 3 and 4 would consist of interviewing central office (Prison Health Services) personnel and interviewing medical experts and others on the outside. Mr. Rosen stated that he felt the ultimate focus would be on the need for reorganizing Prison Health Services and the lack of leadership which existed in the central office.

At 1:55 p.m. Mr. Pisano entered the meeting.

Mr. Siegel introduced both himself and Mr. Pisano and informed the Board that Private Concerns, Inc., the organization both were there to talk about, was designed under Henry Roth and Judge Altmann of the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council as an ex-offender program which could begin in or out of the prison.

At 2 p.m. Father Rios and Mr. Cleary entered the meeting.

Mr. Siegel described Private Concerns, Inc., as a new non-profit corporation which would serve as a technical resource for employers and unions by working with other agencies to develop jobs and programs for inmates in City and State prisons.

Mr. Pisano stated that Private Concerns, Inc., wished to develop programs in the private sector for ex-offenders. He stated that it was necessary for his agency to look at both the correctional facilities and the educational levels of inmates to determine what kind of training was needed and feasible in order to place inmates and ex-offenders in career employment.

Mr. Pisano stated that he hoped to go to the City and State government with a description of existing programs and determine from them if in-prison training is viable.

Father Rios asked about Hispanic inmates and the problem of the language barrier. In addition, he asked Mr. Pisano why businesses would be interested in hiring inmates and ex-offenders and in what way was he calling upon the services of the Board.

Mr. Pisano said that employing Hispanic inmates was one of the central areas of concern of his organization. He stated that for large businesses, the interest in inmate and ex-offender employment was for good public relations; while for smaller businesses, the provision of significant manpower sources was the main consideration.

Mr. Tufo asked Mr. Pisano which job qualities were most in demand. Mr. Pisano stated that clerical and secretarial skills were most in demand, and that clerical training was inadequate in the institutions for employment.

Mr. Tufo asked about funding. Mr. Pisano stated that CJCC funded them for \$700,000 and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation gave them \$90,000.

Mr. Brickman stated that all work-release to date had been on the State level except for Sloan House; he stated that work release centers lacked job development programs, and that the Board of Correction could be using Mr. Pisano together with these centers and provide the contact and skills of Private Concerns, Inc., to them.

Mr. Pisano asked the Board if it could help gather data for a mid-November training program. Mr. Brickman referred Mr. Pisano to Assistant Commissioner Alphonso Ford.

Mr. Hamiel questioned whether Private Concerns had initiated the Bell and Howell and the Chase Manhattan programs. Mr. Pisano replied they had not. He said they had not yet initiated any programs.

Mr. Jackson questioned Mr. Pisano about the hiring of ex-offenders. He asked how many ex-offenders were on the Private Concerns, Inc., staff. Mr. Pisano replied that there were two out of a total staff of 30 and out of a professional staff of 10.

Father Rios asked whether Private Concerns, Inc. was geared to handle physically handicapped. Mr. Pisano said they were not.

At 2:45 p.m. Messrs. Pisano and Seigel left the meeting.

The Board next discussed the annual report. Mrs. Singer said she felt it was too long and that a summary was needed.

Mr. Tufo brought up the printing of the article in the Village Voice on the 10 worst judges, stating that it was released without Board approval and that its release had angered Judge Ross and, by allowing its release the staff had not acted in its own best interests.

Mr. Jackson added that there was no working relationship between the press and the Board.

Mr. Jackson returned to the issue of Private Concerns and informed the Board that this organization had only hired the ex-offenders under coercion, and that a good candidate had been turned down.

The Chairman stated that the Board could change its policy of not going to the press and that although he had been led by a policy of not going to the press, if something else could be worked out, he was willing to change this policy.

Mr. Jackson said that he felt the Board should go to the press about one Joanne Chesimard who had given birth under the care of a private physician and who, upon return from Elmhurst to the Women's House, had been put in solitary confinement--and would remain there until she agreed to a vaginal and rectal search.

At 3:05 p.m., Ms. Shanahan and Ms. Culver left the meeting, Mr. Fisher began acting as Secretary of the meeting and Carol Nemeyer, Sandra Paul, Edwin Holmgren, and Milton Byam entered the meeting. Mr. Brickman introduced the guests to the Board.

Mr. Brickman discussed the history of the Association of American Publishers and informed the Board of the astounding display of charity exhibited by the publishing houses in donating books to prisons and in developing a model prison bibliography. Mr. Brickman noted that the AAP, the independent publishing houses, and the New York & Queensboro public library systems had done all they could in upgrading prison libraries and that it was now up to the Department to secure a permanent and central librarian to coordinate library services for all of the institutions. In addition, he stated that the Department has submitted the paperwork for a permanent library coordinator but unless the bureaucracy is shaken up, all gains will soon be nothing more than a pile of books.

Mr. Byam declared that the position of Prison Library Specialist which is funded by the State Division of Library Development and channeled through the Queensboro Public Library, would probably be refunded by the state if there is some commitment by the city to establish a permanent library coordinator. Mr. Byam added that it would not be refunded "ad nauseum."

Mr. Brickman declared that what was needed was a full-time library position and an attitude reflected throughout the institutional level that library services are an integral program and not to be shunned by reasonable security demands.

Ms. Nemeyer informed the Board that to her knowledge the Department has three library-aide lines at \$5500 which could be consolidated into a position of library coordinator paying \$15-16,000.

Mr. Byam declared that Mr. Lut Nero, the current Prison Library Specialist, meets with frustration and little commitment at the highest levels of the Department.

The Chairman suggested that they each write letters to the Commissioner advising him of what they think ought to be done. Mr. Brickman suggested that they remain for the session with Commissioner Malcolm and his staff so that they may pose questions to him.

Mr. Holmgren noted that the ideal situation would be to have one librarian for each institution as well as a central librarian.

Mr. Brickman then asked Mr. Fisher to report on where the Prison Library Coordinator stands with the Bureau of the Budget. Mr. Fisher stated that the paperwork submitted by the Department requesting a Prison librarian had been disapproved by the Department of Personnel because it is not classified for the Department of Correction; it is a library position. Mr. Cleary commented that if the Department was committed to obtaining the line they could have obtained it.

Mr. Holmgren stated that a library coordinator is merely a first step in securing first rate library services for inmates. He noted that the New York, Brooklyn, and Queensboro Public Library Systems have books, films, and other audio visual materials available to the prisons. He further stated that the library system cannot be expected to donate another \$30,000 in books if there is no support from the Department in obtaining the coordinator position.

The Chairman suggested that the group seek funds from the Mayor's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for a prison library coordinator. A general discussion then ensued as to why this idea would not be feasible.

At 3:35 the Chairman called for a break until the Commissioner and his staff arrived. Mr. Tufo left the meeting at 4:20 and at the suggestion of Mrs. Singer, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 since Commissioner Malcolm and his staff never arrived nor could they be located.

At 4:40 p.m. Commissioner Malcolm and his staff entered the meeting.

The Chairman raised the question of the status of the Prison Library Coordinator position. The Commissioner declared that he recognized the need for a professional librarian position. Assistant Commissioner Ford stated that the coordinating librarian position had been killed by the Bureau of the Budget. Commissioner Malcolm stated that he will be required to lose an additional sixty civilian employees by the end of this year.

At 4:45 p.m. Mr. Kirby left the meeting.

Mr. Brickman stated that six months ago they had met and discussed the idea of collapsing the library aide lines and was under the impression that the Department would pursue this course of action. He noted that all gains in the delivery of library services would be lost if the line was not institutionalized. Assistant Commissioner Ford responded that he does not recall the idea of collapsing lines.

Ms. Nemeyer stated that she never felt a lack of cooperation from the Department but noted that support from the publishing firms was diminishing. She informed the Commissioner that Mr. Holmgren would not use the \$30,000 he has to spend for books for prisons without the services of a trained librarian to coordinate distribution of these books. Mr. Brickman stated that he thought the Department's policy was aggressive and finds it unfortunate to learn that the paperwork was submitted six months ago and now a problem develops.

The Commissioner asked that Ms. Nemeyer, Ms. Paul, representatives from the Board meet with him next week to discuss the matter. In the interim, Commissioner Ford will track down the paperwork.

At 5:15 p.m. Ms. Nemeyer and Ms. Paul left the meeting.

The Chairman raised the question of the installation of telephones on Rikers Island. The Commissioner told of several bids for contracts that had been accepted, but noted that in cases where bidding was way over the estimated cost as set forth by Public Works, they would have to be rebid.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.