

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
BOARD OF CORRECTIONS
LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Regular MeetingNovember 17, 2010

Location6900 Atmore Drive, Richmond, Virginia

Presiding..... John Roberts, Chairman

PresentPeter Decker, III, Chairman, Board of Corrections
B. A. Washington, Member, Board of Corrections
Rev. Anthony C. Paige, Member, Board of Corrections
William Osborne, Member, Board of Corrections
Kurt Boshart, Member, Board of Corrections
Felipe Cabacoy, Member, Board of Corrections
Elton Blackstock, Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority
Gabe Morgan, Sheriff, Newport News City Jail
Roy Cherry, Hampton Roads Regional Jail
Ron Werdebaugh, Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center
Gary Bass, Classification and Records, DOC
Kim Lipp, Architecture and Engineering, DOC
Brooks Ballard, Architecture and Engineering, DOC
Bill Wilson, Compliance and Accreditation, DOC
Donna Foster, Compliance and Accreditation, DOC

The meeting was called to order and attendees were welcomed.

I. Committee Chairman (John Roberts)

- Mr. Roberts welcomed the committee members,. He then called for a motion to approve the October minutes. By **MOTION** duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously **APPROVED**. The Motion carried.

II. Meeting Summary

Kim Lipp reported the following:

- The Grayson prison is complete and the final certificate of occupancy is expected in November. The Board of Corrections will officially name the prison in the near future. There is no status change on opening plans. When asked how many vacant prisons there are currently, she answered that Mt. Rogers/Grayson is the only one considered “mothballed”. Green Rock

Correctional Center is housing Pennsylvania inmates under contract plus there are eight prisons that have been closed by direction of the General Assembly. Southampton Correctional Center is being demolished with inmate labor. The remaining closed prisons are available to the respective localities. Tazewell and Chatham have been awarded to localities.

- Mr. Gene Johnson paid the committee a visit in order to introduce the new Director of the Department of Corrections, Mr. Harold Clarke and Banci Tewolde, the Special Assistant to the Secretary from the Office of the Secretary of Public Safety, and re-entry coordinator. The Liaison Committee welcomes the them both and looks forward to working with Mr. Clarke and Ms. Tewolde in the future.

Bill Wilson reported the following:

- The out-of-compliance inmate numbers are 3,424 today. The DOC continues to intake inmates whenever there is an available bed. Some localities have requested that the DOC reduce intakes due to the need for the revenue. He continues to review the staffing report for the legislature. He has had problems separating the sheriffs' staff totals from jail non-security staff. Robyn deSocio is assisting in calculating the numbers. Due to slight population reductions in the past year, some of the jails actually indicate having extra positions. While he does not think the positions will be taken away, some of the numbers are nonetheless surprising. Other localities are technically due numerous positions according to ratios of inmates to security staff. Unfortunately, the report falsely indicates 4,000 more beds than allotted staff which was noted by an attendee of a meeting recently attended by Mr. Wilson. He replied to the attendees that, yes, the report shows 4,000 beds available but they are unsafe beds. Mr. Wilson feels that the message is beginning to resonate, but the concept is not totally clear to the legislators and their staff.

Gabe Morgan asked if the possibility for a “show and tell” exists. Mr. Wilson could not make promises regarding a visit to a jail by the legislators and/or their staff. Mr. Morgan and other attendees explained the concept of a “show and tell” for the legislature to the committee using Richmond City Jail as an example as they are showing 200 available beds that are not safe to fill, as well as reasons behind the overcrowding in the jails. Mr. Morgan added the caveat that the bed space availability does not address inmate classification and that this needs to be stressed to the finance committee and the legislators. He stressed that his populations are becoming larger while the state per diems are 31% lower and the mental health needs are seemingly increasing in the overall population. Mr. Cherry observed that the bed space survey is misleading and agreed that the legislators need to see the physical conditions of the bed space being considered as available. The double bunking mantra has become an acceptable norm that is a false portrayal of reality. Support staff is not considered in the recent survey and the insufficient numbers of security staff are

forced to provide supporting functions that need consideration in capacity determinations, a concept that can be realized best upon physically visiting jail facilities. Elton Blackstock noted that recidivism increases due to the lack of programs to better educate inmates prior to release into society adding that mental health inmate deteriorate without treatment, all considerations that need to be addressed. Adding to staffing insufficiencies, some judges require security staff in courtrooms and at the courthouse entrances, which displaces essential staff from the facilities and officers are necessary for transportation, in kitchens, medical departments, DNA collections and in the booking areas among others. These positions are not compensated by the Compensation Board. Kim Lipp wanted to add that she has seen nothing that would forecasts increased out-of-compliance rates in the next few years.

Gary Bass reported the following:

- The DOC beds are full and some jails have indicated that they want to slow the intake rate from their facilities to maintain some state funding, allowing him to increase intake from the jails that are at critical levels. The new General Assembly will convene in January and he will know more about what the future will hold for the DOC after the legislative session. Last year, the legislators recommended the closure of another DOC facility. The MSDs (medium security dorm facilities) were designed, built and staffed for 500 beds and now hold 1,200 beds. He was on the committee studying the 2 year rule and the DOC has recommended no change to the rule, but the final decision remains to be seen from the General Assembly. Mr. Bass added that in mental health, medical and behavioral cases, he can prioritize the intake upon notification. He reiterated from previous meetings that re-entry will be a priority in the near future. The re-entry plan may be found on the internet on the following link:
<http://www.vadoc.virginia.gov/>

Gabe Morgan asked if the re-entry plan included the local level. Mr. Bass replied that it is geared primarily toward the DOC but it does mention the need to include the local level as well. The plan mentioned above is the DOC plan, not that of the governor. Mr. Morgan asked where the plan is for the local facilities. Mr. Bass answered that Banci Tewolde is the governor's appointee to direct the statewide re-entry plan. Mr. Wilson added the he had spoken with her and she said that any jails interested in the re-entry program could contact her (e-mail: Banci.Tewolde@governor.virginia.gov), but funding is not likely at this time. Mr. Morgan stated that this is problematic. Upon release into the community, recidivism is greater at the local level than at the state level. Mr. Bass told the committee that the DOC has not received funding for re-entry, other programs are being eliminated to allow for re-entry. Mr. Roberts asked if the re-entry program would be based on the federal re-entry program which utilizes halfway housing and home confinement and contact every other week. Mr. Bass answered that it is not. Mr. Wilson added that the new director came from Massachusetts where regional halfway housing is utilized. Mr. Blackstock

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added that there is a fundamental flaw in the communications between local level and the legislature that is afforded to the DOC. The inspections and audits are generated by the DOC but the only voice the local facilities have is through individual legislators or through the associations (Virginia Association of Regional Jail and Virginia Sheriff's Association).

Mr. Roberts reminded the attendees that the next meeting would be March 16, 2011.

By MOTION duly made by the Chairman of the Liaison Committee, John Roberts, and seconded by several members in attendance, and unanimously APPROVED, the meeting was adjourned.