

MSBA CORRECTIONAL REFORM SECTION COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting of November 11, 2009

Members present: Michael Berlin, Phil Dantes, Angela Eaves, Wendy Hess, Arnold Hopkins, James Johnston, Roland Knapp, Stephanie Lane-Weber, Alison Leonard-Leach, Pat Lesnick, Walter Lomax, Joseph Tetrault, and Paulette Wirsching.

Guests Present: Gary D. Maynard, Secretary, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Monique Dixon, Heather Anderson, Steve Adler, Dana Middleton, Booth Ripke

Review of Minutes of Meeting of October 26, 2009

The minutes of the meeting of October 26, 2009, were reviewed by the members and approved without change.

Story Book Project

Heather Anderson and Dana Middleton described a project of the Leadership Academy, MSBA, where age-appropriate books are donated and then given to prisoners in Jessup to read to their children. The stories are recorded, transferred to a compact disc, and the disc is sent to the child. This project has the support of Secretary Maynard. Mr. Lomax mentioned his own project, the Family Literacy Program. Anderson and Middleton and Mr. Lomax agreed to see if their respective projects could be of mutual benefit.

Presentation by Secretary Maynard

The Secretary stated that Governor O'Malley has three priorities in corrections: security integration, workforce development, and sustainability.

On the first topic, most of the discussion concerned supervision of offenders in the community. The Secretary stated that the number of non-violent offenders granted parole was up, while the number of violent offenders granted parole was about the same as in the past. He mentioned that the Maryland Parole Commission is using a new matrix scoring system designed by an outside consultant. Several members expressed interest in reviewing the new matrix. The Secretary said that the number of offenders under supervision by the Division of Parole and Probation was approximately 70,000. There is intense supervision of certain violent offenders, mostly homicides, through the Violence Prevention Initiative.

The Secretary stated that the population at the Baltimore City Detention Center was down by roughly 4,000. He stated that mental health issues in this population and in the Division of Correction is the biggest challenge to the Department. He wishes to see treatment started while the person is incarcerated and continuity with community care after release. He believes that 40% of Division of Correction prisoners have some mental health issue or issues. He noted that DOC now uses prisoners as suicide watch observers and there have been no suicides in the last year.

The budget for medical care for prisoners is roughly 150 million. This is up from roughly 60 million in 2004. The focus is on diabetes treatment, as successful treatment can prevent other serious and costly diseases in the future. The Secretary also discussed advances in the electronic patient care system and telemedicine with specialists at Johns Hopkins Hospital. The Department is currently drafting requests for proposals for the new health care contracts, as the current contracts will expire June 30, 2010.

On workplace development, the focus is on re-entry. The Governor wants prisoners to leave the system with GEDs and other tools to be successful. Our recidivism rate is now approximately 50% and the Governor wants a five percent reduction. The Secretary believes that drug treatment and vocational/technical training is the key to reaching this goal. He said vo/tech training has increased and that the transition period with DLLR has gone well. He also said DOC was making progress in getting prisoners identification cards, driver's licenses and birth certificates prior to release.

On sustainability, the Secretary noted projects where prisoners are planting trees and building habitat for oysters.

On miscellaneous topics, the Secretary stated that the Toulson Boot Camp was closed because the research showed that it was not effective without aftercare and it was expensive to operate. He also stated that the West Wing of the Penitentiary was closed because of problems with the cell door locks. He stated that the Department is striving to reduce unnecessary overtime. The floor was then opened to questions.

Various topics were discussed. On the 2007 elimination of special project credits for housing, the Secretary expressed his preference for incentive-based programs. He discussed his recent offer of inmate labor to renovate the building now housing the Rosemont Police Athletic League. There is a trend toward more kiosk reporting for offenders under supervision in the community. He also stated that there should be less duplication and more continuity in the transferring of files from DOC to Parole & Probation. He stated that DOC now had 3000 drug treatment slots and 3000 GED slots. The Secretary's chief concern is that "the system is dumping the mentally ill on corrections."

Brief Updates/Old Business

Mr. Knapp has updated our description of the Paul Davis Award. Nominations should be in by March, 2010. The award will be made in June, 2010.

Notes from the Secretary's Roundtable meeting in September were distributed.

On the pre-trial *Kaizen*, Mr. Knapp met with an assistant to the Secretary and there are nine items remaining on the "to do" list. DPSCS has been extremely cooperative. There is now a memorandum of understanding governing the Office of the Public Defender's access to CJIS. DPSCS is still hoping that the State's Attorney's Office will be more of a participant in the process.

Adjournment

Ms. Hess adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:30 p.m. **The next meeting will be January 12, 2010, at 6:30 p.m., and then the subsequent second Tuesdays of each month.**