

Prison Reform Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2019
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Governor's Crime Commission

Board Members Attending: Beth Austin, Art Beeler, Mike Killmer, James French, Dorothy Ledford, Stanley Drewery and Stephanie Hollembaek.

Department of Public Safety (DPS) Officials Attending: Tim Moose, Todd Ishee, Tracy Little, Kenneth Lassiter, Chris Holland, Pam Walker, Jerry Higgins, Jodi Harrison, Doug Holbrook, Michael Dail, Susanna Davis and Loris Sutton.

Chair Austin called the meeting to order. On behalf of the Board, Chair Austin recognized and thanked Prisons Director Kenneth Lassiter for his 30 years of service and extended best wishes upon his September 30 retirement. Director Lassiter thanked Chair Austin for her comments. Director Lassiter thanked everyone for the support he received throughout his career.

Chief Deputy Secretary Moose thanked Director Lassiter for his dedication and hard work and stepping up to lead Prisons in what has been the most challenging time ever for corrections in North Carolina.

Prisons Commissioner Todd Ishee echoed CDS Moose' sentiments and stated he had learned that there was not a harder working person in the agency than Mr. Lassiter. Commissioner Ishee thanked Director Lassiter for all the work he had done for Prisons. Commissioner Ishee noted he had visited 28 prisons so far and realizes that there are challenges ahead but he remains positive about the future. He stated that he looked forward to working with the Board members and hearing their final recommendations soon.

A motion was made by Stanley Drewery and seconded by Art Beeler to approve the August 20, 2019 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved as presented.

The Board heard several presentations related to current operations and initiatives. Copies of the presentations can be found on the DPS Prison Reform [website](#).

Susanna Davis, director of DPS Legislative Affairs, provided a legislative update.

Ms. Davis updated the board on bills that were recently enacted into law. Some included:

- ▶ House Bill 106 - Inmate Health Care & 340B Program
- ▶ House Bill 108 - PED/Safekeeper Health Care Cost Recovery Practices
- ▶ House Bill 138 - Damage Jail & Prison Fire Sprinkler/Penalty
- ▶ House Bill 617 - Allow Repeat Referral to Teen Court
- ▶ Senate Bill 413 - Raise the Age Modifications

She explained House Bill 966 – 2019 Appropriations Act and possible budget scenarios.

Sara Royster, DPS HR Critical Needs Analyst, presented on Recruitment and Hiring Practices for Health Services. Ms. Royster shared several current efforts to reduce healthcare vacancies. She stated Health Services and Human Resources are dedicated to a partnership with the following goals:

- ▶ Continue assertive recruitment efforts.

- ▶ Implement a quality and effective hiring process for all healthcare positions.
- ▶ Continue reviewing and utilizing all available methods and tools to offer fair and competitive salaries.
- ▶ Provide consistency and efficiency in employment practices.
- ▶ Provide HR training and re-training when needed to ensure the confidence and expertise of staff are at their highest levels.
- ▶ Continue to improve and ensure that the hiring process is a positive experience.
- ▶ Explore programs that will improve retention and turnover.

Mr. Beeler asked how many travel nurses are currently being utilized. Per Ms. Royster, there are 22 being used through Temporary Solutions and 211 through staffing agencies.

Stephanie Hollembaek commended Ms. Royster and the HR staff for their dedication in hiring medical staff. She added that hiring healthcare professionals presents different challenges than hiring custody or other disciplines.

A presentation was provided by Jeff O'Briant, Director of DPS Central Engineering, and Mike Hall, Prisons Assistant Director for Facilities Management, on Facility Status and Maintenance Practices. They provided a facilities overview as well as repair and renovation and Capital needs. Current challenges include:

- ▶ Ongoing funding deficiencies
- ▶ Hiring
- ▶ Technology (infrastructure and replacement)

Mike Killmer asked if there had been any discussion of using solar power. Director O'Briant indicated there have been discussions about solar but no decisions to utilize have been made.

Doug Holbrook, DPS Chief Financial Officer, requested that the presenters discuss some of their offender assignment challenges. Director O'Briant stated offender labor is used in multiple ways through Central Engineering's Inmate Construction Program (ICP), which is a training program for the offenders and also helps reduce costs for the department. Offenders are also assigned to Facility Management to assist with various projects.

Chair Austin announced that the Board would be in recess for lunch. Following lunch, the Board held a work session to discuss potential recommendations. Visitors were invited to stay for the work session.

Chair Austin adjourned the meeting at 3:04 pm.