

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION  
DECEMBER 14, 1971

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Tuesday, December 14, 1971, at 51 Chambers Street, Room 929.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, Dribben, DeMonte and Schulte, and Mrs. Singer. Also present by invitation of the Board were John M. Brickman, Executive Director of the Board, Lesley J. Spector, Executive Secretary of the Board, William Goodstein, Counsel to the Board, Kenneth Nochimson and Steven Richter, Law Internes of the Board, and Sally Howlett, Administrative Assistant of the Board. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of November 15, 1971 were adopted.

The Chairman stated that he would be meeting with Deputy Mayor Hamilton in the near future to discuss the appointment of the new Board members.

The Chairman stated that he had sent a letter to Deputy Commissioner Benjamin Malcolm concerning the great number of toilets that were in disrepair in the various institutions, declaring that if they were not in operation by February 1, the Board of Correction would take appropriate action.

The Chairman declared that Department of Correction officials had visited the Sheridan Center and had found it to be a perfect adjunct detention facility for the Tombs. The Chairman further stated that the Board's law suit would be filed in Manhattan Supreme Court on Thursday, December 16. He said that the suit would not attack present bail procedures at this time, since The Legal Aid Society is bringing an action in the early part of next year and the Board could join in that action.

The Chairman stated that he has been urging the courts not to close for the holiday season, but rather to use that time for emergency bail review and pre-trial conferences. Mr. Schulte stated that a good argument could be made for keeping the Supreme Court open since the Criminal Court is not recessing for the holidays. He further stated that it might be a good idea for a citizens' committee to be appointed to investigate the courts. The Chairman stated that the City did not have the power to conduct such an investigation, since the courts are under the jurisdiction of the State.

The Chairman then stated that the Board might wish to take a position on the building of a new prison in Manhattan. He further stated that he could not take part in the discussion or the decision of the Board on its position, since there might be a conflict of interest. He stated that when he was appointed Chairman of the Board, he advised the

Mayor and the Board of Ethics that one of the clients of the firm of which he is a member held title to property which was being considered as a site for the prison and therefore stated at that time that he would not voice an opinion on the matter. He suggested, therefore, that a Sub-Committee for the New Prison be appointed and that Mr. Schulte be Chairman of that Sub-Committee. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Mrs. Schulte was made Chairman and Messrs. Dribben and DeMonte and Mrs. Singer were appointed members of the Sub-Committee.

Mr. Brickman stated that a public hearing was being held before the City Site Selection Board on Monday, December 20, and that the Board might wish to appear at the hearing to make a statement.

Mr. Brickman stated that money had been appropriated in the Capital Budget for acquiring a site and conducting a planning study for the new prison. He added that the space planning consultants had been hired and their report was in the process of being printed.

Miss Howlett stated that the new prison was being designed to hold 1,000 people in a medium security facility. She further stated that there would be an orientation floor for incoming prisoners to be tested and classified. She added that most of the building would be dormitory facilities and that the building was expected to cost between \$60-80 million.

Mr. Brickman stated that the total cost would break down to more than \$50,000 per cell.

Mrs. Singer stated that several years ago, the Board of Correction went on record in favor of a new prison. Mr. Dribben stated that at that time, the prison would have been much less expensive.

Miss Howlett stated that there were counsel rooms being planned for each floor of the new prison which would be used by psychiatrists, social workers, etc.

Mr. Brickman stated that the best alternative to a new prison might be to reopen the Sheridan Center and remodel some of the floors of the Tombs into dormitories, since a new prison would not be ready for occupancy for at least seven years. He then suggested that a resolution on the new prison might be in order.

Mr. Dribben suggested that the Board state that in principle it is against a new prison and that as a substitute, the Board recommends that favorable action be taken by the court to reopen the Sheridan Center. He further suggested that if Sheridan cannot be reopened, the Board should recommend a feasibility study on renovation of the Tombs.

Mr. Schulte suggested that perhaps money should be invested in the old Women's House to make it usable. Mrs. Singer stated that she was convinced that community opposition would be so strong that such an idea would not work.

Upon motion made by Mr. DeMonte, and seconded by Mrs. Singer, it was unanimously, with the Chairman abstaining,



RESOLVED, that the Board of Correction opposes the building of a new detention prison for men in Manhattan. The proposal for a new prison has no relevance to the present crisis of overcrowding. A new prison, by expert estimates, would not be available for at least seven years. A modern medium-security prison facility is available immediately at 75 Morton Street, Manhattan, a building that can house at least 500 prisoners, built and rehabilitated by the State for \$6 million. It stands vacant today and the Board has neither seen nor heard any plan that has proposed a better, more effective structure. This facility can be used tomorrow. Further, in the priority of public spending, the ends of the criminal justice system can be much better served by providing courts, by reforming the unworkable system, by enforcing the limited detention rule, and by handling the narcotics problem in confinement facilities which are not prisons.

Mr. Brickman stated that the Board had been asked for comments on the Correction Code proposed in Councilman Burden's report. The Chairman suggested that all comments be submitted to Mr. Brickman, and that Mr. Brickman would then prepare a master memorandum incorporating comments of all Board members, which the Board members could then read and discuss at their next meeting.

The Chairman stated that he was trying to secure funding to hire a volunteer community coordinator. He further stated that the Clergy Volunteer Program was progressing very well. Miss Spector stated that the Program had been instituted in the Brooklyn, Bronx, and Queens Houses of Detention and would begin on December 20 in the Tombs. She further stated that well over 100 clergymen were now participating in the visitation.

The Chairman stated that he was anxious to know the status of the library project, and that if he could get a copy of the model bibliography, he would personally solicit donations of books. Mr. Brickman declared that Mrs. Pat Conroy is doing a study of all the groups working on prison libraries.

Mrs. Singer suggested that if it was appropriate, the Board should try to arrange a meeting of all the volunteer organizations working in the prisons. Mr. Brickman suggested that the Board get a statement from Commissioner Camp as to what kind of training is being done for volunteers for the Women's House. Mrs. Singer declared that it was her impression that volunteers could enter the prison at any time without any training at all.

Mrs. Singer further stated that she thought we should have a list of wardens and deputy wardens in each institution which could be distributed to Board members. Mr. Brickman said that he would attempt to get such a list from the Department.

The Chairman stated that the Board should either design a volunteer program or get each institution to inform the Board of the kinds of volunteers they need and the Board should help in recruiting.

Mr. Nochimson stated that Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers Union had received a letter from Justice David Ross, Administrative Judge of the Criminal Court, supporting the concept of third-party release and Justice Ross would notify other judges about the program. Mr. Dribben suggested that Mr. Nochimson also be in touch with Mr. MacCormack at the Osborne Association to ask his assistance in the program. Mr. Nochimson stated that District 65 had agreed to work on third-party release and it appears that District Council 37 will also become involved.

Mrs. Singer suggested that Mr. Nochimson also contact John Burnell at the AFL-CIO.

The Chairman then raised the matter of a new Correction Commissioner. Upon motion duly made and seconded, a resolution was approved giving the Chairman the authority, at his discretion, to make a recommendation to the Mayor with respect to such appointment.

Mr. DeMonte stated that the Mayor had a vacancy to fill on the State Parole Board. The Chairman declared that the Board should take an active interest in that appointment.

The next meeting of the Board will be held on January 10, 1972 at 4:00 P.M. All meetings thereafter will be held on the first Monday of the month and at such other times as may be necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lesley J. Spector