

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION
FEBRUARY 3, 1971

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on February 3, 1971 in the library of the Manhattan House of Detention for Men, 11th floor, 125 White Street, New York, New York.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, DeMonte, Dribben, Satterfield and Schulte, Rev. Wilson 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; Terry Strauss, Research Assistant, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Michael J. Dontzin, Counsel to the Mayor; Jack Birnbaum, Assistant Commissioner for Administration, Department of Correction; Leo Zeferetti, President, Correction Officers' Benevolent Association; Harold Brown, Vice President, C.O.B.A.; George Smith and Albert Boyce, COBA delegates, Manhattan House of Detention for Men; Milton Batterman, Warden, M.H.D.; and Stephen Kessin, Institutional Psychologist, M.H.D. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

After luncheon in the library, the Chairman brought the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M. He then introduced the guests to the members of the Board.

Mr. Dontzin informed the Board that the Mayor had confirmed March 10 for the Day of Hope. The Chairman stated that Cardinal Cooke, Bishop Paul Moore, Bishop Horace Donegan and the Board of Rabbis had agreed to participate and that he was hopeful that the Black Muslim leaders would be able to participate as well. The Chairman outlined the agenda for the Day of Hope, as follows:

1. Members of the clergy will visit each institution and conduct special religious services.
2. A series of workshops will be held in various parts of the City. Suggestions for these workshops are:
 - a. The correction officer
 - b. Clergy
 - c. Narcotics
 - d. Libraries
 - e. The prisoner and his family
 - f. The prisoner leaves prison

The Chairman stated that it is hoped that meaningful programs of action for the rest of the year can be developed as a result of these programs.

Mr. Zeferetti declared that he wanted this day to reflect, among other things, the importance of the work of the correction officer in the community. The Board agreed generally that, through the Correction Officer Workshop, this would be accomplished.

Delegate Smith presented the problem of the barrier which he believes exists between the correction officers and the Board. He said there is a feeling among officers that the Board continually criticized correction officers in general for the misconduct of a few, and that the Board never praises an officer's good work,

but only publicizes the bad. Mr. Zeferetti explained the continuing problem of the correction officer, specifically concerning overcrowded conditions in the prisons. He added that, since the Board has been reactivated, the correction officer has become afraid to do his job for fear that the Board will release to the press any story of so-called "mistratment" by a correction officer, after hearing facts only from the prisoner.

Mr. Satterfield suggested that one way which might help in overcoming this barrier between the officers and the Board would be for the Board to issue press releases praising the work of correction officers who perform their tasks under extremely difficult conditions, such as overcrowded prisons, verbal and/or physical abuse from inmates, etc.

Commissioner Birnbaum declared that many of the grievances of the correction officers are of continuing concern to both the Department and the Board and that it might be useful to have regular meetings of representatives of all three groups to discuss problems of mutual concern.

Mr. Kessin suggested that a system be set up by the Board to present citations to individual correction officers who have performed their jobs above and beyond the call of duty.

Mr. Satterfield suggested the possibility of citing prisoners for good behavior. Prisoner citations could be in the form of preferential treatment for job placement when the inmates are released.

Mr. Kessin discussed the problem of little or no training of new correction officers for "crisis intervention". Delegate Boyce declared that for most new officers, this problem does not exist, since these men have been raised in the ghetto and well understand the thoughts and language of the inmates.

Mr. Satterfield suggested that the Board create a public relations division in conjunction with the Board of Education, to set up a program whereby correction officers would visit schools and talk to classes on the life of the inmate, and classes would in turn visit the prisons and the morgue. This, hopefully, would deter young people from committing crimes. Mr. Zeferetti informed the Board that correction officers are presently going out to speak to various civic and community organizations, and they are trying to set up placement centers for inmates when they are released.

Warden Batterman stated that the most important need in the Tombs is for a classification system. To organize a good system requires space, records and specialized personnel.

The Chairman suggested the use of VISTA-type employees to work on each floor of the prison and to deal solely with prisoner grievances. Warden Batterman declared that what is needed are paraprofessionals on each floor to handle inmates' problems, e.g., to call a wife to inform her that her husband has been arrested. Delegate Boyce stated that these paraprofessionals should be recruited from the community since such personnel could relate more easily to the prisoners. The Chairman noted that these employees would have to be very highly disciplined; they could not in any way interfere with the correction officer. The Chairman said that he thought it would be possible to secure private funding for a "pilot project" of paraprofessionals in the Tombs. Commissioner Birnbaum stated that he would arrange a meeting with the Commissioner to discuss this matter further.

Mr. Zeferetti informed the Board that the C.O.B.A. would oppose the Board's use of subpoena power. He is hopeful that, in the future, the Board will try to resolve problems in the institutions and/or with correction officers through the Department, the C.O.B.A. and the Mayor's office, rather than taking the story directly to the press.

Commissioner Birnbaum reported on the progress of telephone installations in receiving rooms of the institutions, as follows:

Manhattan House of Detention - presently 5 phones
Adolescent Remand Shelter - presently 2 phones; 2 more will be installed
Brooklyn House - 3 phones will be installed by February 8
Bronx House - 3 phones will be installed by February 22
Queens House - 3 phones will be installed by March 8
New Queens - 1 phone will be installed by March 25

In addition, by March 25, phones will be installed on the individual floors at MHD. Commissioner Birnbaum said he would arrange a meeting with Commissioner McGrath to discuss the actual use and operation of these telephones.

The invited guests, with the exception of Mr. Brickman and Misses Strauss and Spector, then left the meeting.

The Board agreed generally that it was unfortunate that Commissioner McGrath did not attend the meeting. The Chairman will arrange for a meeting with him next week.

The Chairman reported that he had sent a letter to State Commissioner Oswald concerning his visit to the Catskill Reformatory at Napanoch, N. Y., on January 23. In the letter, he cited two major problems of the institution:

1. Over 300 adolescent reformatory inmates are housed with the adult population.
2. With a population of 70% drug addicts, there is no single narcotics rehabilitation program.

Mr. De Monte suggested an amendment to the Judicial Law of the State which would permit a defendant who would otherwise be assigned counsel by the Appellate Division to select his own attorney. The Judicial Conference would set attorneys' fees and this system of "Judicare" would operate on the same principle as Medicare.

Mr. Dribben reported that he had visited the Brooklyn House of Detention last Saturday. Narcotics addicts in the institution who are undergoing detoxification are housed in a dormitory facility; Mr. Dribben declared that this system seems to work well.

The Chairman requested that the Board appoint William Goodstein, Esq., to the non-salaried post of Counsel to the Board. All members agreed except for Mr. Satterfield, who stated that he would like to see Mr. Goodstein's resume' before he concurs with the appointment.

The Board expressed its appreciation to the Chairman for securing an opinion from Judge Desmond concerning the Board's subpoena power.

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The secretary will notify the Board of its next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lesley J. Spector".

Lesley J. Spector
Executive Secretary