

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION
JULY 19, 1971

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on July 19, 1971, Room 2520, 277 Park Avenue, New York, New York.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, Dribben and DeMonte, 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 Elpidio Rodriguez, summer internes at the Board, Terry Strauss, Research Assistant, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and Lewis Korman, Esq., an associate of Kaye, Scholer, Fierman, Hays & Handler. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:25 P.M. Upon motion duly made and seconded the Board accepted as satisfactory the excuses for the absence of Rev. Wilson and Mr. Schulte.

The Chairman then introduced Messrs. Korman, Nochimson and Rodriguez to the members of the Board.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of July 9 were adopted.

Mr. Korman stated that he and Jonathan Dolgen, Esq., who had been present at the meeting of May 13, had reviewed the minutes of that meeting and had certain amendments to those minutes to suggest. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of May 13 were amended, and a copy of such amendments was ordered to be filed with the minutes of such meeting.

The Chairman then submitted a report on the Riker's Island Reformatory to the Board. He stated that copies had previously been given to Mr. Korman and Messrs. Jonathan Dolgen and Abraham Lass, all of whom had worked on the report, and to Morris Oslin, Warden of the Reformatory. The Chairman stated that he felt that the major finding in the report is that the Board disagrees with the State Commission of Correction's certification of the Reformatory as a reformatory, since the Rikers Island facility does not now have sufficient rehabilitative programs to justify its reformatory status. After discussion and upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved the report. At the suggestion of Mr. Dribben, the Chairman agreed to change two sentences in his letter to Commissioner McGrath. The Chairman stated that the report will be forwarded to Commissioner McGrath later this week and released to the press for the July 26 newspapers. At this point, Mr. Korman left the meeting.

Mrs. Singer then reported on her trip to California. She stated that, while in Los Angeles, she visited several California correctional facilities and spoke with many of the personnel in correction institutions. She further stated that the California system of correction is much different from the New York system.

She stated that the California Department of Corrections is an integrated system of correction and parole. She added that there is no city correction system and that the process is county, state and federal. She declared that the prisons are operated by the state and the jails (i.e., detention facilities) are operated by the county.

Mrs. Singer stated that there is a nine-member Board of Parole appointed by the Governor.

She added that sentenced inmates are assigned to either academic, vocational, counseling or work (inmates are paid a maximum of \$.11 per hour) programs. Such assignments are based on the results of I.Q. tests, vocational aptitude tests and physical examinations.

Mrs. Singer declared that the Board of Corrections in California is established by the Penal Code and that it is comprised of the directors of the Department of Corrections and the Youth Authority, and eight other prominent citizens. She further declared that Board members have their expenses reimbursed on a per diem basis.

She stated that probation is a county system, while parole is a state system.

Mrs. Singer noted that three years ago, there were 28,500 people in prison and 15,000 on parole; today there are 23,000 in prison and 21,000 on parole. She stated that the institutions are working toward a "one man in a cell" system. She further stated that, in the Los Angeles County jails, there are 13,000 detainees and 8,000 sentenced inmates. She added that the backlog in the courts for detainees awaiting trial is a maximum of 60 days.

Mrs. Singer stated that there is a California Women's Board of Terms and Parole which consists of five members, male and female. The Chairman of the Women's Board is also a member of the State Board of Corrections. The Women's Board determines sentences.

Mrs. Singer stated that she visited the women's prison facility in Los Angeles. The institution is under the jurisdiction of the County sheriff and is run by a man. It is run on a military basis. The institution has 1,000 beds and an average population of 850. The entire facility is air conditioned. Mrs. Singer stated that detainees and sentenced inmates wore different colored dresses in order to distinguish the status of each woman. She further stated that the institution has an "honor dorm," where inmates are allowed as much liberty as possible.

Mrs. Singer stated that there is an arts and crafts program there and that finished goods are sold. She further stated that the library at the facility is a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.

Mrs. Singer declared that, at the county level, the recidivism rate is 50% and at the state level, the rate is 60%.

Mrs. Singer then stated that she had visited the new Women's Correctional Institution at Rikers Island earlier in the day and that there is a feeling of despair because of a change of attitude of the prisoners and officers. She added that the physical problems of the new facility make it very difficult to develop good attitudes.

Mrs. Singer stated that she was told by institution officials that more officers and additional civilian personnel were needed to do the job. She also stated that absenteeism is very high.

Mrs. Singer further stated that the women's facility is far more understaffed than the men's institutions and that many of its personnel were leaving because they were overworked.

Mrs. Singer declared that Mrs. Walker-Smith was now being permitted to wear street clothes while teaching her class at the institution. The Board expressed appreciation to Miss Strauss for her efforts on behalf of Mrs. Walker-Smith.

Miss Strauss stated that many people have advised her that correction personnel at the women's facility are on the verge of leaving their jobs. She also stated that the institution was built with the purpose of being internally secure so that inmates could move around the institution without having to be accompanied by an officer at all times.

The Chairman asked the members of the Board whether they thought a useful purpose would be served for the Board to meet with the officers at the institution. Mrs. Singer suggested that the Board hold its next meeting there.

Miss Strauss declared that she thought it was very important to open lines of communication between personnel at the facility and personnel at the central office of the Department. She suggested that a meeting be held at Rikers Island with Board members, key members of the central office staff and Rikers Island personnel.

After much discussion as to the format such a meeting would take, the Board agreed generally to arrange a "coffee hour" at the women's facility on Wednesday, July 28, at 4:00 P.M. The Chairman asked Mr. Brickman to arrange for such a meeting with Miss Behagen and to ask her to invite any correction officers and other personnel who wished to attend.

The Chairman then stated that he was meeting with several psychiatrists at the home of Dr. Abraham Franzblau on July 20 to discuss ways to improve the psychiatric services in the City's prisons.

The Chairman stated that the Clergy Visitation Program is now moving forward and that several clergymen will be meeting at the Brooklyn House of Detention on Tuesday, July 20.

The Chairman then suggested that the Board appoint Jeffrey M. Siger, Esq. as Special Counsel to the Board, an unpaid position, with Mr. Siger's primary area of responsibility to be the Clergy Visitation Program. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board approved such appointment.

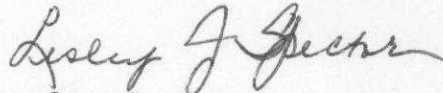
The Chairman declared that he thought it would be helpful if the Board prepared a periodic newsletter. Mr. Brickman stated that Ronald Boyette, Project Coordinator for the Board, was in the process of preparing such a newsletter.

The Chairman then asked about the status of the Prison Fund. Mr. Brickman stated that it should be ready next week.

The Chairman stated that he hoped to have a report on the death of Mr. Burgos at the Bronx House of Detention which would focus attention on the medical problems in the prisons.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lesley J. Spector". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lesley" being more prominent.

Lesley J. Spector
Executive Secretary