

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION
MARCH 15, 1971

A regular meeting of the New York City Board of Correction was held on Monday, March 15, 1971, at the offices of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, Room 2520, 277 Park Avenue, New York, New York.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, Dribben, Schulte, DeMonte, and Satterfield, 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, Messrs. Watt and Sylvester of the New York City Youth Services Agency, and Mr. Rodriguez, who works with Joseph Monserrat on developing programs for Spanish-speaking citizens of the City of New York. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:15 P.M. He then introduced Messrs. Watt, Sylvester and Rodriguez to the members of the Board. Messrs. Watt and Sylvester informed the Board that the Youth Services Agency had received a \$250,000 grant from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to expand a program of assistance to adolescents at Rikers Island. The program, which presently employs one full-time and two part-time workers, will be expanded to 16 full-time employees, four of whom will be Spanish-speaking. The employees will interview adolescents as they enter the Adolescent Remand Shelter in an attempt to ascertain the causes for their crime, their goals in life, etc. There will also be workers in the community who will act as liaison between these adolescents and parents, friends, clergy and others in the neighborhoods. Most importantly, there will be a service to help place youths when they are released, i.e., finding jobs, helping them be readmitted to schools, etc. Mr. Watt declared that if the program is successful, the recidivism level could be reduced substantially.

The YSA representatives suggested that they work closely with the Board on matters of mutual interest. The Chairman stated, on behalf of the Board, that the Board would be willing to cooperate in any way possible.

Mr. Sylvester declared that YSA had been soliciting clothing from various sources to be used by indigent adolescents who arrive at Rikers Island. He also stated that, with the forthcoming grant, YSA hoped to supply combs, brushes, toothpaste and similar items to those who did not have them.

The Board expressed its concern to Mr. Rodriguez of the lack of programs for Spanish-speaking inmates. Mr. Rodriguez assured the Board that his organization was concerned with this problem and would look into developing Spanish and/or bi-lingual programs for the prisons.

Messrs. Watt, Sylvester and Rodriguez then left the meeting.

Mr. DeMonte requested a report on what progress had been made in securing bi-lingual civil service examinations. The Chairman declared that there are not two exams being given; thus, the Department of Correction will have two lists from which to appoint employees.

Mr. Schulte reported to the Board on the status of telephone installation on the housing floors of the various prisons. He stated that he had spoken with Assistant Commissioner Jack Birnbaum regarding the matter. According to Commissioner Birnbaum, telephones will be installed on the floors in the Manhattan House of Detention for Men on April 2, in the Bronx House of Detention on April 26, and in the Brooklyn House of Detention on June 12. After obtaining this information, Mr. Schulte called the Telephone Company. He was told by the Telephone Company that the telephones would in fact be installed in the MHD on April 2. With respect to the Brooklyn House, there was a problem with existing cables there, and the Company is not sure the installation can be made by June 12. Mr. Schulte was advised that there is a problem at the Bronx House in that the warden has refused to allow installation of the telephones unless (1) the telephones are equipped with an automatic logging device, (2) the telephones are restricted as to geographical limit, and (3) there is an automatic time limitation on all telephone calls. The Telephone Company representative stated that if these conditions were to be implemented, it would take much longer than anticipated to have the telephones installed in the Bronx House. Mr. Schulte also stated that the Department has not as yet agreed to the warden's proposals so that, in fact, there is no definite installation date in the Bronx. Mr. Schulte declared that he feels that the Board will be unable to assist in the implementation of this recommendation unless it has the cooperation of Commissioner McGrath. The Chairman will communicate with Commissioner McGrath with respect to the matter.

Mrs. Singer stated that she felt there was a lack of organization within the Department of Correction and cited some examples to prove her point. First, the Women's Prison Association wants to set up a social service project in the court pens. It took several weeks of telephoning and writing to various officials of the Department, and eventually the intervention of Mrs. Singer as a member of the Board, before passes were issued for the WPA staff to visit the pens. Second, there is a Decorators' Association that has volunteered to visit the New Women's House of Detention, plan the decorating scheme, supply the necessary materials and do the work. Again, it has taken great efforts to involve Departmental personnel in this project and, after several weeks, Mrs. Singer is now hopeful that the Department will arrange transportation for the decorators to visit Rikers Island to see the new facility.

Mr. Satterfield suggested that, at future Board meetings, we should invite commissioners of the agencies directly responsible for implementation of any of the 51 recommendations on the Board's Agenda for Action. Mr. DeMonte added that he felt it would be helpful to invite Councilman Monroe Cohen, Chairman of the City Council Committee on Public Safety, to discuss relevant City legislation. The members of the Board agreed that Commissioner McGrath and his deputies should be invited to the Board meeting of April 19 to review the progress that has been made in the implementation of the 51 recommendations.

The Chairman stated that he had met with Budget Director Edward K. Hamilton last week. The Chairman declared that the Budget Director implied that: the Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village would not remain open after the new WHD was operational; that there is a possibility that Branch Queens may be closed; and that it is going to be very difficult to lift the "job freeze" for correction officers.

The Chairman declared that he had met last Friday with various labor leaders and was very encouraged by their response to the 51 recommendations. On April 7, the Chairman will take the leaders on a tour of the prisons following which there will be a press conference at which the labor people will support the 51 recommendations. They will suggest at the press conference one form of bail reform, i.e., that anyone in the family of a labor union member who is arrested be released to the custody of the union in lieu of bail.

The Chairman stated that a workshop for clergy would be held at Trinity Church on March 25. He estimates that well over 100 clergymen will participate and will discuss ways in which they can become involved in alleviating problems in the prisons.

Mr. Brickman stated that, with regard to visitors' telephones, there is a strong possibility that St. James Church and the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church will donate \$1,500 to implement the project. He also informed the Board that Bristol Meyers is donating several cases of toothpaste, hair tonic and other commissary items for use by inmates in the MHD for Men.

The Chairman declared that there are 17 physicians now working in the volunteer program in the Tombs (they are being paid on a per diem basis, which was necessary in order to expedite the program). He also stated that he had met with Dr. Vincent Dole, who has agreed to supervise the expansion of the methadone detoxification program in the prisons.

The Chairman informed the Board that the Bellevue Psychiatric Ward today closed its facility to further admissions because of enormous overcrowding. The Board agreed generally that this is a potentially dangerous situation.

The Chairman then stated that it would be in order to consider the appointment of William Schechter as public relations advisor to the Board, at a fee of \$50/week. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Mr. Schechter's appointment and retainer were approved.

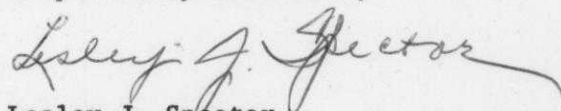
Mr. Dribben agreed to check on the availability to inmates of the recreation area in the Tombs.

Mr. Schulte then suggested that, at some future meeting, the Board discuss what can be done to institute some meaningful rehabilitation programs in the prison.

The next meeting of the Board of Correction will be held at 4:00 P.M. on April 7, 1971, at 277 Park Avenue, New York, New York.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Lesley J. Spector
Executive Secretary