

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION
OCTOBER 18, 1971

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Monday, October 18, 1971 at 51 Chambers Street, Room 929. Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, DeMonte, Dribben and Schulte, and Mrs. Singer. Also present at the 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, Vernon West of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, Leo Zeferetti and Harold Brown, President and Vice President of the Correction Officers Benevolent Association, and George Sinatro and Bill Lane of the Synanon Program in California. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:55 P.M. He welcomed Mr. Zeferetti and Mr. Brown to the meeting. Mr. Zeferetti stated that he appreciated the Chairman's support of the COBA's position regarding potential disturbances in the City's prisons.

The Chairman raised the problem of the escalating population in the City's prisons. Mr. Zeferetti stated that it is urgent that another facility be opened to relieve the overcrowding. He suggested the use of one of the following: the old Women's House of Detention in Greenwich Village, which would make available 700 more beds; the facility at Hart Island, which would need some renovation; or the annex to the Correctional Institution for Men at Rikers Island, which, Mr. Zeferetti stated, is not being used because there are not enough correction officers to staff it.

Mr. Zeferetti stated that this problem should be a top priority item, and that rehabilitation should be secondary. He further stated that any federal funds made available to the City for correction should be used for housing, staffing and training.

The Chairman stated that due to the state's cutback in NACC funding, there are approximately 100 additional prisoners per week in New York City institutions who formerly would have been sent to NACC facilities.

Mr. Nochimson stated that he had attended a meeting of the Village Liaison Committee on the Women's Prison at which Commissioner McGrath assured Congressman Koch that the prison in the Village would not be used again for a prison and that the building was going to be sold. Mr. Zeferetti stated that there are presently 25 correction officers guarding the building and if the building is going to be sold, he would like to have them reassigned.

Mr. Schulte stated that he had been advised that at least 50 cells in the MHD were not being used because of broken or inoperable toilets. He stated he was further advised that it takes one year to

get a new toilet bowl installed. He further stated that he was advised by a member of the staff at the MHD that it would be better and in the long run more economical to have steel bowls installed instead of china ones.

The Chairman declared that many prisoners are arrested on narcotic or narcotic related charges which are also federal offenses and that such arrests might well serve as justification to request federal funding to alleviate the overcrowding. The Chairman suggested that the City could ask the Governor to declare the overcrowding situation a state of emergency and then make more space available to house inmates. The Chairman further suggested that the Board could enlist the aid of New York City Congressmen and Borough Presidents in informing the community of this situation.

The Chairman then raised the subject of the Correctional Aide program. Mr. West stated that there are presently 100 aides in the program, 50 of whom are in a work-study program and 50 of whom are in school full-time. He further stated that aides were working only in the MHD as of now.

Mr. Zeferetti stated that one of the major problems with these aides is that there is a conflict with Department of Correction trainees. He stated that aides are permitted in the cellblocks, while trainees are not. He further stated that the Correctional Aide program pays for the aides to go to college while the trainee program does not, and that aides earn more money than do trainees. He added that trainees are checked very carefully as to their background, while aides are not checked as thoroughly.

Mr. Zeferetti stated that one major problem with the program is that institutional personnel have not been briefed or given any sort of guidelines as to what is the responsibility of these aides, or who is to supervise them.

Mr. Zeferetti declared that it is important to determine whether the aides plan to become correction officers upon completion of their program. He further declared that the system of appointment must continue to be based on a competitive examination.

He stated that he had tried to discuss with appropriate Departmental officials, including the Commissioner, ways in which the aide program and the trainee program could be integrated, but was told that since the aide program was federally funded, the Department had no jurisdiction.

Mr. Zeferetti stated that the aides' function so far has only been to assist in making telephone calls.

The Chairman suggested that a meeting be set up to discuss the problem. Mr. West suggested October 26 and the Chairman and Mr. Zeferetti agreed. Mr. West will invite Commissioner Camp to attend.

Mr. Zeferetti said that the correction officers are close to exploding. He stated that they have been asked to work too much overtime and that they may soon decide not to work overtime at all.

The Chairman stated that in the coming months the Board plans to focus its attention and study on the problems of the correction officer. Mr. Zeferetti declared that he would be pleased to help the Board in any way he could.

At this point, Messrs. Zeferetti, Brown and West left the meeting.

The Chairman introduced Messrs. Lane and Sinatro to the members of the Board. They informed the Board that Synanon had recently opened two new offices in California. As a result, they stated that Synanon could accommodate 300 addicts from the New York area immediately and 500 by Christmas. They further stated that they had set up an office in Manhattan at 338 West 84th Street (877-2912) to recruit people for the program. Mr. Sinatro stated that within the last two weeks, 150 New Yorkers had been approved for the program and are already in California.

Mr. Sinatro declared that Synanon would be willing to take people just released from New York City prisons if their parole officers agreed. He added that the only cost to the addict would be his plane fare to California, and that he is in touch with the major airlines to try to arrange a reduced fare for the addict entering Synanon.

Mr. Lane stated that it is suggested that people enrolled in the program remain at Synanon for a minimum of two years. In response to a question from Mr. Brickman, Mr. Lane stated that statistics show the program to be 80% successful.

Mr. Sinatro stated that the New York City Probation Department is starting to refer people to Synanon.

At this point, Messrs. Brickman, Lane and Sinatro left the meeting.

Mrs. Singer reported on her visit to the Women's Correctional Institution, stating that 42 cells have now been doubled up. She stated that Miss Durr attributes the overcrowding to the increased prostitution arrests, as well as the fact that judges seem to feel the institution is operating below capacity.

Mrs. Singer stated that Miss Durr will be retiring within a week and that either ADS Brothers or ADS Murph will replace her.

Mrs. Singer stated that the facility still needs an additional 30 officers. She added that the recreation area is only being used two hours a day, that there is now a doctor in the institution on a midnight-8:00 A.M. tour, that there has been a decrease in the number of volunteers since the move from Greenwich Village, and that methadone detoxification is now being done in the infirmary. She added that

the Teachers College program offers classes in home economics, business administration and arts and crafts, and that 137 inmates are enrolled in the program.

Mrs. Singer then asked for approval of an inmate profile she was asked to submit to the Women's Prison Association to be used at a symposium next week. After making a few suggestions, the Board agreed generally that the profile could be submitted.

Mrs. Singer stated that she thought volunteer groups were receiving more information on Departmental activities than the Board members. The Chairman suggested that all Board members be put on the Department's mailing list.

The Chairman requested that Mr. Brickman be notified of the Board's interest in the newsletter, responding to Mr. Dribben's inquiry as to its status.

The Chairman stated that he had spoken with Mr. Dontzin, Counsel to the Mayor, about the appointment of Board members, and that he had been assured that action would be taken by the end of the week.

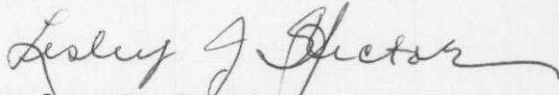
Mr. Nochimson then informed the members of the Board that a public hearing would be held on the case of Robert Apablaza, who had been incarcerated in the Brooklyn House of Detention, escaped and gone to Louisiana. There, he was arrested for the purchase of \$5 of marijuana and sentenced to 50 years at hard labor with no chance of parole. He escaped from prison there and returned to New York. He was recaptured and is now in the Queens House of Detention. Lieutenant Governor Wilson has already signed the extradition order.

The Chairman stated that many people, including District Attorney Hogan, have publicly stated they are against extradition and that the purpose of the hearing would be to make the facts known to the community.

The Chairman suggested that witnesses should include District Attorney Hogan, a representative of the Governor, a representative from The Legal Aid Society, a member of the QHD staff, and the prisoner himself.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Lesley J. Spector