

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION
SEPTEMBER 27, 1971

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Monday, September 27, 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, DeMonte 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, William Goodstein, Counsel to the Board, William Schechter, Press Advisor to the Board, Steven Richter, Law Intern for the Board, Terry Strauss, Research Assistant, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and Carol Gerstl, part-time Program Research Analyst, Bureau of the Budget. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 3:55 P.M. At the suggestion of Mr. DeMonte, there was a silent prayer in memory of those who died at Attica.

The Chairman announced the resignation of Mr. Satterfield as a member of the Board, and circulated a copy of Mr. Satterfield's letter of resignation for the members to read.

Mr. Brickman stated that the first issue of the Board of Correction newsletter would be ready for distribution by the end of September. He further stated that the task force working on the problem of visiting in the prison would have the first draft of its report ready on October 6.

Mr. Schulte asked what the status of Board members is concerning their visitation to the prisons. The Chairman stated that if any member is denied access to any institution at any time, he should immediately notify the Chairman or the Board staff and that he would then notify the Mayor directly.

The Chairman declared that there is a task force working on the problems of the commissary. He further declared that he had been in touch with Bess Myerson, Commissioner of Consumer Affairs. She stated that her agency had received many complaints from prisoners about commissary facilities. Mr. Brickman stated that the task force has already visited five or six prisons and has interviewed commissary managers and inmates.

Miss Strauss suggested that the task force be in touch with LSI since they have also done a study on commissaries. Mr. Schulte volunteered to work with the task force on the accounting problems in the commissary system.

The Chairman stated that he hoped to hold extradition hearings on a case involving a man who had been sentenced to 50 years imprisonment in Louisiana for sale of five dollars worth of marijuana. The Chairman further stated that, although the extradition warrant has already been signed, the Governor can still reconsider the case.

The Chairman declared that a draft of the Board's report on its hearings on death and suicide in the prisons will be ready on October 15. He further stated that WNYC will rebroadcast the hearings during the week of October 4.

The Chairman stated that one of the things that has happened as a result of the hearings is that the Mayor has given total responsibility for health care in the prisons to the Health Services Administration. Mr. Brickman stated that the Health Services Administrator has appointed Alan Gibbs full time administrator for prison medical and mental health. Mr. Brickman further stated that at this point, all incoming prisoners are getting physical examinations. He added that Health Services Administrator Chase states that all inmates at the Tombs who wish to see a doctor now in fact do so, and that the target date for instituting this procedure in all institutions is November 1. Mr. Brickman stated that there would be a prison health meeting on Tuesday, September 28, and that such meetings will be held on a weekly basis. It was agreed generally that Mr. Schulte would attend such meetings whenever his schedule permitted.

At this point, the Chairman introduced Carol Gerstl to the members of the Board and explained that she had been invited to discuss the Department of Correction budget. Miss Gerstl distributed copies of the Department of Correction Budget to members of the Board, and then presented a general overview of the budget and answered questions from members of the Board. A copy of the budget was ordered attached to these minutes. After the budget discussion was completed, Miss Gerstl left the meeting.

Mrs. Singer stated that she had spoken with Mrs. Durr at the New York City Correctional Institution for Women and was told that Mrs. Behagen will receive one year's vacation and terminal leave, and that Mrs. Durr is retiring by November 1. She further stated that the Department is not presently training anyone to replace Mrs. Durr. The Chairman stated that he thought Commissioner McGrath should consider hiring additional assistant commissioners so that there could be one to be in charge of each institution. Mrs. Singer stated that the census at the Women's facility was 697 and its capacity is 620, so that dormitories are now being used.

The Chairman stated that he felt the Board should undertake to prepare a report on each institution annually. He declared that he has urged the Mayor to form visitors' committees for each institution, having as chairman of each committee that Board member who has been assigned to the particular facility.

The Chairman stated that Congressman Koch's Village Liaison Committee on the Women's Prison met on September 24 with Commissioner McGrath to discuss some of the problems at the women's facility. Miss Strauss stated that she attended the meeting and that one of the issues discussed was visitation. She stated that Commissioner McGrath

informed the group that no surprise visits would be permitted, but that they could visit the institution at any time as long as the Department was notified.

The Board then discussed the question of the two vacancies on the Board. The Chairman stated he would discuss the matter with the Mayor.

Mr. Schulte declared that over the past several years, he had received notification of special commendation of the outstanding work of various correction officers. He further declared that he had responded personally to congratulate the officers, but thought it might be a good idea for the Board to send such letters. The Chairman stated that Mr. Brickman should check to see whether the Board staff could send the letters, and whether the Board could undertake to establish an award presentation system to outstanding correction officers.

The Chairman declared that he had learned of a program in Detroit involving training in intergroup relations (similar to an encounter group) which might be a good program in which to enroll some New York City correction officers. He stated that the group is conducted by behavioral scientists. Miss Strauss stated that she thought it was a good idea but suggested that there must be similar programs in New York City.

Mr. Dribben stated that he had visited the Manhattan court pens, and that the conditions under which Legal Aid lawyers must meet with their clients are bad. He suggested that a task force be appointed to devise a better system. The Chairman stated that a correction officer had told him that the Bronx court pens are even worse and that correction personnel treat the prisoners very poorly.

The Chairman stated that he had taken an independent position regarding the prevention of access to State prison facilities for Senator John Dunne. It was agreed generally that the Chairman would send a letter to the Senator on behalf of the Board praising him for his outstanding work in the prison system.

The Chairman further stated that he was concerned with the delay in the appointment of a committee to investigate the disturbances at Attica.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Lesley J. Spector