

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION  
JANUARY 10, 1972

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Monday, January 10, 1972, Room 2520, 277 Park Avenue.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, de Monte, Dribben 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; Jeffrey M. Siger, Special Counsel to the Board; Averell Satloff, Law Intern of the Board; and Terry Strauss, Research Assistant, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Miss Spector as Secretary of the Meeting.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 4:05 P.M. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of December 14, 1971 were adopted.

The Chairman stated that, after frequent conversations and correspondence with the Office of the Mayor, he has now been assured of Mr. Schulte's and Mrs. Singer's reappointment to the Board, and that at least two of the three other Board vacancies will be filled by the end of the week.

The Chairman said that he had received a letter from Senator John Dunne and that although the Senator could not be present at today's meeting, he would be pleased to meet with the Board to discuss his Committee's report on the New York City prisons.

The Chairman announced that Kitty Hawks, a former staff member of the Board, had been voted among the best dressed women in the world.

The Chairman stated that, through the efforts of Gloria Bond, Director of Volunteers of the Board, Mrs. Corretta Scott King will visit the Adolescent Remand Shelter and the Women's Correctional Institution on January 14th, in commemoration of the anniversary of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He added that Harry Belafonte would perform at two shows at the ARS on the same day.

The Chairman declared that a Task Force on the Prison Chaplaincy had been established, with Rev. Wilson as its Chairman and Father John Corn of Trinity Parish as its Vice-Chairman. The Chairman stated that the Task Force would have as its goals the examination of the role of the prison chaplain and how the chaplaincy should be reorganized, as well as to examine the role of religion in the prisons and what larger role it can and should play. The Chairman stated that he had requested a grant from the Fund for the City of New York to staff a four-month study by the Task Force. He added that the Task Force will meet for the first time on January 17th and will meet with the prison chaplains on January 24th.

The Chairman requested approval of the Board to establish a Task Force to study the working of the State parole system. Upon motion duly made and accepted, the Board approved the creation of such a Task Force. The Chairman asked Mr. Schulte to serve as the Board's representative on the Task Force. He further stated that Herman Schwartz, Jean vanden Heuvel and Felicia Bernstein had volunteered to work on the Task Force.

Mr. Dribben suggested that the Task Force be in touch with the Vera Institute since it had done a study on parole. Miss Strauss added that the Task Force should also be in touch with the Fortune Society and the LIFTT - GROW Program. Mr. Siger declared that if the Task Force needed legal assistance, the Council of New York Law Associated might be willing to provide volunteer attorneys.

The Chairman stated that the Board's law suit concerning the re-opening of the Sheridan Facility on Morton Street as an adjunct detention center to the Tombs has now gone to the Appellate Division. He further stated that Judge Stevens is considering its reopening and that the Chairman hopes to see Judge Stevens with Dr. Vincent Dole on Wednesday, January 12th. He added that he has enlisted the assistance of former Chief Judge Charles Desmond and hopes to have Senator Javits visit the Tombs and the Sheridan facility within the next week.

The Chairman stated that he intended to send a letter to the Mayor outlining the Board's agenda for 1972. He said it was important that the Mayor receive the letter before the new Correction Commissioner was appointed so that the new Commissioner would have an opportunity to discuss the agenda with the Board before he was actually sworn in. The Chairman declared that he thought the single most important item on the agenda was the principle that each prison should have a staff member of the Board as its ombudsman. He stated that another goal would be to establish, first as a pilot project and then in all institutions, a prison council comprised of the warden or his representative, a representative of the correction officers, the ombudsman, the supervising physician, the chaplains, and elected representatives of the prisoners. The Chairman declared that such a council would meet regularly to discuss the problems of failure of communication.

The Chairman stated that some other items on his agenda to the Mayor include the use of retired teachers to instruct at Rikers Island (an application for funding is being submitted to CJCC); the hiring of a staff person to work full time on the libraries; the assignment of the prison death review board function to the Board of Correction; and the establishment of a Board newsletter to be submitted to prisoners as well as Department personnel.

Mr. Dribben suggested the Board keep a statistical record of its activities, e.g., the number of specific complaints the Board handles.

The Chairman stated that he had asked Queens District Attorney Muckell to come into the prisons and speak with inmates, and that he planned to invite all the district attorneys, the Police Commissioner and judges to visit as well.



Mr. Dribben declared that he felt the Board should take a more active role in helping the Department recruit qualified correction personnel.

The Chairman stated that he would like the Board to do some work in the area of sentencing and restitution.

With respect to the Reformatory, Mr. Brickman declared that all Reformatory sentenced inmates had been transferred to the C-76 annex. He further declared that the Reformatory building now housed only detainees, but that the facilities of that building (e.g., classrooms) are still being used by sentenced prisoners who are bussed to and from the building each day.

Mr. Satloff then reported to the Board on the results of his study of the MDTA program located at the Reformatory stating that the goals of the program are to train inmates, to secure employment for participants after their release, and to prepare them for high school equivalency programs. He stated that there are 100 participants in the program, all between the ages of 17 and 35, and that there is a waiting list of 500. He further stated that the program tries to relate what is being taught in the classroom to what is being taught in the shops.

Mr. Satloff declared that inmates are admitted to the program when they have approximately 9 months of their sentence remaining. He further declared that each participant is paid \$20/week, of which \$15 is saved for him and given to him upon his release, and \$5 can be used for commissary.

Mr. Satloff stated that Mrs. Alice Reed has been running the program very well. He further stated that the program is only funded to allow use of 1/3 its capacity. He added that the teachers are interested in the program but that they are not satisfied with their salaries, i.e., they are paid hourly and therefore have no health, vacation or sick leave benefits.

Mr. Satloff declared that, although the teachers work a 6-hour day, they feel they could accomplish more in an 8-hour day. He added that there is a need for a remedial reading teacher and many more textbooks.

He then explained that there is no "recycling" of the program, i.e., when one person "graduates", Mrs. Reed is not permitted to replace him with another. He added that the Department is trying to amend its contract with the Board of Education so that "recycling" can occur.

Mr. Satloff added that there is virtually no aftercare program, and that Mrs. Reed must try herself to secure jobs for each of her "graduates".

He further stated that the Department has done a study of the program and found that its graduates have a recidivism rate of only 33%.

The Chairman asked Mr. Siger for a report on the Clergy Volunteer Program. Mr. Siger stated that he and Miss Spector had met with representatives of Union Theological Seminary and that they are interested in becoming involved in the Program. He further stated that he was going to be in touch with the other seminaries in the area in the hope that each seminary could become responsible for a specific institution.


Mr. Siger declared that the Legal Aid Society would begin its Prison Para - Professional Program in the City prisons on January 17th. The Program will place two para - professionals in each institution for four hours each day, where they will act as liaison between Legal Aid and its clients. The rest of their day will be spent following up on information received by the inmates.

The Chairman stated that an incident involving excessive use of force had occurred at the Brooklyn House of Detention. He further stated that he had notified Deputy Commissioner Malcolm that the Board would not investigate the incident if the Department will investigate on its own. He added that he was considering holding private hearings on the incident.

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Monday, February 7, 1972, at 4 P.M. at 277 Park Avenue, Room 2520.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Lesley J. Spector