

MINUTES

BOARD OF CORRECTION

November 1, 1983

A regular meeting of the New York City Board of Correction was held on November 1, 1983 at the office of the First Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Correction, 100 Centre Street, New York City. Board members and staff toured the newly renovated and partially reopened Manhattan House of Detention for Men (Tombs) immediately preceding the meeting.

In attendance were Chairman Peter Tufo, Vice-Chairman John Horan, Mr. Angelo Giordani, Mr. Wilbert Kirby, Mrs. Barbara Margolis, Mr. David Schulte, and Mrs. Rose M. Singer.

An excused absence was approved for Mr. David Lenefsky.

Board staff present were Richard Wolf, Michael Cleary, Barbara Dunkel, David Johnson, Laura Limuli, Deirdre Nurre and Rolando Torres.

Department of Correction staff present were First Deputy Commissioner Peter Seitchek, Deputy Commissioner for Program Services and Legal Policy Robert Goldman, Deputy Commissioner of Administration Sharon Keilin, and Director of Facility Planning Jerome Pasichow.

Chairman Tufo called the meeting to order at 2:45 p.m.

The meeting opened with a discussion of the comments and observations of the Board members and staff on the new Tombs. Wilbert Kirby expressed concern about the blind spots that exist in the Tombs shower area. Deputy Commissioner Goldman discussed the trade-off between inmate privacy and institutional safety and security. Barbara Dunkel stated that the main security gate on the first floor was not operating properly and, in fact, presented a dangerous situation. Deputy Commissioner Keilin stated that the gate was being adjusted to eliminate this condition. Mr. David Schulte reported that the glass panels in the shower doors and the narrow steps to the Tombs public entrance may cause safety and security problems. Chairman Tufo reported that the public address system was ineffective and the housing areas were noisy and recommended that television sets be placed in enclosed areas to reduce noise. In addition, one or both sets should be turned off for intervals during the day. Commissioner Goldman suggested that limiting the number of sets would create problems between Hispanics and other inmates. Mr. Schulte stated that the clothing hooks in the cell were suicide hazards and the replacement of damaged windows was costly and complicated.

Chairman Tufo inquired about the cost of replacing a Tombs window once the building contract has expired. Commissioner Keilin responded that she would provide this figure. Mr. Kirby recommended that the exit keys to the exits on each housing floor should be clearly marked and always available on the floors in case of fire. Commissioner Seitchek reported that the Tombs is in total compliance with Fire Department standards.

Chairman Tufo requested the Department to present its plans on population management to reduce overcrowding and comply with Judge Lasker's order. Commissioner Seitchek reported that the Department would implement a reduced bail program this evening. If an inmate with up to \$1,500 bail, and no other holds or warrants, puts up 10% of his bail in cash, he will be released. All courts and district attorneys will be notified of which individuals are released. The Department anticipates that the population will decrease by 300-400 persons in the program's first week. The resulting inflow and outflow of population will determine how long the program will continue. Chairman Tufo inquired if the program would be reinstated at any time in the future as a safety valve for population levels. Commissioner Seitchek reported that continually deactivating and activating the program would present difficult operational problems.

Commissioner Keilin and Jermone Pasichow reported on the City's design plans for the new White Street Jail. Commissioner Keilin reported that the Department had completed a comprehensive space program outlining space needs and capacities. This space program has been approved by the Department of Correction, Department of General Services, Office of Management and Budget, and the Mayor's Office of Operations. The City has hired Urban and Litchfield/Grosfeld as architects and the Irvine Company as consulting architects on the White Street Jail plan. Four design concepts had been requested which would address the space program. Each design must be unique, not simply a variation of another design concept. Also, certain functions will be shared with the Tombs. The choice of a final design will involve a decision among several factors, including operational costs, capital construction costs, institutional security and control, operation and program needs, suitability to the surrounding urban context, architectural aesthetics, total construction time and amenities for corrections staff. 25,000 square feet of commercial space will be included in the final design. The facility will have a capacity of 500 beds. Although intended to house adult male detainees, the mini-center concept utilized in Tombs, which will also be utilized in White Street, provides the flexibility to house two or three separate populations.

Common to all design schemes are centralized outdoor recreation space and a gymnasium as well as decentralized indoor recreation space. All designs will share certain operational functions with the Tombs. The second floor of the Tombs will house inmate processing and correction staff dining for both

the Tombs and White Street facilities. The second floor of the White Street jail will contain medical facilities for both facilities. The White Street jail will not have a receiving room since inmates will be received in the Tombs. The two facilities will be accessible to one another through basement and second floor passages. Sharing services between the two facilities will generate substantial savings for the Department.

Commissioner Keilin stated that the Department had received five design concepts and had to make a final selection within a week.

Chairman Tufo requested that the Board be informed of the Department's decision as soon as it was final.

Discussion of the five design concepts ensued. Significant features, advantages and disadvantages of each design option were summarized. During the discussion, Chairman Tufo suggested that the foundation for the White Street jail should be of sufficient strength to accommodate additional floors in the future. Although recognizing the rationale for building the White Street jail as a 500 bed facility, Mr. Tufo stated that the option for adding additional housing capacity to the jail in the future should be preserved in order to provide the potential for housing as many Manhattan detention cases as close to the courthouse as possible. Deputy Commissioner Keilin stated that this request had already been submitted to the Department of General Services. She thanked the Chairman for his support on this issue and added that the Board's comments and recommendations on the five design concepts would be very helpful to the Department in selecting the final design for the White Street jail.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.