

BOARD OF CORRECTION

MINUTES

AUGUST 9, 1989

Members Present.

Robert Kasanof, Chairman
Judge William Booth
Rev. Irvine Bryer, Jr.
Barbara Margolis
Rose M. Singer

Excused absences were noted for John Horan, Angelo Giordani, David Lenefsky, and David A. Schulte.

Representatives of the Department of Correction.

Michael Cleary, Executive Director, Management Evaluation Division.
David Frankel, Special Counsel.

Others in Attendance.

Fran Vella, State Senate Committee on Crime and Correction.
John Guzman, and Earl Murphy, New York State Commission of Correction.

Board Chairman Robert Kasanof opened the meeting at 2:14 p.m.. After welcoming the representatives from the Department of Correction and other agencies, he moved for adoption of the minutes of the July 12, 1989 Board meeting. The motion was

seconded by Rose M. Singer, and approved by all Board members present. The Board members decided that even though a quorum was not yet present, the meeting would proceed with any formal decisions to await the arrival of their colleagues.

The discussion then turned to the Department's letter dated August 7, 1989, requesting a renewal of all existing variances. Chairman Kasanof raised the issue of the increased levels of violence in several jails and then described an alarming incident that had taken place in one of the Department's facilities. In July, a correction officer was arrested by undercover investigators as he attempted to bring a pistol to an inmate at the James A. Thomas Center, on Rikers Island. Mr. Kasanof said the incident highlighted the need for increased vigilance in promoting security within the jails, even with respect to the Department's own employees. On the general question of violence levels, Chairman Kasanof requested that the Department prepare an outline for the next Board meeting indicating what it plans to do to reduce violence in the jails. He reminded those assembled that the Board's grant of variances is always conditioned upon the Department's ability to maintain the safety and security of its institutions.

David Frankel, Special Counsel to the Commissioner of Correction, said that the Department will be prepared to report to the Board on its efforts to control violence.

Executive Director of the Board of Correction Richard Wolf reminded the representatives about the Department's non-

compliance with conditions to the existing variances.

Specifically, in the Adolescent Reception and Detention Center the Department is housing "high security" general population sentenced adolescent inmates throughout the facility, in a number of housing areas, instead of in one housing area as was required. In addition, the classification codes of these inmates were to be 18 or greater. Of the 59 "high security" sentenced inmates housed in ARDC, many have classification scores of less than 18. Mr. Wolf asked the Department's representatives to tell the Board what steps they will take to bring the facility into compliance with the Board's conditions. Michael Cleary announced that Department officials were going to meet on ARDC's classification and housing problems and that within two days he would be able to report to the Board staff about their progress in solving them.

Mr. Wolf then asked about the status of the Bibby Venture.

Mr. Frankel said that the Bibby Venture has been moved to Pier 40 on the Hudson River. The Department planned to bring the inmates aboard around August 18, 1989.

Chairman Kasanof then asked the Department about the Army Corps of Engineer's decision to give approval to house the Bibby Venture at that location for only one year.

Mr. Frankel explained that the Army Corps of Engineers denied the City's request to permanently moor the Bibby Venture at Pier 40 after it found that a floating prison at that site would be inconsistent with the protection and use of that public space. In June of 1989, New York's Secretary of State, Gail

Shaffer, had come to a similar conclusion ruling that permanently mooring the Bibby Venture was inconsistent with New York's Coastal Management Program.

Chairman Kasanof then asked about the floating facility that the Department was having built to its specification.

Mr. Frankel said that barge will be completed by 1990 and will have the capacity to house 800 inmates.

Board member, William Booth then asked what happened to the plans to permanently moor the Department's barges at Rikers Island.

Mr. Frankel acknowledged that this, in fact, had been the original plan. But circumstances, which he did not elaborate upon, had changed those plans. He said that the Department is preparing a master plan for the location of its barges and when the plan was further along, the Department would present it to the Board. He mentioned the possibility of mooring barges in the Bronx and at North Brothers Island.

Judge Booth then asked when the Bibby Venture would be ready to receive inmates.

Mr. Frankel said that by the middle of September, all the work should have been completed and the vessel would be ready to house inmates.

Board member Rev. Irvine Bryer then asked about the completion date for the Elmhurst prison ward renovation. He reported that he had recently visited the ward and found an unacceptably high level of dust in the air. The problem was so

acute that some correction officers had to wear masks, while the inmates had no protection against the dust. He suggested that the Department improve the ventilation in the area while construction is going on.

Mr. Frankel reported that he did not know when the renovation would be completed, but that he will look into the problems with air circulation on the ward.

Rev. Bryer next reported that there is still a problem with air conditioners and hot water in the annex of the Rose M. Singer Center.

Mr. Frankel said that he would also look into this issue and report to the staff on the resolution of this problem. After discussion of the Department's request for an extension of all existing variances, the Board members present unanimously voted to approve the request.

Mr. Wolf then introduced a new staff member, Ruby Smith, Correctional Standards Review Specialist.

It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be held on Wednesday, September 13, 1989.

Chairman Kasanof thanked the representatives of the Department of Correction for their participation in the Board meeting, which adjourned at 3:00 p.m..