



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

JANUARY 16, 2025 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair
Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member¹
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.), Member
Felipe Franco, Member
Jacqueline Pitts, Member
Joseph Ramos, Member
Jude Torchenaud, Member

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Francis Torres, First Deputy Commissioner
James Conroy, Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters/General Counsel
James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Operations
James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs
Kevin Doherty, Deputy Commissioner, Facilities Maintenance & Repair Division
Patrick Gallahue, Deputy Commissioner, Public Information
Michele Banks, Executive Director, Constituent and Grievance Services
Allie Robertson, Executive Director, Intergovernmental Affairs
Jenelle Bazil-Charles, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Intergovernmental Affairs

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS – CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (CHS)

Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President
Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Zachary Rosner, Chief of Service, Medicine
Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

¹ Board Member Cohen partially attended the meeting. Due to extraordinary circumstances, Board Member had difficulty participating virtually.

CORRECTION OFFICERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

Antoinette Anderson, Third Vice President
Vanessa Quinones, Bronx Borough Trustee

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Visionary V Ministries
Jennifer J. Parish, Urban Justice Center/Jails Action Coalition/HALT
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defender Services
Margarette Lopez, Prisoner Rights Project
Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS
C. Boyle, NYCDS
Fran Geteles, HALT
Jay Edidin, WCJA
Tashoy Miller, WCJA
Leah Faria, WCJA
Ally Lynch, WCJA
Nathaniel Ewan, WCJA
Keith McKay, WCJA
Barbara Opatowsky, NYC Bar Association
Richardo Kramer, JAC
Jack Beck, JAC
Octavia Ewart, Bronx Defenders
Ryan Acquiciotta, Freedom agenda
Noelle
Katja Brignall-Daly, Queens Defenders

Approval of January 16, 2025 Meeting Agenda

Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order with a quorum of members present. Chair Sampson requested a motion to approve the agenda of the Board's January 16, 2025 meeting. The agenda was unanimously approved (Chair Sampson, Vice Chair Skipper, and Board Members Cozier, Franco, Pitts, and Torchenaud). See this portion of the video [here](#).

Approval of the November 12, 2024 Public Meeting Minutes

Chair Sampson requested a motion to approve the draft public meeting minutes of the Board's November 12, 2024 meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the minutes were unanimously approved (Chair Sampson, Vice Chair Skipper, Board Members Cozier, Franco, Ramos, Pitts, and Torchenaud voted in favor). See this portion of the video [here](#).

Public Comment Period – People in Custody

The Board heard public comment from a female detainee who expressed concerns about the increased levels of violence in the female correctional facility, inadequate attention provided to incarcerated women with mental health issues, and concerns with mixed classification housing. Additionally, the caller expressed concerns with lack of access to telephones following incidents, and program services continues to be a concern.

Board Members inquired as to whether Board meetings can be viewed on tablets distributed to incarcerated individuals and asked the Department look into its feasibility. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Executive Director Update

BOC Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla shared condolences with the families of Department staff who have passed since the November meeting.

As of January 15, 2025, the approximate total census of people in custody is 6,616. By facility, as of January 15, BHPW (59), EHPW (7), EMTC (1,537), GRVC (900), NIC (263), OBCC (1,551), RESH (183), RMSC (375), RNDC (1,090), and WF (651).

Regarding reporting, the Board issued five reports in the fourth quarter of 2024: (1) a semi-annual monitoring unit report; (2) a report detailing findings and recommendations regarding the deaths of Anthony Jordan and Charizma Jones; (3) a semiannual report assessing the City's borough-based jails plan; (4) a report assessing the Department's 2024 heat mitigation efforts; and (5) a report evaluating the Department's grievance complaint process. All of these reports and any responses to the reports are uploaded on BOC's website. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Department of Correction Updates

First Deputy Commissioner (FDC) Torres extended New Year's greeting to the Board members and expressed gratitude to retired members of service. She highlighted the Department's progress in enhancing safety and security throughout 2024, noting significant reductions in slashings, assaults, and cell fires.

She provided updates on strengthened community partnerships that have extended programming for incarcerated individuals and introduced free transportation services to improve access to visitation.

FDC Torres also discussed DOC's voter registration drives, which provided incarcerated individuals an opportunity to vote, as well as other community engagement initiatives, such as toy drives. Moreover, she outlined ongoing recruitment efforts aimed at

bolstering the Department's uniformed staff, and provided an update that body worn cameras will be distributed to all uniform staff, beginning with correctional officers and captains. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Update on Department's Heat Mitigation Efforts: Summer 2025

Kevin Doherty, Deputy Commissioner of Facilities Maintenance and Repair Division, reported improvements in air conditioning across facilities that previously had little to no cooling. He acknowledged that installation of a HVAC system is a costly and complex process, funded entirely by the Department.

Deputy Commissioner Doherty also noted that capital funding remains limited due to plans for the facilities closure. Lastly, he outlined the methods and procedures used to monitor and report heat temperatures to DOC leadership. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Department's Office of Grievance and Constituent Services (OCGS) Updates

Dr. Michele Banks, Executive Director of OCGS, stated the Department is currently reviewing the Board's assessment report on grievance procedures.

As part of the Board's recommendations, Dr. Banks noted that beginning in May 2024, incarcerated individuals will be able to use issued tablets to enhance access to the grievance process. Additionally, she shared that the Department is reviewing its grievance directive and will provide updates before any changes or implementations take place. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Update on Overcrowding Limited Variance

Ned McCormick, Associate Commissioner of Facilities Operations, reported that 100 beds were installed in the Otis Bantum Correctional Center in December 2024. He addressed population trends, noting an anticipated increase that necessitates the additional bed space.

Associate Commissioner McCormick emphasized that the Department assesses bed space requirements based on safety considerations and housing needs. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Department Correction and Correctional Health Services Joint Updates

James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs, reported that the Department and CHS are collaborating to track clinic production through a shared dashboard.

Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer, stated that CHS provides the call-down list or appointment list to the Department to improve services.

However, the Chair expressed disappointment with the Department's and CHS's efforts in improving collaboration with sick call procedures and developing a comprehensive dashboard. In response, both agencies committed to working with their IT departments and will provide the Board with an update at the next public meeting. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Public Comment

The Board heard public comment from Mayzebeth Ginger Lopez (Prisoners' Rights Project), Jay Edidin (WCJA), Natalie Fiorenzo (NYCDS), Jennifer Parish (JAC/HALT), Michael Klinger (Brooklyn Defenders), Octavia Ewert (Bronx Defenders), Chaplain Dr. Victoria Phillips (JAC/V Ministries), and Dr. Frances (JAC/HALT).

The Board heard virtual public comments from Daniele Gerard (Children's Rights) and Peggy Herrera (Freedom Agenda). See this portion of the video [here](#).