



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

NOVEMBER 14, 2023 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne Sampson, Chair
Rachael Bedard, M.D., Member
Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member
Joseph Ramos, Member
Jacqueline Sherman, Esq., Member
Jacqueline Pitts, Member

Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Louis Molina, Commissioner
Francis Torres, Deputy Commissioner for Programs and Community Partnerships
Allie Robertson, Senior Policy Analyst of Special Projects
Mark Pauley, Senior Policy Analyst
Chelsea Chard, Senior Policy Advisor
Stacey King, Executive Director of Educational Services
Charles Daniels, Senior Deputy Commissioner
Valerie Greisokh, Assistant Commissioner of Programs and Community Partnerships
James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS - CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (CHS)

Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President
Jeanette Merrill, MPH, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs
Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rachel Sznajderman, NYCDS
Michael Klinger, BDS
Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Jails Action Coalition and Visionary V Ministries
Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS
Alexa Frost
Tahanee Dunn, Bronx Defenders
Christopher Boyle, NYCDS
Ashaki Antoine, COBA

Jessy Edwards, WNYC
Barbara Berger Opatowsky, City Bar
Kanael Moore, COBA
Kiesha Williams, COBA
Octavia Ewart, Bronx Defenders
Eileen Maher, Vocal New York

Approval of November 14, 2023 Meeting Agenda

Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order with a quorum of members present. Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the agenda of the Board's November 14, 2023 meeting and to add a new item on the agenda related to sick call. Upon being moved and seconded, the agenda was approved, 6-0 (Chair Sampson and Members Bedard, Cohen, Ramos, Sherman and Pitts). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Approval of October 17, 2023 Public Meeting Minutes and Executive Session Minutes

Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the draft public meeting minutes and executive sessions minutes of the Board's October 17, 2023 meeting. Board Member Cohen abstained due to the tone of the previous meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the minutes were approved, 5-0 (Chair Sampson and Members Bedard, Ramos, Sherman, and Pitts). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Executive Director Update

BOC Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla provided Board updates. The Board expressed condolences for DOC staff who passed away in the past month. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

As of this meeting, the total census of people in custody is 6,220. Broken down by facility, OBCC—1,169; Bellevue Hospital—55; EMTC—1,268; GRVC—945; North Infirmary Command, and NIC Infirmary Combined—271; RESH—172; RMSC—333; RNDC—1140, and West Facility—581. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

ED Georges-Yilla spoke about the public report issued by the Committee on Deaths, Near-Deaths, and Serious Injuries regarding the first four deaths in DOC custody of 2023. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Board Member Pitts offered comments regarding the importance of programming to people in custody, in particular persons in custody council. Deputy Commissioner Francis Torres spoke more on persons in custody council. Based on the information provided by DOC, Chair Sampson requested updates from the persons in custody council at public Board meetings, whether in-person or virtual. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

People in Custody Public Comments

Recordings from people in custody were played. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

DOC Updates

Chair Sampson thanked Commissioner Molina for being present at the meeting and for his service to the Department. Commissioner Molina delivered his opening remarks. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

a. Update on the transfer of PIC from VCBC to the West Dorms

Commissioner Molina spoke about how DOC transferred about 600 low and medium classification people in custody from VCBC to the West Dorms on October 16 and October 18, and how the West Dorms will operate. Board members asked questions regarding the status of visitation and physical law library at the West Dorms, reports of DOC cuffing VCBC detainees for all movements, and reports of widespread facilities issues in toilets and pest control. Commissioner Molina and Board members discussed setting up a meeting with DC Patrick Benn, Board Members and Board staff to discuss facilities issues at West Facility. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

b. Update on law library services

DC Torres provided updates on law library, including how DOC is moving away from pandemic plan actions, law library staffing, and access and scheduling of law library and other mandated services. Board members asked questions regarding the role of the Executive Director of Facility Programs and division reporting structure. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

c. Review of obstacles to RMAS implementation/timeline for implementation

Commissioner Molina made comments on facility staffing, related to DOC Torres' presentation on law library. Commissioner Molina spoke about the federal monitorship not approving RMAS rules. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

d. Update on the state of emergency existing within DOC facilities

Commissioner Molina remarked that the EEOs allows DOC to remain agile without requiring variances, at a time when DOC is focusing on operations and security. Commissioner Molina stated that he understands the Board is frustrated and recommends that the Board speak with City Hall about the EEOs. Board members made comments and asked questions, including what reasons the Department articulate to maintain the EEOs and whether DOC has looked at strategic forecasts about when the EEOs can end. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

e. Update on the use of restraint desks in RESH

Commissioner Molina stated that in fiscal year 2023, DOC's violence prevention plan took hold and led to decreases in slashings and stabbings in RNDC. Commissioner Molina spoke about the implementation of the violence prevention plan, decline in assaults of staff, use of force incidences and forecasts, and slashings and stabbings statistics. Commissioner Molina further spoke about RESH operations, including staffing, leg irons, rear panels installed on restraint desks, and regular searches. Commissioner Molina also commented on the movement of ESH from GRVC to RMSC. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Questions by the Board and responses by DOC begin recording [here](#).

f. Update on the opening of the psychiatric unit for women at Elmhurst

Commissioner Molina stated that Elmhurst would open up the week of January 22. Board member Bedard asked what still needs to happen to make it possible. Commissioner Molina remarked that officers assigned to Elmhurst are still being trained. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

g. Update on educational services at RNDC and RMSC

DC Torres gave an update on educational services for 18 to 21-year-olds, including DOC's partnership with the East River Academy, challenges, educational services staffing, classroom space problems at RNDC, classroom averages, and status of conversations with the Department of Education. Board members asked questions about Manhattan Community College no longer providing services in Rikers Island and LexisNexis availability on tablets. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Department of Correction Variance Request, Public Comment, and Vote

The Department requested that visits on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2023, be conducted on a day schedule rather than an evening schedule. This request constituted a variance from Minimum Standard 1-09(c)(1)(i), which requires that the Department provide at least two evenings for visits on Monday through Friday, each week.

No members of the public signed up to testify on this variance.

Through a roll call vote, the variance was approved unanimously, 6-0 (Chair Sampson, and Members Bedard, Cohen, Pitts, Ramos and Sherman). Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

DOC Sick Call Presentation

DC Saunders made a presentation on the sick call process and access to care. The slide deck is available on the Board's website. Watch this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS Updates

Following up on DOC's presentation on sick call, CHS provided additional information regarding the sick call process. Board Member Bedard further asked CHS if the RSV vaccine is available, to which CHS replied that it is not available yet but CHS are looking at that. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS Variance Requests: Psychotropic Medication and Tuberculosis Tests

CHS requested renewal on variances regarding psychotropic medication and tuberculosis screening (record of variance actions are available on the Board's website). There was no public comment on the variance requests.

Through a roll call vote, the psychotropic medication variance was unanimously approved 6-0 (Chair Sampson, and Members Bedard, Cohen, Pitts, Ramos and Sherman).

Through a roll call vote, the tuberculosis testing variance was unanimously approved 6-0 (Chair Sampson, and Members Bedard, Cohen, Pitts, Ramos and Sherman).

See this portion of the video [here](#).

COBA Updates

COBA Third Vice President Ashaki Antoine and COBA Second Vice President Keisha Williams presented updates regarding DOC uniformed staff concerns. COBA spoke about facility concerns at West Facility, the transition of detainees from VCBC to West Dorms, the movement of law library to the Sprungs, SRG housing, splashing incidences, staffing in high classification housing areas in GRVC and RESH, and correction officer retention issues. Board members asked questions, including about splashing shield prototypes in NIC, SRG housing issues, ideal RESH staffing ratios. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Public Comment

The Board heard public comment from Rachel Sznajderman (NYCDS), Michael Klinger (BDS), Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips (Jails Action Coalition and Visionary V Ministries), Natalie Fiorenzo (NYCDS), and Eileen Maher (Vocal New York).

The public comments portion of this video recording is available [here](#).