



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

OCTOBER 17, 2023 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair

Rachael Bedard, M.D., Member

Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member

Felipe Franco, Member

Jacqueline M. Pitts, Member

Jacqueline Sherman, Esq., Member

Joseph Ramos, Member

Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Esq., Executive Director and General Counsel

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS–CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Patsy Yang, Senior Vice President

Bipin Subedi, Chief Medical Officer/Senior Assistant Vice President

Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operation Officer/Assistant Vice President

Nancy Arias, Chief Nursing Officer/Assistant Vice President

Jeanette Merrill, Assistant Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

OTHER ATTENDEES

Antoine Anderson, Correctional Officer Benevolent Association

Ashaki Antoine, Correctional Officer Benevolent Association

Conrad Bucuburn, Bronx Defenders

Lauren Stephens-Davidowitz, Legal Aid Society

Tahane Dunn, Bronx Defenders

Carmela Guaglianone

Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defender Services

Rachel Sznajderman, New York City Defender Services

Opening Remarks/Announcements

Chair Dwayne Sampson stated that the Department of Correction would not be present at the meeting because they are preparing for a City Council hearing later in the week.

Member Felipe Franco motioned to modify the agenda, based on the Department's absence. Member Jacqueline Pitts seconded. Five members voted in favor. Member Robert Cohen voted in opposition. The motion passed and the agenda was approved.

Member Jacqueline Sherman moved to approve the September Board meeting minutes. Member Franco seconded. Six members voted in favor. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

Chair Sampson discussed his concerns for the expansion of monitoring staff. Chair Sampson stated that since all Rikers facilities are 24/7 operations, Board staff should have a larger presence throughout the day at those facilities. Chair Sampson emphasized that it would be his mission for the next few months to secure expanded hours for the monitoring team.

Executive Director (ED) Jasmine Georges-Yilla remarked that the Board does not have the funding to expand their monitoring team at this time.

Chair Sampson stated that expanded monitoring hours does not require additional funding. It requires a shift of working hours – someone working 7am-3pm might shift to 10am-6pm, or on Saturdays. Chair Sampson claimed he had told staff to pair up once a month to go out to Rikers on weekends, but nothing happened.

Member Sherman agreed with Chair Sampson in that an expanded team would be helpful. She suggested a committee to meet until the end of the year to discuss how best Board staff might expand monitoring. Chair Sampson disagreed with Member Sherman's suggestion. He noted that since arriving on the Board, he has had many discussions with Board leadership about this expansion issue but has made no traction. "It has been totally disregarded," he told the Board and the public.

ED Georges-Yilla emphasized that Board leadership has explained to Chair Sampson, since he started, why there were issues with unionized staff, budgetary restrictions, and other issues with Chair Sampson's expansion plan. ED Georges-Yilla expressed interest, on behalf of her staff, to

explore expanded hours, but stressed that Chair Sampson should talk to the Adams administration to extend the Board's budget.

Chair Sampson stated that he had not received one report that the Board has reached out to the Department of Labor or unions to address this. ED Georges-Yilla stated that Chair Sampson has received reports on that matter, and that she will forward him the e-mail.

Member Sherman moved to approve the minutes from the executive session held on September 8, 2023. Member Franco seconded. However, since Chair Sampson had not reviewed the minutes, he asked to table the motion until later, so that he might look over some notes. The Board agreed.

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

Executive Director Opening Remarks

ED Georges-Yilla expressed condolences to the family and loved ones of Manish Kunwar, age 27, who died of a suspected, but unconfirmed, overdose in EMTC on October 5, 2023. ED Georges-Yilla also expressed condolences for the deaths of Department staff since the September meeting.

As of October 16, 2023, the total census of people in custody was 6,229. It was broken down by facility as follows: OBCC–1,185; Bellevue–55; EMTC–1,268; GRVC–924; NIC and NIC Infirmary–271; RESH–183; RMSC–361; RNDC–1,126; VCVC–487; West Facility–83

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

Board Committee Updates

Member Jacqueline Pitts, the chair of the Women in Jails committee, provided an update. Member Pitts stated that the committee met several times to discuss the best way to identify the issues and needs of uniformed women, non-uniformed women, and women in custody. A survey instrument is under development with BOC's research unit. The goal is to administer this survey in January.

Member Pitts is also the interim chair of the Programs committee. The committee reached out to the six vendors that would be cut from the Department's budget, to figure out the scope of their services and the number of staff and job titles that would be eliminated. Four of these six vendors responded, and these responses will be in a report. Commissioner Molina approved a

pilot program, offered by criminal justice advocates who were formerly incarcerated. They will speak with recruit officers during the latter part of their classroom training.

Member Joseph Ramos is chair of the Board's committee on Deaths, Near Deaths, and Serious Injuries. The death report on the most recent three deaths on Rikers Island will be published in the coming days.

Chair Sampson noted that he wants reports to come out ahead of the Federal Monitor's report.

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

People in Custody Public Comments

Recordings from Paul Alexander, Angel Rodriguez, and Rashidi Smith were played. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Sherman moved to approve the minutes from the executive session held on September 8, 2023. Member Cohen seconded. Members Bedard, Cohen, Franco and Sherman voted to approve the motion. Chair Sampson, Members Pitts and Member Ramos abstained. The executive session minutes were approved. Watch this part of the video [here](#).

Correctional Health Service Updates

Nancy Arias provided an update and presented on patience access to clinic care. Access that presentation [here](#).

The following are CHS' answers to the Board's questions: Registered nurses on calls with people in custody cannot renew prescriptions, but can refer the call to qualified individuals, while still on the phone. The telephone system can get busy, which will bump phone calls into voicemail. Flu and new COVID vaccines are being provided. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Correctional Benevolent Association Update

Ashaki Antoine, COBA's 3rd Vice President, provided the first part of the update. Between January and at the time of the meeting, 536 correctional officers were splashed in various facilities on Rikers and throughout the boroughs. The Department has a policy and procedures to follow when an officer is splashed with an unknown substance from a person in custody, but it is not always followed. Many times, correctional officers state that they are uncomfortable going back to their post, because the person in custody who splashed them is still there. Policy states that the person in custody must be searched, but that is not happening. This lack of accountability creates a hostile work environment for the officer.

VP Antoine noted how much has changed with the Department now that sexual harassment and assault from people in custody is taken seriously. However, she told a concerning anecdote about an officer who was recently sexually assaulted by a person in custody in that, because she did not articulate clearly in writing what happened to her, the Department believed she was second guessing what happened.

Lastly, VP Antoine underscored that the reduction in staffing levels and increase in people in custody have put stress on correctional officers and caused permanent illnesses.

VP Antione answered questions from the Board. She explained that COBA President Benny Boscio meets regularly with executive staff from the Department, while COBA delegates meet with managers at each facility. Member Pitts shared that she is in talks with the first Deputy Commissioner and will have an answer on how often there is contact between Department executive staff and COBA.

Antoinette Anderson, COBA's Secretary, updated the Board about overtime. Secretary Anderson highlighted the violence that occurs against correctional officers and claimed that the Board turned a blind eye to their grievances. She argued that programming is a problem because they need staff to run them. She stated that, if there are 15 programs that need to be run, but not enough staff to run them, one cannot expect people in custody to experience programming. VP Antoine expressed that programming ought to be skills they can monetize once they leave Rikers.

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

Public Comment

Lauren Stevens-Davidowitz

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

Natalie Fiorenzo

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

Michael Klinger

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

Tahani Dunn

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

Christopher Boyle

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

Meeting conclusion

Member Pitts moved to go into executive session. Member Sherman seconded. All voted in favor. Once returned from executive session, Board members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.