



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

June 13, 2023 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair
DeAnna Hoskins, Vice Chair
Robert L Cohen, Member
Felipe Franco, Member
Jacqueline M. Pitts, Member
Jacqueline Sherman, Member
Joseph Ramos, Member

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

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Paul Schectman, General Counsel
Robert Gonzalez, Deputy Commissioner of Training and Development
Howard Singer, Deputy Chief of Staff
Allie Robertson, Executive Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
Chelsea Chard, Senior Advisor

NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS - CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President
Jeanette Merrill, MPH, Director of Communications, and Intergovernmental Affairs
Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer
Bibin Subedi, M.D., Chief Medical Officer
Nancy Arias, Chief Nursing Officer
Nicole Levy, Deputy Director of Communications, and Intergovernmental Affairs

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Andrew Ward, The Fortune Society
Ashaki Antoine, COBA
Aubree Aguinaga, Bronx Defenders

Octavia Ewert, Bronx Defenders
Brad Cauthen, Osborne Association
L. Cumberbatch, NYCDS
Christopher Boyle, Vocal- New York
Eileen M. Maher, Vocal – New York
Leah Dunbar, Children’s Rights
Jane Stanicki
Veronica Vela, Legal Aid Society
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defender Serves
Sade Leonard, Correctional Officer
Natalie Fiernzo, NYCDS
Rachel Sznajderman, NYCDS
Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips
Candie, Jails Action Coalition, Freedom Agenda
Jack Davis, HALT
Jennifer Parish, Urban Justice Center

Board of Correction Opening Remarks

Board Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order. Board Members moved to approve the agenda, which was seconded. Seven Board Members voted in favor and Chair Sampson abstained. Member Sherman moved to postpone items 8a and 8b due to the fact that Department of Correction Commissioner Molina was not present. Specifically, Member Bedard motioned that item 8b be put over to the next meeting that the Commissioner can attend, but to keep item 8a on the agenda. Members Sherman, Franco, Cohen, Bedard, and Hoskins voted in favor. Chair Sampson, along with Members Ramos and Pitts, abstained. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Hoskins motioned to approve and ratify actions taken in the May 16, 2023 meeting and the June 5, 2023 emergency meeting. Member Bedard seconded. Vice Chair Hoskins along with Members Sherman, Franco, Cohen, and Bedard voted in favor. Chair Sampson, along with Members Ramos and Pitts, abstained. The motion passed. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Testimony from people in custody was played for the public. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Interim Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla provided updates from the Board. Since the Board’s last meeting, Mr. Rubu Zhao, 52, died by suspected suicide after jumping from the second floor of a housing area in GRVC. His cause of death was blunt force trauma to the head. Mr. Joshua Valles, 31, died on May 27, 2023. He was admitted to Elmhurst Hospital on May 19, 2023, and found by Elmhurst staff to have extensive brain injury and minimal brain function. The Board expressed condolences to the families of Mr. Zhao and Mr. Valles. The Board also expressed condolences for Department of Correction staff who passed away since the last meeting.

As of June 12, 2023, the total census of people in custody is 6,085. The breakdown by facility is as follows: AMKC—1,910; Bellevue Hospital—41; EMTC—943; GRVC—858; NIC—176; RMSC—370; RNDC—909; VCBC—713; and West Facility—70. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

First Public Comment Section

Andrew Ward, The Fortune Society
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Ashaki Antoine, COBA
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Aubree Aguinaga, Bronx Defenders
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Octavia Ewert, Bronx Defenders
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Brad Cauthen, Osborne Association
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L. Cumberbatch, NYCDS
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Christopher Boyle, Vocal- New York
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Eileen M. Maher, Vocal – New York
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Leah Dunbar, Children’s Rights
Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Department of Correction Updates on Recruitment and Training

Deputy Commissioner of Training and Development, Dr. Robert Gonzalez, provided updates on DOC recruitment and training. Dr. Gonzalez implemented practices of using Genetec video to analyze behaviors of persons in custody and correctional officers, and using case studies and more interactive learning. Representatives from the Investigations, Trials, and Counsel divisions are now helping educated correctional officers on aspects of Rikers and how it pertains to their jobs.

Within the first 100 days, the Department appointed an Assistant Commission of Training & Development, Dr. Jeremiah Johnson. The organizational chart for Training & Development was redesigned — creating new teams and units, and additional assignments of personnel for the gun range, recruit training, and recruitment unit. Additional projects included partnering up with

Vertex, which trained officers on identifying mental health disorders, created a scholarship unit in April of this year, rebranded the academy with new logos and social media, and created a new TDD newsletter to highlight accomplishments.

The Department intends to create a new Correction Academy in the same facility as the NYPD. Its scheduled completion is 2025. The Recruit Officer training program has been redesigned to 12 classes of in-class instruction, and an 8-week field training program. The captain's course has been shaved down to five weeks from 12, in addition to implementing a field training program. On March 29, 2023, 26 officers were promoted to captain.

Dr. Gonzalez's stresses how recruitment is heavy in areas where people in custody come from. The Department maintains a retention stratagem to address those who feel inclined to resign. Dr. Gonzalez's presentation and his specific statistics can be seen in this portion of the video [here](#).

Correctional Health Service's Variance Requests

Lauren Stocel, Chief of Service for Mental Health, presented CHS's variance requests.

First, CHS requested a variance on Minimum Standard § 2-05(b)(2)(i-ii) on psychotropic medication. This variance allows psychiatrists to see and evaluate stable adult patients on psychotropic medication in general population at least every 28 days, rather than every 14 days. Secondly, CHS requested a variance on Minimum Standard § 3-04(b)(2)(i-ii) on tuberculosis testing. This variance allows CHS to use either interferon-gamma release assays (IGRA) or tuberculin skin test (TST) for tuberculosis screening, and to exempt from repeat screening those prisoners who have a documented negative test six months prior to their admission.

Member Cohen stresses that he, and other Board Members, do not feel comfortable providing a year-long variance, and would prefer to provide a 6-month variance instead. CHS amended the request to be a six-month renewal.

Member Cohen motioned that the variance request for the psychotropic medication variance on psychotropic medication be granted for six months and reviewed every six months. Member Bedard seconded. Seven Board Members voted in favor and Chair Sampson abstained.

Member Cohen moved to approve the variance that CHS may use other mechanisms to test for tuberculosis, also for a limited 6-month period. Member Sherman seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. Both motions carried. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Discussion on the Department of Correction's intent to cancel \$17 million in contracts with non-profit organizations

Member Bedard recused herself and left the room during this discussion as she is on the board of the Osborne Association.

DOC General Counsel, Paul Schectman, provided some information into the Department's decision. According to GC. Schectman, the mayor told the Department that there needed to be a 4% cut in spending. That 4% decrease is \$47 million and could not have been reached without the \$17 million cut from Programs. The Department will cutting congregate programming done by outside providers. GC Schectman argued that Deputy Commissioner Frances Torres can make up this deficit in a variety of ways.

GC Schectman noted that correctional staff, for the most part, will be filling in to deliver programs to meet minimum five hours of programming a day. Vice Chair Hoskins pointed out how correctional staff are already struggling to fulfill basic correctional staffing needs and questioned how they could provide programming on top of that. GC Schectman stated that correctional officers will only provide security during programming. Programming will be provided by civilian staff. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

Vote to Enter Executive Session

Member Sherman moved to go into an executive session. Vice Chair Hoskins seconded. The Board entered its executive session to discuss proposed litigation and personnel matters.

Upon the Board's return to the public portion of the meeting, Vice Chair Hoskins shared that, within the executive session, the Board discussed its issues regarding the lack of video access from the Department, and what the next steps are. Watch this portion of the video [here](#).

General Public Comment

Jane Stanicki

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

Veronica Vela, Legal Aid Society

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

Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defender Serves

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