



**NEW YORK CITY
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

FEBRUARY 28, 2024 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

ATTENDEES

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dwayne Sampson, Chair
DeAnna Hoskins, Vice Chair
Rachael Bedard, M.D., Member
Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member¹
Felipe Franco, Member
Jacqueline Pitts, Member
Joseph Ramos, Member
Jacqueline Sherman, Esq., Member

Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)

Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, Commissioner
Allie Robertson, Senior Policy Analyst of Special Projects
Charles Daniels, Senior Deputy Commissioner
James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs
Charlton Lemon, Acting Assistant Chief
Sherrie Rembert, Assistant Chief of Administration
Allison Pace, Associate Commissioner of Operations
Kathleen Zadzora, Assistant Commissioner of Health Affairs
Nancy Savasta, Acting General Counsel
Frank Dwyer, Deputy Commissioner for Public Information
Sharon Nelson
Patrick Benn, Deputy Commissioner of Facilities and Fleet Administration
James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner of Public Information

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
Bipin Subedi, Chief Medical Officer/Senior Assistant Vice President
Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

¹ Board Member Cohen attended the meeting remotely because he was unable to reach the meeting location.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ashaki Antoine, COBA
Kiesha Williams, COBA
Antoinette Anderson, COBA
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defenders
Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Jails Action Coalition and Visionary V Ministries
Anisan Sabur, UJB
Akiana Smith, WCJA
Jennifer J. Parish, Urban Justice Center/Jails Action Coalition, HALT
Tahj Hollijan
Courtney Gross, NY1
Lionel Cumberbatch, COBA
Carlen Rodriguez, NYCDS
Rachel Sznajderman, NYCDS
Darren Mack, JAC
Saira Khan
Casey Dalporto, NYCDS
Mosammet Akter, NYCDS
Grace Ortez, JAC
Scott Paltrowitz, HALT
Chris Boyle, NYCDS
John Griffin, NYCDS
Eileen Maher, Vocal New York
Daniele Gerard, Children's Rights
Kelly Grace Price, Close Rosie's
Kayla Simpson, Legal Aid Society

Approval of February 28, 2024 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 February 28, 2024. Upon being moved and seconded, the agenda was approved unanimously (Chair Sampson, Vice Chair Hoskins and Members Bedard, Cohen, Franco, Ramos, Sherman, and Pitts). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Approval of January 10, 2024 Public Meeting Minutes

Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the draft public meeting minutes of the Board's January 10, 2024 meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the minutes were approved (Chair Sampson abstained; Vice Chair Hoskins and Members Bedard, Cohen, Franco, Ramos, Sherman, Pitts voted in favor). See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Chair Remarks

Chair Sampson recognized the opening of the Elmhurst Hospital psychiatric ward for women. The Board played a newsclip from Spectrum News regarding the psychiatric ward's opening. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Executive Director Update

BOC Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla welcomed two new Correctional Standards Review Specialist to the Board: Tamar Scott and Shakira Porter. ED Georges-Yilla also provided updates of recent Board actions concerning sick call and linen exchange. ED Georges-Yilla expressed condolences for the passing of DOC staff since the last Board meeting, as well

as the passing of Manuel Luna, who died in DOC custody on January 19, 2024. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

As of February 27, 2024, the approximate total census of people in custody is 6,251. This represents a 2.8% increase in population as of January 1, 2024, when there were approximately 6,081 people in custody. By facility, as of February 27: BHPW (55), EHPW (7), EMTC (1,324), GRVC (959), NIC (270), OBCC (1,470), RESH (157), RMSC (365), RNDC (970), and WF (674). See this portion of this recording [here](#).

The Board's Committee on Deaths, Near Deaths and Serious Injuries issued its latest report on deaths in custody on Friday, February 9, 2024. The report includes the Special Investigation Unit's findings regarding the deaths of William Johnstone, Curtis Davis, Donny Ubiera and Manish Kunwar. On February 21, 2024, the Board issued its report presenting findings and recommendations in connection with its assessment of the Department's use of chemical agents. Board staff analyzed 50 incidents from October 2023 during which DOC uniformed staff deployed chemical agents or "OC." See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Board Member Pitts spoke about the Programs and Education Committee, including highlights of an evaluation completed at a seminar held at the DOC Training Academy on January 2024. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

People in Custody Public Comments

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

Department of Correction Updates

a. DOC's plan for addressing complaints regarding lack of access to indoor and outdoor recreation and limited recreation time (BOC Minimum Standard § 1-06)

ED Georges-Yilla provided background information regarding access to indoor and outdoor recreation. As stated in subdivision (a) of section 1-06 of the Board's rules, "Recreation is essential to good health and contributes to reducing tensions within a facility. People in custody shall be provided with adequate indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities."

The Board's rules set forth minimum standards for recreation, including the following:

- An outdoor recreation area must allow for direct access to sunlight and air.
- Recreation periods shall be at least one hour; only time spent at the recreation area shall count toward the hour.
- Recreation shall be available seven (7) days per week in the outdoor recreation area, except in inclement weather when the indoor recreation area shall be used.
- The Department shall make available to people in custody an adequate amount of equipment during the recreation period.
- Upon request, each facility shall provide people in custody with appropriate outer garments in satisfactory condition, including coat, hat, and gloves, when they participate in outdoor recreation during cold or wet weather conditions.
- People shall be permitted to engage in recreation activities within cell corridors and tiers, dayrooms and individual housing units, including but not limited to table games, exercise programs, arts and crafts activities. Recreation taking place within these areas shall supplement, but not fulfill, the requirements of one-hour outdoor recreation 7 days a week.

- A person's access to recreation may be denied for up to five (5) days only due to imminent safety and security risks, which must be recorded and transmitted to the Board within one (1) business day of the restriction. Any limits imposed on a person's access to recreation must be approved by the Chief of the Department.

BOC staff have been monitoring the operation of recreation in the different facilities and will continue to closely monitor this area in the coming months.

From December 1st to January 22nd, there was a total of 82 grievances submitted to the Department regarding recreation. People in custody have reported not receiving the mandated one hour of daily recreation, with some experiencing extended periods without access to recreation at all. At EMTC, there are people who have not had outdoor recreation in over one year. Grievances mention issues such as denial of recreation for weeks, inconsistent scheduling, and difficulties accessing recreation due to conflicting schedules with other activities like law library, religious services, and visits. Overall, the recurring theme in these complaints is the deprivation of the mandated recreation time, posing concerns about the well-being of the incarcerated population across all facilities on Rikers.

Moreover, during the weeks of January 15th and January 22nd, BOC staff observed conditions and concerns—expressed by both people in custody and Department staff—regarding recreation across facilities on Rikers. A consistent concern from Department staff is that they need more staff to efficiently operate recreation. They are constantly shift-reduced. They get tasked with other assignments, like court production, resulting in delays in recreation affordability. The consistent concern expressed by people in custody is that there is inconsistent access to daily recreation as required by the Board's Minimum Standards. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Commissioner Maginley-Liddie delivered opening remarks. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Board members asked questions and provided comments regarding what is required to improve access to recreation at RNDC, space for schooling at RNDC, lack of outdoor recreation at EMTC for an extended period of time, structural, staffing, and scheduling issues, denials of access to recreation, the Department's plan to ensure people exercise every day, the RNDC annex, and employing people in custody. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Commissioner Maginley-Liddie noted that Fortune Society and Osborne Association have returned to Rikers Island to provide services. The organizations will be self-funded. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

b. DOC's plan for address the fire safety concerns outlined in the Board's report on the April 6, 2023 NIC fire

DC Benn delivered prepared remarks on the Department's work regarding fire safety since May 2023. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Board members asked questions and provided comments regarding capital funding, the decision to not open cells immediately during the April 6 NIC fire, status of current maintenance requests to repair sprinkler heads, overall staffing in the Fire Safety Unit, control of VCBC since it's no longer in use and whether DOC has a decommissioning unit. See this portion of the video recording [here](#).

Correctional Health Services Updates – Update on CHS’s suicide prevention practices and programs (BOC Minimum Standards §§ 2-01(b), 2-02(d), 2-04(a))

ED Georges-Yilla provided background information on suicide rates on Rikers Island. The Board’s Second Report and Recommendations on 2023 Deaths in New York City DOC Custody was published on February 9, 2024. In 2023, two out of the nine deaths in custody occurred by suicide. There has been a total of 15 suicides in custody since 2020. In 2020, one out of the seven deaths in custody occurred by suicide. In 2021, six out of the 14 deaths in custody occurred by suicide. In 2022, six out of the 19 deaths in custody occurred by suicide. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS’s Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Bipin Subedi, presented on the clinical approaches to reducing suicide risk in the NYC jail system. The presentation is available on the Board’s website. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

CHS answered questions from Board members, including questions about coordinating resources to support people in custody, how people are placed on suicide watch and transferred out of suicide watch, the effectiveness of suicide prevention intervention, issues relating to the availability of clinical and security staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. See the question-and-answer portion of this section [here](#).

COBA Updates

COBA Third Vice President Ashaki Antoine and COBA Corresponding Secretary Antoinette Anderson presented updates regarding DOC uniformed staff concerns, including concerns about sexual assault in the jails. See this portion of the recording [here](#).

Public Comment

The Board heard public comment from Michael Klinger, Rachel Sznajderman, Jennifer Parish, Akiana Smith, Darren Mack, Chaplain Dr. Victoria Phillips, Scott Paltrowitz, Kelly Grace Price, Kayla Simpson, Eileen Maher, and Daniele Gerard. The public comments portion of this video recording is available [here](#).