



**New York City
Board of Correction
February 10, 2026
Public Meeting Minutes**

Attendees:

Members Present

Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.), Member
Felipe Franco, Member
Dr. Lauren Stossel, Member
Jude Torchenaud, Member

Department of Correction (DOC)

Francis Torres, First Deputy Commissioner
Fritz Frage, Senior Deputy Commissioner
James Conroy, Deputy Commissioner of Legal Matters/General Counsel
James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Operations
Kevin Doherty, Deputy Commissioner of Facilities Maintenance
Patrick Gallahue, Deputy Commissioner of Public Information
Robert Van Pelt, Assistant Commissioner of Preparedness and Resilience
Joseph Caputo, Acting Assistant Chief of Facility Operations
Nadia Jean-Francois, Executive Director, Intergovernmental Affairs & Special Projects

NYC Health + Hospitals - Correctional Health Services (CHS)

Patsy Yang, Dr. PH, Senior Vice President
Jeanette Merrill, Senior Assistant Vice President of Communications and External Affairs

Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director
Zachary Rosner, Chief of Medical Service
Joseph Otonichar – Chief of Service, Mental Health
Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

Others in Attendance

Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Visionary V Ministries and JAC
Jennifer Parish, JAC/HALT
Chantelle Williams, NYCLU
Casey Dalporto, NYCDS
Khari Jenkins, NYCDS
Christopher Boyle, NYCDS
Roya Touran, NYCDS
Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS
Jack Beck, HALT
Richenda Kramer, HALT
Gabriella Fusaro, Hour Children
Veronica Palma, Hour Children
Emily Horowitz, Hour Children
Nickie Phillips, Hour Children
Vanessa Gutierrez, Hour Children
Alexi Santander, Hour Children
Margaret Camilletti, Disabled in Action
America Canas
Alessandra Talabong
Bailey Hand
Anna Kim
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defenders

Approval of February 10, 2026 meeting agenda

Chair Sampson stated that he would wait to start the meeting until the Department arrived. Upon being moved and seconded, the February 10, 2026

meeting agenda was unanimously approved. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Approval of the January 13, 2026 public meeting minutes

Upon being moved and seconded, the January 13, 2026 minutes were unanimously approved. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Public comment period – People in Custody (PIC)

Five comments from people in custody were played. Chair Sampson stated that he had personally witnessed some of the colder temperatures in West Facility, and Vice Chair Skipper requested the results of mold testing in RMSC's Building 5. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Executive Director updates

Executive Director Georges-Yilla shared condolences with the families and loved ones of Department staff who have passed since the Board's January meeting.

Regarding census data, as of February 9, 2026, the approximate total census of people in custody was 6,817. As of February 9th, the census numbers by facility were as follows: BHPW (59), EHPW (10), EMTC (1,379), GRVC (869), NIC (296), OBCC (1,413), RESH-ESH (116), RESH non-ESH (488), RMSC (449), RNDC (1,048), and WF (689). [Please see this portion of the video here.](#)

Regarding reports, on January 21, 2026, the Board released a report detailing findings and recommendations concerning the deaths of Benjamin Kelly, James Maldonado, Christian Collado, Edwin Quispe, Ardit Billa, Jimmy Avila, and Carlos Cruz. The Board's report highlights 10 key findings and makes 13 recommendations to DOC and CHS regarding their policies and practices. DOC's response is appended to the report. [See this portion of the video here.](#) [The full report can be viewed on the Board's website.](#)

Regarding the suspension of the Board's Minimum Standards, while some standards remain suspended by court order in the Nunez litigation, additional provisions are currently suspended by executive order. These prolonged

suspensions have coincided with serious operational challenges, including the opening of new restrictive housing units without full alignment with established oversight, due process, and notification requirements. When standards are suspended—whether by executive order or court order—the Board’s enforcement tools, particularly the variance process, are largely unavailable. Oversight continues, but without an enforceable regulatory baseline for certain conditions of confinement.

The Board acknowledges and appreciates the Administration’s decision to move away from the extended use of emergency executive orders suspending the Board’s Minimum Standards and to focus instead on achieving full compliance. The Board looks forward to working with the Department, the Administration, and the Remediation Manager to restore and strengthen the Minimum Standards, support systemwide compliance, and advance a safe and lawful transition away from Rikers Island. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Regarding Board concerns of DOC’s Constant Supervision operations, during the week of December 4, 2025, the Board received information raising concerns about conditions in the West Facility Contagious Disease Unit, known as the CDU Sprungs. In response, Board staff conducted an independent review that raised significant concerns about how constant supervision was being applied and reviewed. Constant supervision is an important safety tool when used as intended.

What the Board observed in December 2025 highlights the need for clearer standards, regular review, meaningful clinical input, and stronger due process protections. The Board shared the following recommendations with the Department in December:

- Constant supervision must be time-limited and subject to regular, documented review
- Directive 4021 should be clarified, particularly with respect to cell-based housing

- Clinical input must meaningfully inform decisions about continuation or removal
- Basic due process and access to mandated services must be ensured

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

Board statements regarding the Remediation Manager appointment, incoming and former DOC Commissioner

Vice Chair Skipper read prepared statements acknowledging and welcoming Nicholas Deml as the incoming Remediation Manager. Vice Chair Skipper also welcomed incoming DOC Commissioner Stanley Richards and thanked former Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie for her service to the Department. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Resolution initiating rulemaking (access to counsel)

On December 12, 2025, the Board received a joint petition for rulemaking concerning proposed rules relating to access to counsel from New York County Defender Services, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, and The Legal Aid Society - Criminal Defense. [Please see here to read the joint memorandum.](#)

Executive Director Georges-Yilla read the draft resolution out loud for the Board's consideration. Upon being moved and seconded, the Board unanimously voted to approve the resolution. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

[Please see here for the approved resolution concerning proposed rules relating to access to counsel.](#)

DOC update on emergency preparedness—power outage, service disruptions, and winter storm

First Deputy Commissioner Francis Torres explained preemptive measures the Department took to prepare for the winter storm and other weather-related possible issues. First Deputy Commissioner Torres did express that

unforeseen challenges did arise from the severe weather conditions, but the Department acted quickly to ensure stable operations continued on Rikers Island. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel requested additional information about continuous temperature monitoring and data tracking when temperatures have fallen below legally acceptable temperatures. Board Members Stossel and Franco and Vice Chair Skipper asked questions about the Department's recent change in thermal policy. Board Member Stossel also inquired about the number of inoperable windows in the facilities, as this has a negative impact on temperature. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

DOC briefing on the implementation of death report recommendations

Acting Assistant Chief of Facility Operations Joseph Caputo discussed touring procedures, trainings, staffing levels, and the potential for disciplinary measures when things go awry. Acting Assistant Chief Caputo stated that the Department acknowledges that there is more work to be done, but the Department is committed to running well-maintained and well-managed jails. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel stressed that touring has not been happening consistently or adequately for years, stating that she isn't sure if it is a supervisory issue or an accountability issue, but a robust corrective action plan needs to be put in place. Vice Chair Skipper requested specific data regarding how often discipline is being imposed on staff members for not touring. General Counsel James Conroy noted on record that there is not always a direct causal relationship between touring issues and deaths in custody. Executive Director Georges-Yilla asked General Counsel Conroy if the Department was asked not to investigate itself, and General Counsel Conroy stated that they are awaiting a notification that the investigation has been completed or will require a further investigation. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

DOC briefing on Constant Supervision operations

Senior Deputy Commissioner Fritz Frage stated that the Department took Board concerns seriously and after conducting a review, the Department determined that the individuals on Constant Supervision status should not have been issued smocks and corrective actions were taken. Senior Deputy Commissioner Frage stated that the Department has determined that the current directive does not adequately distinguish between procedures for constant supervision and suicide watch, so the directive will undergo updates once leadership has finished transitioning. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel asked about the number of individuals on Constant Supervision status and where they are housed. She also asked questions about instances where general population individuals would be housed in Sprungs units in West Facility. After Senior Deputy Commissioner Frage stated that it could occur for a totality of circumstances, including violence, Board Member Stossel stated that she was concerned that this meant that the Sprungs were being used as restrictive housing. Board Member Stossel also requested that the Board be included in the Directive revision process. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS briefing on the implementation of death report recommendations

Chief of Mental Health Service Joseph Otonichar shared a presentation outlining the current CHS systems, procedures, and policies utilized for hospital-level care referrals. However, Chief Otonichar made it clear that hospital admission is ultimately determined by hospital providers, not CHS staff. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Vice Chair Skipper asked for a more detailed explanation of why admission is up to the hospital and how this impacts mental health service for individuals on Rikers Island. Senior Vice President Patsy Yang then gave an overview of the relationship between CHS and NYC Health and Hospitals. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS briefing on Constant Supervision

Chief of Mental Health Service Joseph Otonichar continued his presentation to share information about suicide watch assessments, policies, and procedures. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Vice Chair Skipper voiced confusion about the similarities or differences between Constant Supervision and Suicide Watch, which was later clarified that Constant Supervision is a Department term. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

CHS' overview of the City's reopening of the "Just Home" program

Senior Vice President Patsy Yang expressed excitement at the potential of the groundbreaking "Just Home" program to aid people with a range of severe medical issues in permanent supportive housing. Senior Assistant Vice President of Communications and External Affairs Jeanette Merrill then presented on the "Just Home" program, highlighting how this program can help CHS' medically complex patients spend less time on Rikers Island because there is a stable housing plan available upon their release. "Just Home" is projected to open for tenant occupancy in late 2027 or early 2028. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Board Member Stossel shared her excitement about this project and its potential for New York City. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

Public Comment

Department staff departed the meeting at this time. The Board then heard in-person public comments from Christopher Boyle, Natalie Fiorenzo, Michael Klinger, and Victoria A. Phillips. The Board heard a virtual public comment from Kayla Simpson. [See this portion of the video here.](#)

The Board's next meeting is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 1:00pm.