

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION

September 9, 1975

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Tuesday, September 9, 1975 at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, New York, New York.

Present were Mr. Jackson, Mr. Kirby, Father Rios, Mrs. Singer, and Mr. Tufo. Also present by invitation of the Board were Marc Rosen, Executive Director; Barbara J. Armstrong, Acting Director, Clergy Volunteer Program; Jerome Cappellani and Stephen Fisher, Staff Assistants; and Joseph Smith, interne.

Present from the United States Bureau of Prisons was Larry Taylor, Warden, Metropolitan Correctional Center.

Mr. Tufo served as Chairman and Mr. Fisher as Secretary of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 p.m.

The Chairman reported on his morning emergency visit to Kings County Hospital, where two correction officers and one bystander were shot by an inmate in the Outpatient Department (OPD) clinic. The Chairman stated that inmate Joseph James had visited the OPD dental clinic numerous times and was marked as an escape risk because of his strange behavior. That morning, the inmate was apparently in the dental clinic and asked to go to the bathroom. While Officer Connor stayed outside, Officer Motchan escorted him into the bathroom which was used by both male and female patients. Apparently, a gun was placed in the bathroom by an outsider and inmate James shot Officer Motchan and then went outside and shot Officer Connor and a female bystander. The inmate made good his escape by entering a parked car that was apparently waiting for him outside the Hospital. The Board expressed grave concern about this specific incident as well as the more general problem of the number of inmate visits to OPD clinics which take place in a public setting.

It was stated that a preliminary report on the escape from the New York City House of Detention for Men on August 14 had been completed in cooperation with the Department of Investigation and Mr. Jackson. A discussion ensued on this matter and it was suggested that the possibility of public hearings be entertained since 21 inmates have attempted to escape this year.

At 3:30 p.m. Mr. Smith entered the meeting.

Upon motion duly made by Father Rios and seconded by Mr. Kirby, it was

RESOLVED THAT the Board of Correction will look at the procedures surrounding the escape from the House of Detention for Men and issue a public report on its findings.

The Chairman then described some of the events of the past months regarding HDM. He noted that the situation was apparently getting worse at the institution since the population was about 1600. In addition, he noted that City Hall was thinking about eliminating court parts and this would have a direct impact on the population of the institution. Further, there has been a substantial reduction in the staff of the District Attorney's offices in all of the counties and this too has an effect on the population of the institution and movement of court cases.

The Chairman stated that he had met with Wardens Buono and Rubin in August regarding the splitting of the cell blocks at the House of Detention for Men. In addition, he stated that he had met with Deputy Mayor Cavanagh on this issue and other issues relating to correctional planning. Deputy Mayor Cavanagh informed the Chairman that John Lannigan and Richard Bott would be the people to talk with anytime there was discussion regarding money for capital budget planning for the Department of Correction.

At 3:35 p.m., the Board and staff went on a tour of the institution. At 4:30 p.m. the meeting resumed.

The staff reported on the death of John Thompson at the Kings County Hospital prison ward. It was noted that Mr. Thompson was tear gassed while housed at the Queens House of Detention and was moved to the Kings County Hospital Prison Ward shortly thereafter. He died the following day of viral pneumonia. It was stated that the medical examiner had concluded that Mr. Thompson had died of chemical pneumonia which can be induced by the use of tear gas. There is a question at the moment of whether he received proper medical treatment both at the Queens House of Detention and Kings County Hospital. In addition, there is a question as to the circumstances under which the tear gas was used. To this end, the Board staff is examining the Department's rules and regulations regarding the use of tear gas and, in cooperation with the Department of Investigation, the details of Thompson's death.

The matter of the Board's ARDC monitoring was raised. It was stated that the physical structure of that institution lends itself to some problems. For instance, there is a quarter of a mile distance from the cross wings, the main part of the institution, to some of the housing areas and this contributes to management problems of inmates. It was agreed generally that the Board should continue monitoring the institution before considering whether a written report would be produced.

Ms. Armstrong reported that the Annual Meeting of Clergy Volunteer Program members would be held on October 11, 1975 at 9:00 a.m. at Riverside Church.

At 4:50 p.m. Warden Larry Taylor entered the meeting. Warden Taylor stated that the institution houses pre-trial detainees and short post-trial detention cases. Each housing floor can house 96 inmates and has one unit manager, one case worker, one counsellor, four correction officers spread over three shifts, and one secretary. On one shift during the day there is usually one correction officer, one counsellor and one unit manager. During the 4-12 tour it is desirable to have two correction officers on duty and

after 11 p.m. only one officer is left to supervise all the inmates on a floor. Warden Taylor expects that women will be admitted to the institution and be housed on a separate floor shortly after the middle of September. Responding to a question from the Board on the amount of money it costs to house one inmate per day, Warden Taylor replied that it costs \$22 per day. He also noted that the yearly pay of a correction officer was \$8,500 which is substantially less than the starting salary of a correction officer working for the City. However, he noted, the potential for advancement is much greater in the Federal system.

Warden Taylor offered the following statistics on the institution. The average detention period for an inmate is 28 days. The racial breakdown of the population is as follows:

45% are black
55% are white
1-2% are Hispanic

The total cost of building the Metropolitan Correction Center which can hold 450 individuals was \$14,000,000.

At 5:00 p.m., Warden Taylor left the meeting.

It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be held on September 23, 1975 at 2:00 p.m. at the Chairman's office. The next two meetings would be held on October 14 and October 21 at places to be determined later.

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Singer and seconded by Mr. Kirby the minutes of July 8, 1975 and August 1, 1975 were approved.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Jackson and seconded by Mr. Tufo, a request for excused absence for Mr. Schulte was approved.

Upon motion duly made by Mrs. Singer and seconded by Mr. Tufo, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.