

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION

August 7, 1972

A regular meeting of the Board of Correction was held on Monday, August 7, 1972, in the 14th floor conference room, 100 Centre Street, New York, New York.

Present at the meeting were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, Becker, Dribben, Kirby, Rev. Wilson and Mrs. Singer. Also present by invitation of the Board were John M. Brickman, Executive Director of the Board; Peter A. Lesser, Executive Secretary of the Board; Kenneth Nochimson, Legal Advocate, Board of Correction; Debby Powers, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Paul Dickstein, Bureau of the Budget; and Benjamin Malcolm, Commissioner; Jack Birnbaum, Deputy Commissioner; Richard Aniero, Assistant Commissioner; and Arnett Gaston, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, all of the Department of Correction. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Mr. Lesser as Secretary of the meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 P.M. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of July 10, 1972 were approved.

It was noted that the Board had requests for excuses from Messrs. Schulte and DeMonte, both of whom were absent. Such absences were excused.

The Chairman announced the resignation of Ms. Spector, effective September 30, 1972, and noted that a search for her successor was now in progress.

The Chairman then introduced Mr. Lesser and announced his appointment as Executive Secretary of the Board.

The Chairman expressed concern over the number of suicides in the City prisons in recent weeks, but declared that it was his judgement that the Health Services Administration had been doing a good job in this area and that he was continuing with private discussions as to a mental health facility on Rikers Island. Mr. Kirby declared that he wanted a better utilization of the Department's space. It was agreed generally that a psychiatric clinic is needed. The Chairman noted that new prisons are not being built elsewhere in the country and that the States of California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin in particular have put forth progressive programs in this area. The Chairman declared that a resolution as to new construction might be in order. Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

RESOLVED, that the National Council on Crime and Delinquency has called for a two year moratorium on the building of new prison facilities, and there are major changes now taking place in the criminal justice system tending away from new detention and custodial institutions. The Board of Correction calls for the construction of a central facility on Rikers Island for psychiatric purposes with a minimum capacity for 500 mentally disturbed inmate-patients, together with the funding for adequate staffing. The Board further opposes any new construction by the Department of Correction until that facility is built.

The Chairman then declared that he had personally written to the Mayor concerning the punishment imposed on 14 correctional personnel as a result of the riots of 1970, urging that the fines be suspended. Copies of the letter were distributed, and the Secretary was ordered to attach a copy of the letter to these minutes.

Mrs. Singer reported on the recent Women's Prison Council meeting.

At 4:10 P.M., Messrs. Malcolm, Birnbaum, Aniero and Gaston joined the meeting.

The Chairman then presented the Board's resolution to Commissioner Malcolm. The Commissioner declared that he could not go beyond the position he had already had taken, and said that he already opposed the \$60 million new Manhattan facility which had been proposed by his predecessor, and that he felt that an institution on Rikers Island was critical in view of the housing problem that the Department currently faces. The Commissioner noted that on August 7th, 7,830 detainees were housed in City facilities, which was the highest figure since 1970, and said that he expected 8,000 detainees within the coming weeks. Therefore, the Commissioner said, he feels he has no more room and he can not divert the C-95 project. The Commissioner noted that he hoped to have an appropriate medical and mental health facility in progress by the end of his term. The Commissioner declared that he agreed with the aspirations of the Board, but felt that new housing is needed first.

Mr. Dribben reported that he had proceeded with an Army Reserve affiliation and Mr. Brickman had contracts ready to be signed with the appropriate unit. The Army reserve unit would be responsible for going to the prisons on a regular basis, with the reserve officers fulfilling their military obligations by doing medical and dental work with inmates. Mr. Dribben suggested a luncheon meeting with the Chairman, Commissioner Malcolm, the Commanding General of the Reserve Unit, and a member of the Board staff, in order to make further arrangements.

Mrs. Singer noted for the Commissioner's attention that the library at the women's prison had not been open for a month, and that nothing had been done to resolve the matter. Deputy Commissioner Birnbaum declared that he had yet not had an opportunity to look into the problem, but that he would so immediately.

The Chairman and Mr. Nochimson reported to the Commissioner on the Legal Advocate Program. The Program hopes to finish soon a study on the longest-detained prisoners in the City facilities. It also expects to have a long-range study done on the sentencing backlog. The Chairman announced that by next week there would be 15 volunteers working on pre-sentencing reports to help ease the backlog in the King's County Supreme Court.

Commissioner Malcolm announced that a new work-release facility had been opened on August 4, in the Bronx at 1288 Southern Blvd. He declared that he would welcome a visit from the Board in the future. The new facility will have a capacity of 72 people, and is the Department's third work-release facility. He added that the Department hopes to open a fourth one in Jamaica, Queens, sometime later this year. He declared that with the opening of the fourth facility, the Department would have approximately 275 people in the work-release program, and hopes to have over 300 in all units next year. The Commissioner declared that he hopes to open several small units for females. The Commissioner also noted that Con Edison had offered to provide jobs for residents of the programs. They would be general utility maintenance men and would have ample opportunity for advancement.

The Commissioner noted that he was having problems with the Correctional Aide Program and that people presently in the program had erroneously been informed that they would have permanent jobs. Unfortunately, he said, after the recent Civil Service Examinations, a perusal of the list shows that many of them did not do well enough on the test to be appointed. Deputy Commissioner Birnbaum reported that the Correctional Institution for Women now had a computerized information system and that this was the first step in making the system, and that this was the first step in making the system Department-wide.

The Commissioner then discussed a number of projects and programs which have recently been funded by the Criminal Justice Coordination Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 P.M.