

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CORRECTION

June 12, 1972

A special meeting of the Board of Correction was held on June 12, 1972, at the offices of Stroock & Stroock & Lavan, Room 2520, 277 Park Avenue, New York, New York

Present were Messrs. vanden Heuvel, Becker, Dribben, Kirby and Schulte, and Mrs. Singer. Also present by invitation of the Board were John M. Brickman, Executive Director of the Board; Ms. Terry Strauss, and Ms. Debby Powers, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; Supervising Warden Francis Buono, of the Wardens' Association, Assistant Deputy Warden Gerald Singleman, of the Assistant Deputy Wardens' Association, Captain Ray Mandanici, of the Captains' Association, and Leo Zeferetti, of the Correction Officers Benevolent Association. The meeting was called to order at 10:30 A.M. Mr. vanden Heuvel acted as Chairman and Mr. Brickman as Secretary of the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the meeting was held as a result of various problems which had arisen involving the Board and the uniformed personnel of the Department.

Mr. Zeferetti stated that it was the judgment of the correction officers that the Board of Correction was not interested in doing anything for those who worked in the system. He declared that instead, his people saw the Board as a vehicle of sensationalism and as an opportunity for the Chairman to appear in the press. He declared that the Board was inmate-oriented.

Mr. Mandanici declared that his group had "had it up to here" with its relationship with the Board.

Mr. Buono declared that the wardens were disturbed with several recent activities of the Board. In particular, he declared, the Board should not have sent a representative to the C-76 following the work stoppage there, and it should not have forecast possible violence in the institution, based on overcrowding.

Mr. Zeferetti declared that the correction officers were disturbed that representatives of the Board were entering the prison without adequate screening and clearance. In particular, he declared, he was disturbed by the case of David Donovan, who, posing as a priest, entered the prison through the Clergy Volunteer Program. The Chairman replied by stating that he was surprised that the case had only come to Mr. Zeferetti's attention this recently, since, he said, that as soon as it had come to the Board's attention last winter, Mr. Donovan's access to the institution was suspended and a full report on the matter was prepared and delivered to the Commissioner. He told Mr. Zeferetti that he intended to write to him, describing in full detail the particulars of the case. Mr. Brickman declared that Mr. Donovan had been screened and cleared by the Department, as are all Board staff and volunteers who are issued passes.

Mr. Zeferetti also declared that the officers were disturbed by the activities of one minister participating in the Clergy Volunteer Program in the Brooklyn House of Detention, who seemed to have "inspired" or abetted the formation of an inmate committee. The Chairman declared that this was news to him and that Mr. Zeferetti should have brought the matter to the Board's attention earlier.

Assistant Deputy Warden Singleman declared that as evidence of the Board's good faith, and in light of the fact the Chairman was interceding to effectuate a settlement of the Tombs disturbances cases, the Board should make a public statement calling for suspended sentences for those correction officers disciplined after the 1970 riots. The Chairman replied that the matter had been discussed by the Board, and that it would continue to consider the possibility.

The Chairman then stated that he had considered the possibility of addressing a letter to each inmate in the City prison system, describing the possible serious consequences of disruptive conduct and taking of hostages. Mr. Brickman declared that a draft of such a letter was prepared, and was available. The Chairman stated that he would decide whether or not to send such a letter. The Chairman also proposed that a Task Force be established by the Board to consider the problems of the correction officer, and how to make his job more meaningful and rewarding.

At this point, Mrs. Singer left the meeting.

The Chairman then raised the question of the warden's bill now pending before the City Council, which would empower the Commissioner to appoint wardens directly from the ranks of deputy warden and assistant deputy warden, without the requirement of a Civil Service examination. The representatives of the uniformed force stated their opposition to the bill, declaring that it might result in undue constraints on senior personnel, that it might be used as a political weapon, and that it presented a risk of ethnic or other group favoritism.

The participants in the meeting agreed generally that regular meetings would be useful, and that they would be in touch in the future to arrange such meetings.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 P.M.