

# **PRISON BOARD MINUTES**

**January 13, 2021**

**Board Members Present:**

**Thomas C. Chernisky, President Commissioner  
William J. Smith, Commissioner  
Scott W. Hunt, Commissioner  
Ed Cernic, Jr., Controller  
Don Robertson, Acting Sheriff  
Gregory J. Neugebauer, District Attorney  
Norman A. Krumenacker, III, President Judge**

**Others Present:**

**Chris Smith, Warden  
William Patterson, First Deputy Warden  
Craig Descavish, Second Deputy Warden  
George Rozum, Security Captain  
William Valko, Court Administrator**

**Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Commissioner Smith called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., in the Jury Room of the Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg.**

**Reorganization:**

**Motion was made by Controller Cernic to retain the current existing officers, i.e., William J. Smith, President; Scott W. Hunt, Vice President; and Michael Gelles, IV, Secretary.**

**Motion was seconded by District Attorney Neugebauer and passed unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Controller Cernic to appoint Christian Smith as Warden.**

**Motion was seconded by Commissioner Chernisky and passed unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Smith to appoint Edward Cernic, Jr., Donald Robertson, and Gregory J. Neugebauer as Inspectors.**

**Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Controller Cernic to hold meetings on the second Wednesday of each month in the Jury Room of the Courthouse, at 10:30 a.m., with the exception of the March, June, September, and December meetings. These meetings will be held at the Cambria County Prison.**

**Motion was seconded by District Attorney Neugebauer and passed unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Commissioner Chernisky to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on December 9, 2020.**

**Motion was seconded by Acting Sheriff Robertson and passed unanimously.**

**Public Comment:**

**None.**

**Presentation and Approval of Invoices:**

Controller Cernic presented the following bills and Invoice Status Report for approval:

**Prison bills paid after the Meeting held December 9, 2020:**

Retirement Fund	\$25,003.96
Retirement Fund	\$22,912.72
UPMC Health Plan	\$91,852.08
UPMC Health Plan	\$16,209.64
CamTran	\$152.22
Wells Fargo	\$150.20
FNB (Visa)	\$49.50
Penelec	\$15,625.90
Ricoh	\$1,034.48
Peoples	\$1,007.47
Direct Energy	\$687.01
Pro Disposal	\$495.00
Ray Oil & Gas	\$1,057.75
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$176,237.93</b>

**Invoice Status Report:**

January 11, 2021, 81 Invoices Totaling	\$231,052.55
Canteen Fund bills paid after December 2020 Meeting	\$4,856.90
Canteen Fund Bills to be Paid	\$22,489.30

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to approve the bills and Invoice Status Report.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

**Warden's Report:**

**Personnel:**

1. Ryan Seymore, remove Per-Diem Correctional Officer I from payroll, effective December 16, 2020.
2. Seth Simasek, remove Per-Diem Correctional Officer I from payroll, effective January 6, 2021.
3. Jennifer Shero, transfer from Per-Diem Correctional Officer I to Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective January 24, 2021.
4. Calvin Ates, transfer from Per-Diem Correctional Officer I to Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective January 24, 2021.
5. Hire the following as Per-Diem Correctional Officers, effective February 8, 2021. (Employment is contingent upon successful completion of the pre-employment screenings).

Gabrielle Freed  
Joshua Lowmaster  
Zachary Warzel

Calvin Hartman, III  
Joshua Platko

Moises Hernandez  
Ethan Walters

**Warden Smith reported:**

1. Mitigation of Covid-19 continues to be a priority at the Facility. Appropriate screening, cleaning, social distancing, and quarantine practices remain in effect. As of January 11, 2021, there have been one hundred and eighty-eight (188) positive Covid-19 cases at the Prison; forty (40) staff members, three (3) PrimeCare employees, and one hundred and forty-five (145) inmates. One (1) employee remains off work, and all inmates are considered recovered according to CDC guidelines. In order to expand the chemical disinfectant spraying at the Facility, two (2) battery-operated handheld sprayers have been purchased.

Officials from ICE have been conducting, and will continue to do so, monthly onsite “spot checks” of the Facility for Covid-19 mitigation compliance.

2. As part of the Covid-19 mitigation efforts, a testing procedure was implemented in October that requires all new commitments be tested on day two (2) and again on day twelve (12) of their fourteen (14) day quarantine period. These tests cost \$55.00 each. This week, PrimeCare received three thousand (3,000) tests as part of a state grant award. These tests will begin to be used immediately, potentially saving the County tens of thousands of dollars.

3. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Huntingdon County for temporary housing. This was for minimal housing, which resulted in three (3) inmates at this time. The Prison anticipates holding inmates sparingly, under this MOU.

4. The Prison kitchen dishwasher is in need of repair. Quotes are presently being received for the repair and also for the replacement. The dishwasher is original to the Facility and has operated about six (6) hours per day, seven (7) days a week, for the last twenty-three (23) years.

5. A 2021 Dodge Durango has been placed into service as a staff transport vehicle. This vehicle replaces a 2007 Ford E350 van. The Prison will be converting the current staff vehicle, a 2016 Ford Explorer, into an inmate transport vehicle by installing a secure cage and decals. The cage will be recycled from one of the former Sheriff’s vehicles that is currently out of service.

6. Since the traditional staff Christmas party was cancelled due to Covid-19, a day of special meals was provided for Prison staff before the Christmas holiday. This was well received by staff.

7. The Board was informed, two (2) years ago this past December, that a complaint was filed to the Department of State by a disgruntled inmate concerning the inmate barber shop. The Prison was recently informed by the Department of State that this complaint has been closed, and no action was required.

**Statistical Report:**

Report is attached.

**December, 2020**

Average Daily Population for December, 2020	313
Housing Revenue for December, 2020	\$150,850.00
Year to Date Revenue as of December, 2020	\$1,644,440.00

**Food Service Report:**

During the month of November, the Facility continued working with the Nutrition Group, who prepared and delivered items to be reheated and served for dinner meals during the Covid-19 lockdown. The last premade meals were delivered for the meal on November 15, 2020, as the Facility was able to bring back limited inmate workforce. The inmate workforce is made up of inmates who have antibodies for the Covid-19 virus and have been cleared by PrimeCare Medical.

During the week of November 16, 2020, the Prison transitioned back to the regular menu cycle, making adjustments as needed. It was also during this timeframe that the Facility discussed the importance of workers wearing masks to cover their faces along with the importance of keeping themselves, as well as their work spaces, clean.

Also during November, the Prison prepared a Thanksgiving meal, which included hot sliced turkey breast, hot sliced ham, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, green beans, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie, and a dinner roll.

**Medical Report:**

Report is attached.

**Training:**

None.

**Misconduct Report:**

There was no information to report.

**Miscellaneous:**

There was no information to report.

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to accept the Warden's Report.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

**Communications:**

None.

**Old Business:**

None.

**New Business:**

The Warden updated the Board on the expanded use of the Polycom system to handle hearings. President Judge Krumenacker added that he has been receiving requests from other counties inquiring as to how Cambria County has been handling its hearings.

President Judge Krumenacker requested that the Board look at the PrimeCare contract.

**Adjournment:**

**Motion was made by Controller Cernic to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.**

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**Michael Gelles, IV, Chief Clerk**