

PRISON BOARD MINUTES

January 8, 2025

Board Members Present:

**Edward Cernic, Jr., Controller
Thomas C. Chernisky, Commissioner
Linda Rovder Fleming, President Judge
Scott W. Hunt, President Commissioner
Gregory J. Neugebauer, District Attorney
Keith Rager, Commissioner
Don Robertson, Sheriff**

Others Present:

**Chris Smith, Warden
Craig Descavish, First Deputy Warden
George Rozum, Second Deputy Warden
Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk**

Pledge of Allegiance.

Reorganization:

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to keep the President, Vice President, and Secretary of the Board the same, i.e., Donald Robertson, Sheriff, as President; Keith Rager, Commissioner, as Vice President; and Edward Cernic, Jr., Controller, as Secretary.

Motion was seconded by Judge Fleming and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rager to convene an Executive Session at 10:35 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Controller Cernic and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rager to reconvene the Public Meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Controller Cernic and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to accept the resignation of Chris Smith as Warden.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

It was noted that Judge Fleming stepped out of the Meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hunt to appoint Craig Descavish as Acting Warden until a new Full-Time Warden is hired.

District Attorney Neugebauer reiterated that this motion was to appoint an Acting Warden and beginning a search for a Full-Time Warden.

It was noted that Judge Fleming was still out of the Meeting.

Commissioner Chernisky stated that Craig Descavish could also apply for the Full-Time Warden position.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

Sheriff Robertson appointed Judge Fleming, District Attorney Neugebauer, and Commissioner Hunt as Inspectors.

District Attorney Neugebauer made a motion to approve holding the 2025 Prison Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, at 10:30 a.m., in the Jury Room of the Courthouse, with the exception of the March, May, July, and October meetings, which will be held at the Prison.

Motion was seconded by Controller Cernic and passed unanimously.

It was noted that Judge Fleming was still absent from the Meeting.

Regular Meeting:

Sheriff Robertson called the Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., in the Jury Room of the Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Motion was made by Commissioner Rager to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on December 11, 2024.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

John DeBartola stated that he believed the Prison Board violated the Sunshine Act by taking action at the Reorganizational Meeting prior to holding public comment. He also stated that he was surprised by the Executive Session and the Warden resigning. He questioned if the County was properly spending money.

District Attorney Neugebauer suggested redoing the Reorganizational Meeting to make sure that the Board was compliant with the Sunshine Act. He also stated that the Execution Session was convened to discuss personnel matters.

Judge Fleming returned to the Meeting.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to redo the Reorganizational Meeting to ensure compliance with the Sunshine Act.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Reorganization:

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to keep the President, Vice President, and Secretary of the Board the same, i.e., Donald Robertson, Sheriff, as President; Keith Rager, Commissioner, as Vice President; and Edward Cernic, Jr., Controller, as Secretary.

Motion was seconded by Judge Fleming and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to accept the resignation of Chris Smith as Warden.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Commissioner Hunt to appoint Craig Descavish as Acting Warden until a new Full-Time Warden is hired.

Commissioner Chernisky stated that Craig Descavish could also apply for the Full-Time Warden position.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

Sheriff Robertson appointed Judge Fleming, District Attorney Neugebauer, and Commissioner Hunt as Inspectors.

District Attorney Neugebauer made a motion to approve holding the 2025 Prison Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, at 10:30 a.m., in the Jury Room of the Courthouse, with the exception of the March, May, July, and October meetings, which will be held at the Prison.

Motion was seconded by Controller Cernic and passed unanimously.

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 11, 2024:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Retirement Fund | \$33,054.52 |
| Retirement Fund | \$30,240.94 |
| UPMC Health Plan | \$92,082.38 |
| UPMC Dental | \$86.72 |
| Symetra Life Insurance | \$505.76 |
| Visa | \$2.75 |
| Mainline Newspapers | \$103.79 |
| Elite Outdoor Services | \$875.00 |
| Shane Davis | \$167.50 |
| Kimberly Peles | \$33.50 |
| Ricoh | \$459.58 |
| Penelec | \$26,708.11 |
| Total: | \$184,320.55 |

Invoice Status Report:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| January 6, 2025, 75 Invoices Totaling | \$130,687.11 |
| Canteen Fund Bills Paid after December, 2024, Meeting | \$3,110.05 |
| Canteen Fund Bills to be Paid | \$50,072.96 |

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

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Warden’s Report:

Personnel:

1. Sarah McCool, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective December 16, 2024.
2. William Muir, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective January 3, 2025.
3. Joseph Coyle, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective January 7, 2025.
4. Greg Kupchella, remove Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective February 21, 2025.

There are currently eleven (11) Full-Time Correctional Officer I vacancies, and two (2) Correctional Officers are out on extended medical leave.

Deputy Warden Descavish reported:

1. MAJOR MAINTENANCE/FACILITIES UPDATES:
 - a. Kronos Time Keeping Software – There was no update.

- b. **Housing Unit F Furnace** – The blower in the furnace failed on December 23, 2024, and needs replaced. It has been ordered.
2. Deputy Descavish tracked all overtime throughout 2024. The total overtime hours were 17,038. The reasons for that were as follows:
- a. 7,984 hours (47%) were to cover call offs;
 - b. 5,868 hours (34%) were to cover hospitalized inmates;
 - c. 1,014 hours (6%) were for inmate transports to court, etc.;
 - d. 316 hours (2%) were to cover shortages on the schedule; and
 - e. 1,856 hours (11%) were for miscellaneous reasons, i.e., CERT, emergencies, searches, incidents, etc.
3. Based upon Munis reports for January 6, 2025, the Prison is currently \$1.06 million under budget for 2024, minus any outstanding invoices and invoices approved for payment at today’s Meeting.
4. The Prison is currently serving fifty (50) inmates through the recently expanded MAT Program. In addition, Alliance has agreed to reduce its methadone agreement with PrimeCare from \$19.00 per day per inmate to \$14.00 per day per inmate, which will reduce the reimbursement to them by this same amount.
5. On December 19, 2024, the Prison met with the testing representative from Germ Solutions. The results of testing since the system has been installed showed a 99.996% decrease in aerobic bacteria, a 99.9916% decrease in fungi, and a 99.065% decrease in MRSA, when compared to the baseline surface testing results acquired six (6) months ago.

Statistical Report:

Report is attached.

December, 2024

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Average Daily Population for December, 2024 | 346 |
| Housing Revenue for December, 2024 | \$194,683.50 |
| Year to Date Revenue as of December, 2024 | \$2,526,490.50 |

Food Service Report:

During the month of December, the Prison continued working with inmate labor on preparing new and different items on the new menu cycle. They also worked on preparing items for the Christmas meal, which consisted of hot turkey ham, hot turkey breast, mashed potatoes, stuffing, turkey gravy, corn, pumpkin pie, and dinner rolls. They discussed personal hygiene and the importance of keeping one’s self clean and healthy during the winter season while working in the food service industry.

Food Service Director Callihan also continued working with the Nutrition Group on ways to try to help with rising food costs and shortages.

Medical Report:

Attached.

Training:

The following staff training was completed during the month of December, 2024:

- 1. Captain Kristen Perino, Lieutenant Eric Wysong, and Lieutenant Dakota Houston completed Prison Rape Elimination Act Investigator Certification at Centre County Prison.**
- 2. Officer Tanya Deyarmin completed eight (8) hours of training in Central Control Operations.**
- 3. Officer Jordan Ford completed eight (8) hours of training in Prison Mail Operations.**
- 4. Officer Alexander Short completed eight (8) hours of training in Prison Mail Operations.**
- 5. Officer William Muir completed sixteen (16) hours of training in Prison Kitchen Operations.**
- 6. Officer Johnathan Regala completed sixteen (16) hours of training in Maximum and Floor Control Operations.**

Two (2) school tours of the Facility were provided to Cambria Heights School District.

Misconduct Report:

There was no information to report.

Miscellaneous:

None.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to approve the Warden's Report.

Motion was seconded by Judge Fleming and passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Motion was made by Commissioner Chernisky to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk