

PRISON BOARD MINUTES

September 10, 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:

Kurt Wolford, Warden
Megan Bursky, Assistant Deputy Warden
Donald Ochenrider, Major of Security and Investigations
Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk

Pledge of Allegiance.

Sheriff Robertson called the Meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., in the Jury Room of the Cambria County Courthouse, Ebensburg, Pennsylvania.

Public Comment:

John DeBartola questioned the average time for parole and how the County could help with reintegration. He also asked the Board to address the increase in crime in the County, and once again questioned how the Prison was going to handle the overtime issue that currently exists.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on August 13, 2025.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

An Executive Session was held on September 8, 2025.

Presentation and Approval of Invoices:

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

Prison bills paid after the Meeting held August 13, 2025:

Retirement Fund	\$31,266.22
Retirement Fund	\$32,470.62
UPMC Health Plan & Dental	\$46,274.21
UPMC Health Plan & Dental	\$45,021.58
Symetra Life Insurance	\$614.40
FNB Visa	\$4.11
FNB Visa	\$16.23
Mainline Newspapers	\$751.77
Wells Fargo	\$150.20
Penelec	\$29,667.43
United Energy	\$820.69
GC Pivotal	\$169.70

Total: \$187,227.16

Invoice Status Report:

September 5, 2025, 85 Invoices Totaling	\$98,567.06
Canteen Fund Bills Paid after August, 2025, Meeting	\$2,877.54
Canteen Fund Bills to be Paid	\$17,558.36

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:

The Warden requested an Executive Session to discuss personnel and security matters.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to convene an Executive Session at 10:42 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and passed unanimously.

Motion was made by District Attorney Neugebauer to reconvene the Public Meeting at 10:57 a.m.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rager and passed unanimously.

Personnel:

Removals/Resignations/Transfers:

1. John Kindja, retirement date modified to July 19, 2025, from July 18, 2025.
2. Rescind the employment of Robert Keilman, Per-Diem Correctional Officer, effective August 18, 2025.
3. Rescind the employment of Jeffrey Nigborowicz, Per-Diem Correctional Officer, effective August 18, 2025.
4. Rescind the employment of Daniel Link, Per-Diem Correctional Officer, effective August 18, 2025.
5. Remove Rebecca Mayes, Full-Time Correctional Officer, effective August 27, 2025.
6. Remove Daniel Shortencarrier, Full-Time Correctional Officer, effective August 26, 2025.
7. Remove Daniel Sheesley, Full-Time Correctional Officer, effective August 20, 2025.
8. Remove James Doran, Per-Diem Correctional Officer, effective August 28, 2025.
9. Harry Plummer, Full-Time Correctional Officer II to Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective August 25, 2025.
10. Caleb Patterson, Per-Diem Correctional Officer I to Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective September 14, 2025.
11. Debra McCoy, Per-Diem Correctional Officer I to Full-Time Correctional Officer I, effective September 14, 2025.

Warden Wolford reported:

1. **Supervisory Positions**
 - a. With the newly appointed captain positions, the Prison has begun implementing a fully revamped system of supervision within the Facility. For many years, the distinction between the roles of lieutenant

and captain was little more than a matter of title. Today, that separation is being defined with clear authority, responsibility, and oversight to strengthen accountability at every level.

b. The Prison has developed a set of “post orders” for both lieutenants and captains; going beyond generalized job descriptions. These post orders are the first of their kind at the Facility. The Prison is also in the process of establishing specific criteria for each position, ensuring the chain of command is clearly defined. This initiative will strengthen operations by providing clear ownership of responsibilities, giving staff greater clarity, and streamlining checks and balances throughout the Prison. This change in policy has been communicated to all staff.

c. The Prison converted the former print shop area into a dedicated lieutenant’s office. Using repurposed resources, each lieutenant now has their own computer, desk, and phone extension, with equipment provided entirely through unused County inventory. The only expense to the County was the addition of one (1) printer to the existing contract and approximately \$100.00 for paint to refresh a room that had not been painted in decades.

d. The former office space in the staff muster area, once shared by all seven (7) shift supervisors, has now been converted into a dedicated captain’s office. This also was accomplished entirely with repurposed resources; desks from the old Domestic Building, the last of the Prison’s unused computers, and an additional phone provided by IT. This upgrade provides ownership to each supervisor and firmly re-establishes the chain of command.

e. A swearing-in ceremony was held at the Courthouse for captains, lieutenants, the food service director, maintenance supervisor, and re-entry coordinator. This marked the first time that all shift commanders stood together outside the Facility at the same time. The ceremony reinforced the pride of stepping into a leadership role, strengthened teamwork among administrators, and sent a clear message to correctional officers that hard work and dedication are recognized and rewarded.

2. Staffing

a. A few cadets were lost from the Academy. Three (3) full-time officers resigned from the class, but they were immediately replaced by two (2) per-diem staff. One (1) per-diem was removed, and three (3) retirees ultimately decided not to return as planned. With that said, the Prison continues to move forward with two (2) per-diem officers who are college students, five (5) retiree per-diems, and it remains on track to be one (1) full-time officer short of full staffing levels, once the current Academy class graduates.

b. The retiree per-diem officers will primarily be assigned to medical transports, to assist with job shadowing, and training new correctional officers after the Academy class. While the initial plan was to use them during all job shadowing, a more fiscally responsible approach is to assign them, only when their presence prevents another officer from being mandated. This strategy maintains effective training while further reducing overtime costs.

c. Coordinator Mary McCoy officially began her role as Re-Entry Coordinator on August 25, 2025. Goodwill has also posted the position of re-entry specialist to complement her work. In addition, the Prison is finalizing the development of the new Department of Custody and

Community Integration, located in the former video courtroom, to support and facilitate the important work these two (2) positions will lead.

d. The Prison has posted the open counselor position created by Coordinator McCoy's transition, as well as the vacant director of training and recruitment position. In addition, interviews for the chaplain role are scheduled to take place in the coming week.

3. Major Maintenance / Facility Updates

a. Intertech has completed the replacement server and software upgrade. The camera system is now operating better than ever, and the upgrade provides enhanced security for the inmate population and greater safety for staff.

b. The thaw box in the kitchen has been replaced by K&D and is now fully operational. This upgrade resolves long-standing issues with food storage and preparation, ensuring reliability for daily meal service and improved efficiency in kitchen operations.

4. Federal Surplus

a. In an effort to reduce costs, the Prison obtained equipment through the Federal Surplus Program. To meet the mandate for dual authentication, twenty-four (24) new computers were purchased at a cost of \$150.00 each. With comparable models typically priced between \$700.00 to \$800.00 a piece, this purchase generated a savings of over \$13,000.00 for the Prison's budget.

b. The air conditioning system in the lieutenants' office was quoted at approximately \$9,000.00 to replace. Instead, the Prison purchased two (2) floor air conditioning units from Surplus at \$95.00 each, effectively resolving the temperature issue at a fraction of the cost. This approach provided immediate relief while avoiding a substantial expense to the County.

c. The Prison purchased twenty (20) office chairs at \$20.00 each to replace the worn-out chairs in offices and control centers. This cost-effective solution addressed an immediate need while providing significant savings compared to standard replacement costs.

5. Audits / Inspections

a. The results of the 2025 PREA Audit have been received, and the Prison has officially passed. In the final report, the Facility exceeded five (5) standards and met all forty (40) required standards, reflecting full compliance and a strong commitment to safety and accountability.

b. The United States Marshals Service conducted an inspection of the Facility and reported no issues. They also noted that there were minimal complaints from federal detainees, an improvement from their last visit, when complaints had been more prevalent.

c. The Prison is in the final stages of contracting with an inspector to conduct a comprehensive audit of the Facility and the Training Department. This voluntary audit is intended to proactively identify and address potential issues before they arise. The cost will be covered through the inmate rehabilitation fund, as the audit directly supports inmate safety and overall welfare.

6. Inmate Treatment

a. The Prison held a re-entry work session with Goodwill, Cambria County Drug and Alcohol, Cambria County Probation, and Cambria County

Behavioral Health at the Day Reporting Center. During the meeting, eligibility criteria for referrals to the Re-Entry Program were established. These sessions will continue on a quarterly basis to ensure the Program's ongoing success and to address any challenges that arise.

b. The Re-Entry Team will be conducting a site visit to Dauphin County, in October, to observe its Re-Entry Department firsthand. This visit is intended to gather insights into proven practices that have been effective in another county, allowing the Prison to identify strategies that can be adapted and implemented in Cambria County. By learning from the successes of others, the Prison is taking a proactive step toward strengthening its own Re-Entry Program and improving outcomes for those served by the Program.

c. Smarter Parents, a County-based group that facilitates educational programs for parents, will be meeting with the administrative staff to review program materials prior to introducing them to the inmate population. This collaboration is designed to ensure that the content is appropriate, effective, and aligns with the needs of those in the Facility's care. By providing incarcerated parents with the tools and education to strengthen family relationships, the Program will not only support successful re-entry but also help create greater stability for children and families in the community.

d. A Services Fair is scheduled for September 19, 2025, marking the first event of its kind at the Prison. The fair will bring together community partners and service providers to connect directly with inmates, offering resources to support their transition back into the community. This initiative represents a major step forward in strengthening the re-entry efforts and ensuring that inmates have access to the tools and support needed for long-term success.

7. Miscellaneous

a. A meeting was held with all of the County Magistrates in an attempt to develop a system to streamline court transports and to address the needs of both the Prison and the court system.

Statistical Report:

Report is attached.

August, 2025

Average Daily Population for August, 2025	320
Housing Revenue for August, 2025	\$120,060.00
Year to Date Housing Revenue as of August, 2025	\$1,058,805.00

Food Service Report:

Report is attached.

Medical Report:

Report is attached.

Training:

The following staff training was completed during the month of August, 2025:

1. The third Training Academy of 2025 began for new cadets on August 18, 2025.

2. The Training Committee, led by Captain Perino and Counselor Smick, has completely revamped the Prison's Training Academy. With the assistance of Officer Sinclair, the Academy will now feature the first ever re-entry simulation designed to give new staff a firsthand understanding of the challenges the inmate population faces when transitioning back into the community.

In addition, Counselor Smick has been working closely with the State to ensure that every element of the Academy is modernized and aligned with the highest standards. This effort reflects the Prison's commitment to providing the best possible training experience for the staff and building a stronger, more effective future for the Facility.

Misconduct Report:

There was no information to report.

Miscellaneous:

None.

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

Motion was seconded by Judge Fleming and passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

Motion was made by Controller Cernic to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was seconded by Commissioner Chernisky and passed unanimously.

Alex M. Ashcom, Chief Clerk