

Minutes

MEETING OF BOARD OF INSPECTORS FOR THE POTTER COUNTY JAIL March 4, 2022, Gunzburger Building

CALL TO ORDER - Paul Heimel, Chair

ROLL CALL – Members Barry Hayman, Nancy Grupp, Glenn Drake, Judge Stephen Minor, Paul Heimel, Andy Watson, all present. Warden Angela Milford, present. Administrator Jessica Giebel, present.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS – none

MINUTES --

Feb. 4, 2022; B. Hayman moved to approve; G. Drake seconded; all in favor

REPORT FROM CHAIR –

Media inquiry shown on the agenda is on hold. Chairman Heimel would like the board to develop a policy for accommodation of public comments/media requests.

Potter is one of eight counties nationwide selected for a hands-on technical assistance/best practices program to build Re-entry Services through strategic planning and collaboration. Judge Minor, Jim Kockler, Commissioner Heimel and Bryonna Swede have been participating in the initial conversations with the consultants. The process will be all-inclusive among elements of the local criminal justice system. Further details will be shared in the coming weeks.

GUEST SPEAKERS –

Sara Benedict, Criminal Justice Coordinator, Dunn Co., Wisc.

Ms. Benedict discussed some of the innovations and criminal justice reform initiatives that Dunn County has implemented over the past 14 years, earning the county recognition as a leader among rural counties. County leaders worked together to implement “smart justice” concepts and have engaged in two national technical assistance projects, Data-Driven Justice to assess the impact of criminal justice option and Stepping Up to effectively deal with mentally ill offenders. Ms. Benedict detailed the benefits of her county’s Data Work Group, which has allowed decision-makers to track the effectiveness of pre-trial diversion efforts, re-entry services offered for inmates/detainees, and other elements of the criminal justice system. As a result, Dunn County has reduced recidivism and lessened costs. The county now generates

revenue by collecting rent for out-of-county inmates being housed at its jail. As examples of information gathered through the data collection system, Dunn County has determined that 75 percent of offenders have a mental health diagnosis. Substance abuse trends are also documented, with methamphetamine, alcohol and opioids as the top three addictions among the current offender population. One major benefit of compiling data is its use for seeking federal or state grants.

Doug Ormson, Jail Captain (Warden), Dunn Co., Wisc.

Captain Ormson served for 20 years as sergeant prior to being promoted to his current position. He has been hands-on in collecting, analyzing and disseminating data from the Jail Management System. Judges and others from the criminal justice system have found the data to be valuable in decision-making on sentencing, bail, and alternatives to incarceration. The jail population has been reduced by approximately 30 percent as a result of the reforms that have been implemented.

REPORT FROM WARDEN –

Warden Milford reported there are 39 inmates; 2 serving on weekends; 2 on work release; and 8 females, all of whom are housed in other facilities. Staff administered COVID-19 vaccines to 5 inmates; 2 officers received a booster shot. COVID quarantine period has been reduced from 14 to 10 days for those showing no symptoms. Work continues on implementing the tele-mental health program for which the jail has contracted. Pat Harris has been investigating jail ministry options. Dawn Dovensky has provided some trauma training with the corrections officers, with more to come later in the year.

OLD BUSINESS –

Commissioner Hayman shared findings from his review of 16 county jail websites to investigate improvements that could be made to the Potter County Jail website.

Chairman Heimel inquired about local participation in National Corrections Officer Recognition Week, May 1-7. Judge Minor asked Warden Milford to look into options for a local observance.

PCoRP Risk Management Assessment update. Warden Milford is compiling the documents and policies requested by consultant Marie Jones.

NEW BUSINESS –

Commissioner Hayman presented an update on plans for a Community Garden. Part of the project is the participation by jail inmates to tend to the garden on Water

Street in Coudersport. Logistics on transportation and security provisions will need to be discussed.

Chairman Heimel reported on a tour of the jail basement, also attended by Commissioner Hayman and Maintenance Director Joe Kurtz. Warden Milford guided the group for a review of the space for possible renovation for use as a Re-entry Center and/or a Day Reporting Center for individuals under court supervision. Jail Board members shared concerns about security and other issues. Other locations will be investigated.

ADJOURNMENT – G. Drake moved; B. Hayman seconded; all in favor.