

**Prison Reform Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes**

October 10, 2018

9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Governor's Crime Commission – Room #100

Board Members Attending: Beth Austin, Art Beeler, Stanley Drewery, Mike Killmer, Dorothy Ledford
Not attending: James French and Stephanie Hollembaek

Department of Public Safety officials attending: Reuben Young, Pam Walker, Kenneth Lassiter, Carlton Joyner, Loris Sutton, Cliff Nichols, Pam Cashwell, Casandra Hoekstra, Jane Gilchrist, Jerry Higgins, Tracy Little

Chairperson Austin welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Interim Chief Deputy Secretary Reuben Young shared that former board member Gary Mohr has taken a position with NCDPS as Senior Executive Advisor for Prison Reform. Chief Deputy Secretary Young stated agency leadership is very excited to have Mr. Mohr onboard and looks forward to Mr. Mohr sharing his expertise and insight. Mr. Mohr was not present at the October 10 meeting; however, Judge Young asked that everyone welcome Mr. Mohr to his new role.

Judge Young acknowledged that Friday, October 12 was the one-year anniversary of the tragedy at Pasquotank Correctional Institution that ultimately claimed the lives of four Prisons employees: Justin Smith, Wendy Shannon, Veronica Darden, and Geoffrey Howe. A moment of silence was observed in their honor.

A motion was made to approve the June 19, 2018 meeting minutes. Minutes were approved as presented.

Due to Mr. Mohr leaving the board, Chair Austin stated that the Advisory Board needed to elect a new vice chair. Chair Austin made a motion to nominate Art Beeler as vice chair. The motion was seconded by Mike Killmer and motion passed.

Mr. Beeler shared that he would like to recognize the recent one-year anniversary of the death of Deputy Secretary Gwen Norville. Mr. Beeler stated Ms. Norville was very involved in Prison initiatives for many years and is deeply missed.

DPS staff presented information on Hurricane Florence response and impact, inmate health care and prison safety and security updates. Copies of the presentations can be found on the [DPS Prison Reform website](#).

Loris Sutton, Prisons Assistant Director of the Security Accountability Section, presented an overview on Hurricane Florence response and impact. Ms. Sutton's responsibilities include management and oversight of the Emergency Response Team and its operations, and she shared Prisons actions during the Hurricane Florence event.

Specifically, the Prisons State Emergency Response Team set up regional and divisional command operations for approximately 10 days. Both regional and divisional teams operated on a 24/7 basis. The primary functions were the evacuations of several prisons and county jails. Ms. Sutton stated Prisons'

management team met several days prior to the hurricane to evaluate storm projections for rainfall, winds and storm surge for facilities in the anticipated path of the storm.

Six prisons - Neuse, New Hanover, Hyde, Pamlico, Tyrrell, and Carteret – were fully evacuated. Hoke was partially evacuated due to a specialized population of dialysis patients. In total, 2,937 offenders were evacuated from state prisons to other facilities across the state. In addition to addressing internal needs, Prisons also received requests from county jails to evacuate and temporarily house their population. Seven county jails - Beaufort, Carteret, Dare, Chowan, Scotland, Duplin, and Lenoir – were evacuated. Lenoir evacuees were not housed in state prisons, but were transported to other county jails. A total of 694 county jail offenders were evacuated. Approximately 150 offenders were evacuated from the DART Cherry substance abuse facility and housed at the former Fountain Correctional Center.

Prisons also assisted in the movement of military personnel and private citizens. Ms. Sutton stated no incidents of escape, injury or loss of life were reported during these movements. She noted it was a long process for everyone and facility staff are commended for a job well done. Mike Killmer commended Prisons staff for a great job during Hurricane Florence.

Terri Catlett, Deputy Director of Health Services, provided a presentation on Healthcare and Mental Health Services Ms. Catlett stated the mission of Health Services is to provide or coordinate the administration of comprehensive health care services that meet the physical and mental health needs of incarcerated offenders. She noted the general health status of offenders is declining and the average age of offenders is increasing.

Services provided to the offender population include medical/surgical care, behavioral health care, dental care, and nursing care. Service levels include primary, specialty, inpatient, and residential care. Primary care services are provided at all 55 prison facilities, three Confinement in Response to Violation centers, and two residential Alcohol and Chemical Dependency Program facilities across the state. Specialty care services are provided at select facilities: Central Prison, NC Correctional Institution for Women, Piedmont, Alexander, and Maury Correctional. Mr. Beeler requested that Mr. Mohr review the Health Services organizational structure to determine what is most appropriate for resource allocation and program functions.

Tracy Little provided a presentation on Prison Safety and Security Updates. Ms. Little presented updates based on the following strategic plan framework categories:

- Enhancing Security Policies and Practices
- Reducing Contraband in Prison Facilities
- Improving Training for New and Veteran Employees
- Increasing Hiring and Retention

Specific updates include:

- Radios, batons and pepper spray are being provided to certified staff in facilities at all custody levels.
- Whistles are being deployed to all non-certified staff who currently are not assigned a radio. Stanley Drewery shared that he had received very positive feedback from across the state regarding the whistles.
- Personal body alarm “man down” technology is being piloted at three facilities: Harnett, Franklin and Nash Correctional. Installation is underway and the agency intends to have “pin-point” location ability down at the pilot sites by November. Personal alarm lanyards will also be issued to all visitors.
- The Reducing Contraband workgroup is visiting South Carolina and Virginia as well as federal institutions in Butner to learn from their practices and to see what can be used in NC’s prisons.

Mr. Killmer asked if the agency has statistics on the types of contraband and how it is coming in to facilities. If so, what does the data show? Ms. Sutton responded that Prisons management relies on the facilities to document such information when an incident occurs. Ms. Sutton offered to query the facilities and pull the data for Mr. Killmer and provide it at the next meeting.

Nicole Sullivan, Director - Reentry, Programs and Services, and Assistant Director Sarah Cobb facilitated a discussion of member engagement questions. The members discussed two questions that were previously provided to them.

The first question was:

Recognizing that the agency cannot hire its way out of the pressing issue with vacancy rates, what strategies do you recommend the agency use for hiring and retaining employees in challenging times?

Member comments generally fell in the following categories:

- Promote Corrections Profession
- Provide Incentives
- Develop Career Pathways
- Enhance Recruitment Strategy
- Improve Hiring Process

The second question was:

In your opinion, what are the most important aspects of workforce development to ensure that our front-line and supervisory staff are adequately trained for their current roles and prepared to move into higher level positions in the future?

Member comments generally fell in the following categories:

- Develop Career Pathways
- Assess System-wide Perceptions
- Prioritize Specific Training

Board members expressed they liked the facilitator format, and they would like to continue the concept in future meetings.

Ms. Little requested future discussion topics from board members. Chair Austin noted that 2019 meeting dates to be discussed in the coming weeks.

Chair Austin adjourned the meeting at 12:09 pm.

Approved 11/14/18 - TAL