



Prison Board  
Don Myers, President  
Katie Charlton, Vice President  
Jason Renshaw, Secretary  
Frank Pitzer  
Pat Fabian  
Myra L. Miller  
James J. Panchik

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*County Jail*  
**COUNTY OF ARMSTRONG**

**August 11, 2022**

**ARMSTRONG COUNTY PRISON BOARD**

A meeting of the Armstrong County Prison Board was called to order on Thursday, August 11th, 2022 at 8:30am. Meeting held in the Courtroom #1.

Members Present: Commissioner Myers, Commissioner Renshaw, Commissioner Fabian, Judge Panchik, District Attorney Katie Charlton, Sheriff Frank Pitzer, Controller Miller, Solicitor Miller (via phone)

Others Present: Warden Hicks, Deputy Warden Prazenica, Chief Administrator – A. Poole, Chrissy Creel (Jail)

Absent:

Guests: Dennis Phillips (Leader Times), Josh Wlazak (Leader-Vindicator), Betty Fischer (Sec-Treas. Teamsters 538), Amanda Bundick (Atty – Teamsters 538), Matt Hassa (Jail), Jeff Bailey (Jail), Cody Heeter (Jail), Heather Smail (Jail), Nicole Dunn (Jail), John Fox Jr. (Jail), Melzina Barkfelt, Mike Woodside, Dan Lucovich, Debra Sinclair, Cindy Hassa, John Davis, Jennifer Marsh, Jacob Hassa, Michele Bailey, Jim Bowser, Mark Kerr, Darlene Smail, Jorn Jenson, Becky Wright

Commissioner Myers announced that this meeting is being recorded.

**APPROVAL OF JULY 14<sup>TH</sup> MINUTES**

On a motion by Judge Panchik, seconded by Sheriff Pitzer and carried unanimously; the minutes for July 14th, 2022 Prison Board Meeting were approved.

**APPROVAL OF JULY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

On a motion by Judge Panchik, seconded by Sheriff Pitzer and carried unanimously; the Financial Reports for July 2022 were approved.

## WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden's Report was presented by Warden Hicks.

On a motion by Commissioner Fabian, seconded by Controller Miller and carried unanimously; the Warden's Report for July was approved.

## OLD BUSINESS

### **1. Siren Tested on August 11th, 2022**

## NEW BUSINESS

1. **Staff Trainings** – Warden Hicks stated that there were no trainings done this month as it is vacation season. Next trainings will be in September with the range and emergency plans. Hicks also stated she would like to start sending officers to the Department of Corrections Training Academy but the Jail is still short staffed.
2. **Prison Board Solicitor - Invoice** – Warden Hicks stated that Solicitor Miller only had two hours last month and this month and that since he was unable to attend (only by phone) that he would just put it on next month's invoice.
3. **Reorganization Part (3)** - Warden Hicks stated that she would like to table this until a later date if possible as the plan needs some work.
4. **Taxpayer Savings Through Best Practices Group Update** – Warden Hicks stated that there were several ideas presented. 1) Bench Warrants (missing Hearings) – ideas on ways for an inmate to update their address/phone number upon release. 2) Inviting a member of Probation Department to attend this meeting to hear their ideas. 3) Inmate Jail Debt being added to the court costs on a plea deal. 4) Out of County Warrant Inmates – adding a timeline for these inmates to be picked up. 5) Commissioner Fabian also suggested that the Chief Public Defender be added or requested to attend these meetings as well.
5. **Lowering the Hiring Limits – To Meet Staffing Needs** - Warden Hicks stated that due to the Jail's staffing issues that the Board consider hiring 18-21 year olds. Hicks wants to possibly recruit from our local Lenape Vo-Tech school to see if anyone would be interested in working at the Jail upon graduating. Hicks has checked with other Wardens and around half of the PA counties are already doing this. The law also covers 18-21 year olds to carry a firearm because a corrections officer is considered part of law enforcement in their job duties. The Department of Corrections Academy (DOC) is now certifying 18-21 year olds for counties without issue. The DOC is also working on hiring them as well. Hicks also stated that the county's insurance company said that they did not oppose and it would not drastically impact rates. D.A. Charlton wanted clarification on the insurance to know exactly if the premiums would increase or not. Aaron Poole is to check. Charlton also wanted clarification regarding transports and housing inmates. Judge Panchik suggested that we reach out to Lenape and see if they are interested and see if an internship program

could be started. Panchik stated the main reason being the Jail is such a foreign and institutionalized atmosphere that it is a shock when you walk through the doors. Commissioner Myers will reach out to them. Myers also stated that if all these boxes are checked and a policy is made and reviewed by the Solicitor then the Board would move forward with consideration.

6. **Cleveland Brothers – Control Panel (Generator)** – Warden Hicks stated she has received an email from Cleveland Brothers that during their recent assessment that they had advised the previous administration of problems with the control panel. The panel is outdated and you can no longer order parts for it. There is a 20-30 week waiting period for a new one and the Jail would be without a generator in an unplanned outage. Hicks stated that if we schedule the upgrade at our convenience that it would only be about a week to complete the upgrade and that the Jail could borrow a generator from the County to use during this fix. The cost would be \$23,325.00 plus the cost of an electrician to hook it up. Commissioner Fabian asked if they were a co-star vendor and if they weren't that it would need to be put out for bid.

On a motion by Commissioner Fabian, seconded by Controller Miller (pending confirmation of Cleveland Brothers being a co-star vendor) and carried unanimously; to recommend to the Board of Commissioners to move forward with the upgrade of the control panel on the generator.

7. **Gardening Club – Work Release** – Warden Hicks stated that she has been thinking of ways to utilize inmates, specifically females, who meet the qualifications of work-release that could do projects that could benefit the community. Hicks suggested about a garden club funded by the IRF account and have the females put a garden in the fenced in area to grow flowers and food that could be donated to the elderly thru Community Action and local food banks. Commissioner Fabian suggested to contact Penn State Extension – Master Gardener Program to help with cost, tools, seeding, and education.
8. **Temporary Lieutenant Position** – Warden Hicks stated that one of the Lieutenants has gone off on medical leave while another has just been hired but is just in training. Hicks would like to create this temporary position until their return. Both unions have no verbal objections.

On a motion by Controller Miller, seconded by Sheriff Pitzer and carried unanimously; the recommendation to Salary Board pending more discussions between both unions and the county's labor attorney to create a temporary lieutenant's position and how it would affect the existing bargaining agreements.

9. **Part-Time Nurse Positions** – Warden Hicks stated the Jail is down 3 full-time LPN positions which is being currently covered by an outside on-call agency. It is costing the county \$70 per hour vs. the \$17.95 per hour rate for a county LPN. Hicks stated there is currently one individual interested in part-time only at the moment. Hicks stated these 2 positions would only be temporary until the 3 full-time positions are filled.

On a motion by Controller Miller, seconded by District Attorney Charlton and carried unanimously; the recommendation to Salary Board pending more discussions from the

nurse's union and the county's labor attorney to create two temporary part-time LPN positions.

10. **IMAT Grant ending 9-29-22** – Warden Hicks stated that this grant is ending the end of next month. Hicks contacted Kami Anderson about this and Anderson stated as of right now there isn't any funding posted. Anderson hopes to continue this program but would have to look at alternate ways to fund. Anderson mentioned the opioid settlement money that should be available the end of August with Commissioner Fabian adding that that money is being currently discussed on ways to use. District Attorney and Commissioner Fabian asked Warden Hicks if she could get figures on what it cost to do this program.
11. **Psych Doctor – Maxim Healthcare Staffing** – Warden Hicks stated that the Jail is still without a psych doctor. Hicks had found a company out of Pittsburgh – Maxim Healthcare Staffing to provide a quote. However, they said there was not enough billable hours for them to be interested (they wanted 40 hours per week). The jail was asking for 1 hour on Tuesdays so Hicks asked for 2 hours. They said they would see but Hicks stated that this looks like it will fall thru as well. Controller Miller asked about online (Telehealth) ways of doing it and Hicks stated that this company was suggesting that but Hicks was concerned about the extra staff and costs that that would incur.
12. **Sheriff Update 1. Contraband 2. K9 Unit Utilized** – Warden Hicks wanted to acknowledge the Sheriff's department on their due diligence in stopping an inmate from bringing a pen back to the Jail after stealing it from one of the public defenders. Another incident was the Sheriff's department deputy and his K-9 responded within an hour of Hicks calling to search an area of the Jail for drugs. No drugs were found. Commissioner Fabian thanked Sheriff Pitzer and his department and as it had been suggested in the past, that these sweeps continue.
13. **Warden Hicks to Address Prison Board and BOC on Repairs** – Warden Hicks just wanted to thank the Board for addressing issues, problems, answering questions, approving repairs, etc. in the last month. Hicks stated it had been a stressful, busy month and she couldn't have gotten thru it without their help.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION –**

Commissioner Myers called for an executive session at 9:47am for personnel reasons; Motioned by Commissioner Fabian, seconded by Controller Miller and carried unanimously.

The Board reconvened from executive session at 10:00 am; Motioned by Commissioner Fabian, seconded by Controller Miller and carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** – Amanda Bundick (Atty for Teamsters Local 538) stated that they were invited to attend today's meeting after their previous meeting was cancelled by the Commissioners. Bundick spoke at length about the lack of corrections officers currently at the Jail saying that the corrections officers don't have any more to give. Bundick said that you have to pay people to work and above poverty-level wages. This has caused mandatory overtime, with some officers working as many as

three to four double shifts each week. Bundick stated that the commissioners have said that they can't just give raises because of the union contracts but Bundick said the union is always in favor of its members making more money. Bundick stated that the issues are not the Jail's Warden's fault. Bundick said the county needs to quickly provide raises for current employees, boost pay levels for new hires, pay the employees their promised COVID bonuses, and increase safety measures at the Jail to eliminate consecutive doubles to name a few. Commissioner Myers responded that this Board has the utmost respect for all their staff but this meeting was not a contract negotiation session. Myers mentioned that the last contract was mutually agreed upon, with no arbitration needed. Myers also stated they have an obligation to taxpayers to look at all alternatives. Judge Panchik, speaking on behalf of the courts, stated that the complaints being spoken about were directed at the board of commissioners, specifically, and he has and will continue to speak out on behalf of the officers. Union Steward Hassa said the older officers like him did not get a 20% raise as Commissioner Myers stated. The increase on the starting wage has not brought new people in – it did not work. Jeff Bailey, who recently retired from Clarion Co. Jail and is now full-time at ACJ, stated that Clarion does not have any staffing or mandate issues. Bailey has family members working at Jefferson County who aren't experiencing the staffing or mandate issues either. Bailey suggested to reach out to these other counties and see what they are doing. Commissioner Myers ended the conversations after the public's allotted time was up. Betty Fischer, secretary-treasurer Teamsters Local 538, asked the commissioners to speak to all attending after the other Prison Board members were dismissed. Fischer stated they were told they would have no time limit.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, it was motioned by Controller Miller, seconded by Commissioner Fabian and carried unanimously; the Board adjourned at 10:28 AM.

The next Armstrong County Prison Board meeting will be held on September 8th, 2022 at 8:30am. Location is to be determined.

ARMSTRONG COUNTY PRISON BOARD

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason Renshaw".

Commissioner Jason Renshaw, Secretary