

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF CORRECTIONS  
LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Regular Meeting .....September 15, 2010

Location .....6900 Atmore Drive, Richmond, Virginia

Presiding..... John Roberts, Chairman

Present .....Peter Decker, III, Chairman, Board of Corrections  
B. A. Washington, Member, Board of Corrections  
Rev. Anthony C. Paige, Member, Board of Corrections  
Cynthia Alksne, Vice Chairman, Board of Corrections  
William Osborne, Member, Board of Corrections  
Bruce Conover, Northwestern Regional Adult Detention Center  
Steve Draper, Sheriff, Martinsville City Jail  
Jeff Frazier, Superintendent, Northern Neck Regional Jail  
Elton Blackstock, Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority  
Gabe Morgan, Sheriff, Newport News City Jail  
Mike Jones, Moseley Architect  
Robyn deSocio, Compensation Board  
Gary Bass, Classification and Records, DOC  
Kim Lipp, Architecture and Engineering, DOC  
Brooks Ballard, Architecture and Engineering, DOC  
Bill Wilson, Compliance and Accreditation, DOC  
Donna Foster, Compliance and Accreditation, DOC

The meeting was called to order and attendees were welcomed.

**I. Committee Chairman (John Roberts)**

- Mr. Roberts welcomed the new committee members, as well as the new Chairman of the Board of Corrections, Mr. Peter Decker, III. He then called for a motion to approve the July minutes. By MOTION duly made and seconded, the minutes were unanimously APPROVED by the attending committee members.

**II. Meeting Summary**

Robyn deSocio reported the following:

- There is little new to report. There are only a couple funding requests to report, alternative detention of non-violent offenders, the standard inmate forecasting process and recommended changes to state responsible inmate populations in the 1-2 year time period. The training program for managing jail risks has been put on hold due to some changes in the Compensation (Comp.) Board's administration budget. The final policy committee meeting will be next week regarding per diem funding. The adequacy of funding will be better determined in the next few weeks.

Mr. Roberts asked about the administrative budget cuts for the Comp. Board. Ms. deSocio answered the jail costs accountant had recently retired, but the two LIDs auditors who had been assisting him for the past couple years will be filling in for his position regarding the jail costs report. She said the Comp. Board had lost quite a bit of funding leading up to last year and the was not a large loss realized in the last legislative session. Altogether, the Comp. Board lost about 30% of the funding for the administrative operations. Fortunately, they were able to avoid staff layoffs through position elimination and restructuring.

Kim Lipp reported the following:

- The Mt. Rogers/Grayson Facility is close to completion. She shared a nighttime photo to illustrate the low glow lighting to reduce nighttime light pollution. The project has been recognized by the International Dark Sky Association and won an award in 2009 for the effort. Once funded, the facility will house 1,036 beds. During testing for final occupancy, it was determined that a fire pump must be installed. This requires several months for completion and it is not expected to be finished until January or February. This results in a costly error for the construction vendor who supplied the fire suppression system. There are 6 staff members in the administration building who exercise the systems. Cynthia Alksne asked if anyone would be housed there or if it could be rented. Ms. Lipp said that the project is not funded to open and although advertised for rent (for contract prisoners) there has been no viable commitment. Ms. Alksne asked what costs were involved in maintenance staff to exercise systems. Ms. Lipp estimated \$700 thousand this year, but the operating budget was estimated at roughly \$25 million if opened. Elton Blackstock asked if the upcoming budget plan would include a request to fund the facility to house inmates. Gary Bass responded that it is included in the budget plan for FY12, but forecast numbers for state responsible and local responsible inmates has decreased. Ms. Lipp stated that people in the locality have been hoping for the employment opportunities, so it is likely that legislators are being lobbied to open the prison.

Mr. Osborne stated that the local facilities in the southwestern regions of the state are overcrowded. Mr. Bass said that eight state facilities have been closed

and 1,000 beds have been contracted at another facility which has shifted the emphasis from the DOC to the jails. The decision was made due to jail bed vacancies in some localities. What Mr. Bass is seeing now is requests by the jails for inmates. Mr. Osborne stated that he was hearing complaints that the localities are having to supplement funding for the jails due to overcrowding. Mr. Bass replied that that is partly due to reduced funding by the General Assembly. He added that there are some jails that are full and some that have vacant beds such as the Western Regional Jail in Salem which is requesting offenders. Ms. Lipp advised Mr. Osborne that localities complaining about overcrowding may want to discuss the issue with Mr. Bass so that offenders can be moved to another facility.

Reverend Paige asked which facilities needed replacement. Ms. Lipp responded that there are a number of facilities that need replacement such as Powhatan Correctional Center. Rev. Paige asked if the Grayson facility could be used as a replacement for these inmates. Ms. Lipp said that Powhatan houses level 3 offenders and Grayson is set up as a higher level of security prison. Gabe Morgan asked if there is a plan to decommission Powhatan, and Ms. Lipp stated that funding was requested to replace the prison about 3 years ago. Grayson is not a viable replacement for Powhatan primarily due to location. Powhatan is centrally located and Grayson is in southwestern Virginia. This would require layoffs of the Powhatan staff (approximately 350 people) and the hiring and training of staff for Grayson. Powhatan is a reception center with a medical and mental health facility which would increase transportation costs. There are multiple operations at Powhatan even though it is an old facility. Mr. Bass advised that the current budget calls for the closing of another prison next year, but it won't be a prison as large as the Powhatan facility. Ms. Alksne asked when the next budget proposal was due. Ms. deSocio said that the time frame has not yet been announced, but would likely be the end of the current month.

Gary Bass Reported the following:

- There are currently 432 inmates on work release. He is getting requests for inmates from the jails. The out-of-compliance rate is currently 3,395 and he expects the numbers to basically maintain at this level. The governor is an advocate of a strong re-entry program. The DOC has submitted a comprehensive re-entry plan to the governor's office and expects a response to the plan sometime in October. Even though there is currently a re-entry program in place, only about half of the offenders complete the current plan. The new plan would apply to a larger portion of the inmate population. This is in a format that is considered governor's working papers only and cannot be assimilated at this time. Mr. Blackstock said that this could have a direct impact on local budgets. There were some suggestions that the re-entry programs may be returned as a DOC function, rather than a jail function, to reduce impacts on local budgets. Mr. Bass advised that it has been considered from different perspectives. Bruce Conover agreed that the re-entry program is a good

program, but consideration for training plans has fallen short. He suggests a work transition plan following the training program for transitioning back to society. Mr. Bass said that part of the new re-entry plan would include earlier identification of offenders for training followed by re-entry transitioning. Mr. Morgan added that transitional housing would be beneficial to prepare inmates for release. Mr. Bass explained that this is part of the consideration especially for inmates with medical and assisted living needs. The DOC cannot control this issue in some instances. When Mr. Bass asked if the problem is from the DOC or from the community, Mr. Morgan said the problem is from all aspects. Mr. Bass described the difficulty in finding acceptable locations for parole offices due to the community protests that require the relocation of offices. Re-entry housing has become a much more difficult issue.

Sheriff Draper noted that he is on the governor's re-entry council and has found this to be a problem, but even more opposition is shown toward mental health challenges because there is a lot of non-compliance with continuation of medications and other mental health behaviors. Mr. Bass agreed that the jails and the DOC are primary sources of mental health providers in today's climate.

Mr. Bass advised the committee members that the DOC was recently given an IT award for the CORIS database.

Mr. Blackstock explained to the members that the sheriffs' offices and regional jails have been forced to find creative methods to generate revenue due to funding reductions which may answer the reasoning behind the requests for more inmates. His jails (Blue Ridge Regional Jail Authority) have had a \$2.8 million budget reduction. The operational capacity as determined by the DOC is around 760 inmates and he has 950-1,000 on a daily basis. He has been forced to double bunk areas that would not normally be double bunked in order to generate revenue. The jail contract beds program previously paid \$28/day and has been reduced to \$12/day. There have been per diem reductions as well. The jails are struggling to generate revenue. When jails and schools are facing locality funding reductions, the jails fall to the bottom of the list for priority funding. There is currently a survey being generated to identify the double and triple bunking that has occurred to help fund the jails. The additional beds have been used as a method to offset the cuts experienced by the jails. Ms. deSocio pointed out that part of the funding reductions are due to reduced local responsible inmate populations. Mr. Morgan added that he considers the double bunking capacities survey, which should show that capacities are currently near double what the DOC determined as capacities, an assessment that is counter productive for the jails who are trying to generate revenue. He stated that he is very concerned with the population inventory and the trend with the legislators' attempt to push back the funding requirements to the localities. Bill Wilson said that this is one of the concerns being addressed in the survey. The additional beds are not included in the design. There is a priority to express this reality to the legislature. Most localities have expressed safety concerns exceeding the

additional bunking but have no other option due to funding reductions. Mr. Wilson said that the misconception with the legislature is an assumption that eventually, the facility will request approval for additional beds over the operational capacity. Ms. Alksne stated that the jail needs to be designed for the total eventual capacity from the start, to account for HVAC, kitchen, medical etc., requirements in the initial design. She suggested that specific concerns should be in writing and will be submitted to each legislator. B. A. Washington asked if the facilities are asking for fewer beds than they feel they will eventually need because they do not think they will be approved for the total that they will require. Mr. Wilson stated that the Meherrin River locality had requested a 798 bed facility and the legislature approved the facility for 400 saying they could double bunk for the remaining bed requirements. The legislative limitations are due to budget shortages. For other facilities, they can only fund (locally) a facility of a certain size and end up building in phases. Mr. Conover added that the jail population requires flexibility due to weekend population increases. Ms. Alksne stressed that the square foot allowances of the operational standards need to reflect the ACA standards and a realistic capacity. The next meeting of the construction standards committee will be October 12 at 9:00 a.m. at 6900 Atmore Road, Richmond, VA, in the A&E conference room. Ms. Alksne invited the Liaison Committee members to attend.

Bill Wilson reported the following:

- Patrick County is due to open in December. Loudoun County should be opening in the spring of 2011 with 211 additional beds. Amherst County is about 55% complete. RSW (an official designation - Rappahannock, Shenandoah and Warren Counties are represented in this jail) has purchased the facility site. Meherrin has broken ground on the 400 bed facility. Richmond is undecided to the best of his knowledge. Rockbridge is undecided if they will build an expansion.
- Jeff Frazier has retired from his position at Northern Neck Regional Jail. Mr. Frazier has served on the committee since 2007 and he will be missed.  
  
Mr. Roberts asked Mr. Decker to appoint a new member to replace Mr. Frazier.
- Mr. Roberts asked that a directory of the Liaison Committee members be provided for the members.

By MOTION duly made by the guest Chairman of the Liaison Committee, Elton Blackstock, and seconded by several members in attendance, and unanimously APPROVED, the meeting was adjourned.