

CORRECTIONS COMMISSION MEETING

Third Floor Conference Room
South Dakota State Penitentiary
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

May 13, 2005
9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Senator J.P. Duniphan, Commission Chairperson; Committee Members: Paul Aylward, Brad Drake, Representative Pat Haley, Senator Garry Moore, and Representative Casey Murschel

Others Present: Interim Secretary of Corrections Doug Weber, Deputy Secretary of Corrections Laurie Feiler; Dave Schiefen, Policy and Compliance Manager; SDSP Associate Warden Owen Spurrell; Human Resource Manager Kirk Edison; Parole Director Ed Ligtenberg; Classification and Transfer Manager Rick Leslie; Pheasantland Industries Director Bob Rae, Lawrence Schroeder, and Mary Burgraaf, Secretary

Agenda Item Number One: Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Senator Duniphan and a quorum was present.

A motion was made by Paul Aylward to approve the minutes from February 28, 2005. Representative Haley seconded. The motion carried.

Agenda Item Number Two: Community Transition Program/Transition Case Manager

Rick Leslie reported on the Community Transition Program. It was created in August of 2004 to assist those inmates who were approved for parole but lacked acceptable housing arrangements. It is used in Yankton, Sioux Falls, Redfield, Rapid City and Pierre. The first offender was put in the program on 10/13/2004 and to date there have been 353 participants. The offenders in the community transition program are treated like they are at a community corrections facility. They are mixed with inmates who have to abide by the guidelines of the regular DOC institutions. There were some initial hurdles that had to be overcome at the minimum custody units because of this.

As of today, there were 75 Community Transition Program offenders in Unit C, 41 in Yankton, 10 in Rapid City, and 14 in Pierre. Communities that are interested in the Community Transition Program should contact Mr. Ligtenberg about information on the need and how successful offenders can be in other areas of the state. There may be offenders who would like to go to other communities in the state but a facility has not been identified there. The DOC is open to look at other communities if job opportunities are available for transitioning.

Three Transitional Case Managers have been hired to identify those offenders who may/will benefit from the Community Transition Program. Assistance from a Transitional Case Manager is especially important for those offenders needing sex offender services in the community, offenders who have mental health issues and need services in the community, and those offenders having difficulty finding appropriate housing. There are also high-risk offenders who cannot always put together their release plan. Some other offenders don't have all the support programs or a career center available to them. The Transition Case Managers can help the offenders with these.

Parole agents feel that offenders need at least \$1,500 to get started/set-up in the community. To help the offender succeed while on parole, the parole agent works out a compromise so that child support is waived for a period of time until they are on their feet. The offender's payroll while in the Community Transition Program is deposited into the inmate banking system.

Currently the Community Transition Program comprises 4.5 % of the adult offenders incarcerated in the Department of Corrections. The offenders in this program are considered to be in a better position to succeed in the community. 91.6% of the offenders who have graduated from this program are succeeding in their community placement. Comparatively, the success rate for offenders going straight to parole is 65 percent.

The challenges within the Community Transition Program are finding quality, good paying jobs. With the label of "inmate", this can be difficult for a lot of offenders. Also, some offender job skills are not very marketable. We have no data to compare the prior salaries/pay of offenders to what they are earning now. There is no comparative data as to what parolees in other states earn.

The question of a concentration of sex offenders located in one area of the state was raised. Currently, most community aftercare resources are available in Sioux Falls. However, services have been developed in approximately twelve different areas throughout the state.

We are beginning to get some national attention on the Community Transition Program. The NIC has contacted us because no other state has a program such as this. The Corrections Commission recommended that this program be presented to the Midwest Legislative Conference later this summer.

Agenda Item Number Three: Rapid City Land Issue

Mr. Weber provided the latest report on the Rapid City land that was intended for a minimum custody unit. FEMA is still reviewing the status of the land to determine if it is within a flood plain. The seller is willing to buy this parcel of land back if FEMA determines that it is within a flood plain. The DOC has until July 1, 2006 before this land needs to be sold back (or the DOC moves forward with building plans).

Agenda Item Number Four: Prison Industries

Mr. Rae reported on Pheasantland Industries. One shop is doubling in size. Negotiations are underway to bring in another private sector operation to make parts that are currently out-sourced overseas. The jobs would be minimum wage labor. It is projected that this shop will provide 25 jobs. Low-medium, high-medium and maximum custody inmates would be working at these jobs. The question was raised why minimum custody inmates were not looked at for these jobs since they are normally closer to release and needing money. Many minimum custody inmates are in the Community Transition Program or have work release jobs and already earn more than the minimum wage.

The Native American craft shop was closed because of no market for the products. Leaders of the Native American community felt this was a good project when it was started. It was criticized as a project by a minority. The Native American craft shop still employs one inmate who makes ceremonial drums.

We are opening another shop to do graphics for the Braille Shop. This will be the first such prison shop in the nation to work specifically on Braille graphics. Initially 10 inmates will begin the operation, with a possibility of up to 40 inmates eventually being employed in this shop.

Agenda Item Number Five: Construction Update

Associate Warden Spurrell gave an update on the construction of Jameson Annex Unit D. The construction process was unique in that a maximum-security building is being built within a maximum custody facility. A new perimeter needed to be constructed first and it is projected that in July we will need to re-establish the original perimeter fence and all people and products will go through the security entrances. Construction is on target for completion of the 192-bed facility. The budget is also on target as there have been very few add-ons or adjustments. A tour of the construction site followed the adjournment.

Mr. Weber reported on the Mike Durfee State Prison (MDSP) construction project. Work is being completed on the interior now. The target date for occupation of the 400 bed housing unit is 7/1/2005. The dining room/kitchen and laundry are also on the time and budget target. It was suggested that the Fall Corrections Commission meeting take place in Springfield to view that project.

Mr. Weber, with input from Senator Moore, reported on the Government Audit & Operations Committee (GAOC) meeting in Springfield with the MDSP staff. They were pleased with the response and exchange of information. The discussion was open and frank and the Committee was impressed with the staff. Communications is a real issue. The Committee felt that communications were not coming down to the line staff, i.e. Lieutenants to the correctional officers. The Committee felt more officers were needed at MDSP.

Staff and inmates had the same concerns. Concerns about more radios and cameras not being wired were issues with staff. Contraband is a real issue. Chew (chewing tobacco) is a symbol of power. Pay and benefits for correctional officers is an issue. PACE program quickly brings salary up. The turnover in Sioux Falls is 20% and single digits in Pierre and Springfield. Management, pay and how we handle inmates have helped with the turnover. Flextime versus overtime was also an issue; BOP dictates how these are used.

Currently the applicant pool is excellent with many qualified applicants. DOC now only advertises when we have an open position; unlike in years past when we had a continual opening. Statewide, the starting salary for a correctional officer for FY2006 is \$11.75 per hour. If we can keep an officer for two years, they usually become long-term employees.

Agenda Item Number Six: Date and Location of the next meeting

Next meeting in September at Springfield. Please check your schedules and notify Ms. Feiler for dates that work for you.

Agenda Item Number Seven: Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chair

Election of officers: Rep. Murschel nominated Senator Duniphan for Chair with Brad Drake (?) seconded. The motion for nomination closed by Senator Moore and Seconded by Brad Drake. Unanimous ballots were cast for Senator Duniphan.

Senator Moore nominated Representative Pat Haley for Vice-Chair, seconded by Paul Alyward. Nomination ceased and the vote was unanimous for Representative Haley.

Agenda Item Number Eight: Adjourn

Senator Duniphan called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Representative Haley made the motion for adjournment.
Brad Drake seconded.
The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned