

Department of Corrections

Prison Issues Board

Montana State Prison
400 Conley Lake Road
Deer Lodge, MT
September 22, 2020
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

I. Call to order

Pat Smith advised the next meeting will be held in January 2021 during the legislative session, place and times will be announced once the legislative schedule is set. He then called to order the regular meeting of the Prison Issues Board of the Department of Corrections at 9:05 a.m. on September 22, 2020 at Montana State Prison.

II. Roll call

The following members of the committee were present: Pat Smith/Chairman, Peter Bludworth/ CCC, Steve Grubb/GFRP, Tom Green/DCCF, Steve Ray/ Pine Hills, Jennie Hansen/ MWP, Jim Salmonsens/MSP, Reginal Michaels/DOC Director, and Cynthia Wolken/DOC Deputy Director.

Quorum is present.

The following persons were also present: Colleen Ambrose, Kurt Aughney, Griffin Burns, Chris Connell, DJ Godfrey, Kiela Harris, Noah Hatton, Kimberly Lamb, Laurie Mills, Kathy Rolston, Pat Schlauch, Alicia Tangen, and Mark Wlazlak.

Members of the public present: Clemente Arciga, Micah Braided Hair, Marcos Bullchild, Josh Butterfly, Brenton Littledog, Laurie Littledog, May Simmons and Dana Tenas.

III. Approval of Minutes

Warden Hansen moved to approve the minutes from last meeting. Acting Warden Salmonsens seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Update from Director Michaels

- a) Director Michaels discussed COVID-19 affects to the Department of Corrections facilities and thanked staff of the work done to keep COVID-19 out of our facilities.

- b) Director Michaels announced Jim Salmons as the Acting Warden of Montana State Prison after the resignation of Lynn Guyer. The process of selecting a new Warden for Montana State Prison has begun.
- c) Transportation from county jails to DOC facilities has been a focus. Transportation has been slowed to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our DOC facilities. Director Michaels discussed the Cascade County judge's order and its effect to our operations at the Great Falls Regional Prison.

V. Review of Locked Housing

- a) AW Godfrey addressed the committee regarding actions taken to adhere to House Bill 763. Implementation of changes at Montana State Prison began in January 2020. A major action taken was changing one of our locked housing units into a Secure Adjustment Unit and increased the amount of time offenders are out of their cells. Other modifications include a risk reduction model implemented, adjustments to our level system in the Restrictive Housing unit, increased group activities/programming in the locked housing units and additional staff training in first-aid mental health, de-escalation and cognitive based programming. MSP has been able to reduce the length of stay and the number of offenders in the restrictive housing unit as well as reduced the number of mandatory lockups. Offenders released from the Restrictive Housing Unit directly to the community has also been reduced.

VI. Review of Property and Canteen List Inventories

- a) AW Godfrey reviewed Inmate Canteen Requests with Committee. All members approved the Food Requests reviewed. All members approved the Non-Food Requests reviewed. AW Godfrey discussed the security concern of hygiene products offered on canteen not in clear bottles. A popular brand of shampoo/conditioner is only available in a purple bottle. AW Godfrey will continue to research what brands are available in the clear bottle. All members approved the Hobby Requests reviewed. Warden Hansen recommended limits to length of hobby items should be specific to each hobby item. AW Godfrey agreed and will impose limits on leather and horsehair only. Warden Hansen inquired about the makeup change request. AW Godfrey will submit the makeup list changes to committee for email approvals.

VII. IWF Annual Budget

- a) Kiela Harris, Budget Analyst for DOC, reviewed IWF FY20 Expenditure Summary. IWF FY21 budget was created the same as FY20 until we met and decided how to move forward. For FY21, the budget was \$200,000 less due to the additional spending authority requested at the end of FY20. Current cash balance as of this morning is \$1,042,712. Pat Smith asked if the \$200,000 additional authority carries over to the following year. Kiela Harris confirmed it does go away at the end of the fiscal year and needs to be re-requested. Committee discussed options on how to move forward with approval of the IWF FY21 budget. Acting Warden Salmonsens recommended the MSP budget be reduced by \$68,109 at this time for committee approval, then contingent on approval of additional authority, \$68,109 will go back into the MSP budget and the rest will go into the Global Fund. Committee approved IWF FY21 budget unanimously.
- b) Cindy Hiner requested the purchase of a greenhouse at Riverside Special Needs Unit with IWF funds. Approximate cost for 12x16 greenhouse is \$2999. Superintendent Steve Ray moved to approve with contingency of getting spending authority approved, Acting Warden Jim Salmonsens seconded. Motion approved by committee.

VIII. Roundtable

- a) Montana Women's Prison – Warden Hansen discussed inability to do Family Day as usual but are having their first annual MWP Got Talent show at the end of the month with 15 inmates performing. Performances will be recorded and sent home to families.
- b) Pine Hills – Pine Hills has their farm up and going. Residents were out haying this summer. Handful of residents and staff tested positive for COVID. Very few positive cases are symptomatic, especially residents.
- c) CCC – Warden Bludworth discussed upcoming conference call to move forward with the tablets and the video visitation at CCC.
- d) GFRP – State Unit Manager Grubb discussed COVID issues at GFRP. Inmates are tested weekly. Limiting all movement in facility to slow the spread of COVID-19 virus.
- e) DCCF – Warden Green not available to comment.
- f) MSP – Acting Warden Salmonsens reported zero cases of COVID-19 with MSP inmates. Movement between units has been limited throughout the

pandemic to limit spread of virus. MSP is continuing COVID-19 Sentinel testing for inmates and staff. MSP has recently launched email on the offender tablets and has been very popular among offender population.

- g) Kurt Aughney– Discussed proposed policy change of indigent status from \$15 to \$18. Indigent policy has not been updated since 2017. Adjusting the indigent status to \$18 would open qualification of “indigent status” to more offenders. Griffin Burns will submit the draft of the proposed change to the committee for review.

IX. Public Comment

- a) Laurie Littledog – Discussed concerns with COVID at Montana State Prison, High Side windows, parole plans, and offender census reporting.
- b) Josh Butterfly with Project Opening Doors – Discussed concerns regarding religious activities, the hygiene policy regarding hair cutting, and transparency of IWF funds.
- c) Micah Braided Hair – Discussed religious materials for Native Americans, email availability throughout all facilities, and census concerns.
- d) Clemente Arciga of Welcome Back – Discussed tablets/emails availability for all DOC offenders, indigent status, and mail restrictions due to contraband.
- e) Marcos Bullchild with Project Opening Doors – Discussed concern with Native American religious activities at correctional facilities.
- f) May Simmons – Discussed canteen and hobby issues, community work, medication availability at correctional facilities, MWP recreational facilities, blocked phone calls and facial coverings.
- g) Dana Tenas with Project Opening Doors – Discussed COVID-19 issues in correctional facilities.
- h) Benton Littledog – Requested to let offenders out who have been granted parole and to wear face coverings.

X. Adjournment

Pat Smith advised the next meeting will be held in January 2021 during the legislative session, place and times will be announced once the legislative schedule is set. He then adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.