

**Department of Corrections
Prison Issues Board
Montana Women's Prison
Billings, MT
June 9th, 2022
9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

I. Call to Order

Pat Smith called to order the regular meeting of the Prison Issues Board of the Department of Corrections at 9:04 a.m. on June 9, 2022, at Montana Women's Prison.

II. Roll Call

The following members of the committee were present: Pat Smith/Chairman, Cynthia Wolken/MDOC Deputy Director, Tom Green/DCCF, Peter Bludworth/CCC, Jeff Lee/Pine Hills, Jennie Hansen/MWP, Jim Salmonsens/MSP and Gayle Butler/MCE.

Quorum is present.

The following persons were also present: Michael Moorman, DJ Godfrey, Mark Wlazlak, Chris Conell, Heidi Crowe, Noah Hatton, Autumn Combs, Alex Schroeckenstein, Kyle Chenoweth, Keila Harris, Natalie Smitham, Carolyn Bright, Kathy Ralston, Melissa McEwen, Renee Seiler-McDonald, Erica Wimmer, Alexandria Klapmeier, Shane Hildenstab, Scott Eychner, Kurt Aughney, John Daugherty, Jim Anderson, Quinn Jacobson.

Members of the Public Present: None.

III. Approval of Minutes

Pat Smith moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Administrator Butler seconds the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Legislative and Management Team Updates

- a) No concerns. Upcoming Interim Budget Subcommittee meeting for the Public Safety Agencies to discuss staffing related issues. Gale Butler and Scott Eychner will also be discussing updates at the upcoming Interim Education Committee meeting on 06/15.

V. Division Updates

- a) Jim Anderson reported working to bring together a Professionalism Committee to encourage a higher held standard for Correctional Officers and to improve overall proficiency in new hires.

VI. RIC Updates

- a) Pat Smith reviewed new religious items that were requested by offenders and approved by the Religious Issues Committee. The RIC had approved items from two religious groups. Judaism was approved a 24"x24" cloth that is available to be purchased from the canteen and is already listed on inmate property sheets. Tarot cards were approved to be purchased from a secured outside vendor. Odinst were approved a pendulum and a 24"x24" prayer rug. Both can be purchased from Canteen.

- b) Jennie Hansen asked the Committee where to find the minutes to the RIC meetings. The minutes are not posted publicly and must be requested from the RIC. The committee discussed where allowed religious items for all facilities should be listed so that they may be viewed. Jennie states there is an issue with religious items not being allowed at all facilities. The Committee discussed setting a meeting with Religious Coordinator Terri Steffalo to discuss procedure updates so that all facilities may have the same religious items. Pat Smith moved to approve the religious items from the recent RIC. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Update of Inmate Work Assignments & Compensation

- a) Not ready for discussion, move to the next PIB meeting.

VIII. Review of Property and Canteen Changes

- a) AW Godfrey reviewed offender canteen requests received, reviewed and approved by the security chiefs with the Committee. All members approved the food requests that were reviewed. All members approved the non-food requests that were reviewed. Members discussed which items would be approved to be rotated.
- b) Gayle Butler discussed the issue of offenders not being able to get certain items that are offered on the canteen list. She states canteen needs flexibility due to the items on the list not being available and they need alternative vendors. Unavailable items have resulted in canteen having more grievances than ever. Members discuss how to get approval for swapping out canteen items that are not available. The members discussed their concerns for the safety and security of the facilities amid the frustration of offenders not being able to order the items that are available to them. Members discuss the importance of communication with offenders and the possibility of allowing flexibility on the policy and procedure of ordering canteen when the items listed are not available for purchase. There are no major issues with non-food items.
- c) Jennie Hansen states that offenders at MWP want foundation to replace the tinted moisturizer on their canteen list. Most of the grievances are for this item. Members approved the motion to replace the tinted moisturizer with foundation for female offenders only.
- d) Kyle Chenowith stated offenders think it's unfair that to be able to order a large face watch the offender must have an ADA permit. Members discussed if the watch would be a security issue. If the large face watches only have Bluetooth capabilities and not smart watch capabilities, they will allow one per offender. Kyle states that offenders would like to keep their hearing aid batteries in the cell with them. Members discussed that the hearing aid batteries are too much of a security risk for offenders to order off canteen. Hearing aid batteries will remain to be given as needed by medical staff. Canteen will be notified of changes. Pat Smith motioned to approve the canteen items. Motion passed unanimously.
- e) Members reviewed and approved all but one of the hobby requests reviewed. Offenders had requested that all hobby permits be changed to allow erasers. This request was denied. Members discuss the package change on beads and will allow offenders to purchase more due to smaller packaging. There will no longer be a size limit on hoop earrings for beading permits. Offender maximum weekly spending limit was raised from \$60 per week to \$75 per week. Members discuss the pros and cons of allowing one large photo album or having two. If the committee is unable to find one large one, the offenders may be allowed two. Pat Smith motioned to approve the hobby items. Motion passed unanimously.

IX. Review & Approvals of Facility IWF Budgets

- a) Kiela Harris, Budget Analyst for DOC, reviewed IWF FY22-FY23 Offender Welfare Estimated Budget Worksheets for each facility. Current cash balance for the IWF is \$686,021. MSP asked for \$260,000, MWP asked for \$72,870, DCCF asked for \$49,405, Pine Hills asked for \$15,000 and CCC asked for \$194,750. If all initial requests are approved, \$93,996 would go into the Global Fund. Budgets are approved based upon the availability of authority and requests; they are not based on revenue generated by each facility. Kiela discussed updating IWF policy to reflect their business practices.
- b) Jennie Hansen inquired about IWF paying for Indigent Kits. Natalie Smitham stated the Legislative Audit Division feels that Indigent Kits are an operating expense of the facilities and requests that they not be paid for in the future by the IWF. Upon approval, the committee will move forward with the Legislature request. MDOC will ask that the Legislature add additional funding to the General Fund to pay for the Indigent Kits beginning FY24.
- c) Warden Green stated that DCCF has the highest offender telephone rate of all facilities. The committee approved Warden Green telling the phone company to reduce the rate and reduce IWF funds for his facility.
- d) Committee discussed the options for the offender birth certificate fund. This will be discussed further at the next PIB meeting. Pat motioned to approve the IWF budgets with the ability to adjust as needed. Committee approved IWF FY22-FY23 budgets unanimously.

X. IWF Accounts & Global Fund Updates, Requests, Funding Reviews and New Business

- a) DCCF had no requests or updates.
- b) MSP had no requests or updates.
- c) MCE had no requests or updates.
- d) Pine Hills had no requests or updates.
- e) CCC requested additional funding for sound proofing the offender gyms at the facility. The cost and quantity of the panels that were previously needed for sound proofing has risen from \$36,000 to \$99,000 due to supply and demand as well as inflation. Warden Bloodworth would still like to add sound proofing despite risen costs. The gyms are used for ceremonies, graduations, and inmate events. Pat motioned for the Committee to approve amount for sound proofing panels. Motion passed unanimously.
- f) MCE has no requests or updates
- g) AW Godfrey is concerned about the rising cost of TV services for the offenders. Committee agreed that rising cost in all facilities is becoming a problem and would like to look at contracting with other TV services and the possibility of unifying services with all facilities to simplify contracts and cost.

XI. Roundtable

- a) Montana Women's Prison - They are currently 15 Correctional Officers down. This is due to low wages. Overall, they still have good moral. Family day is Saturday. There will be 150 family members and 80 offenders, making this the most successful Family Day that they have had.
- b) Dawson County Correctional Facility – They are also having staffing issues and receiving few applications for correctional positions. This is due to wages being too low. Offenders are becoming restless due to canceled yard time, activities, etc.
- c) Montana State Prison – They are having staffing issues. They are also receiving few applications for correctional positions. MSP has been implementing forced and mandatory overtimes to keep security at an acceptable level. They have 3 offenders that are currently in various hospitals in the surrounding counties and getting help from P&P to supervise.
- d) Crossroads Correctional Center – They are having staffing issues. They have 15 officers that come in from other states to help.
- e) Contract Placement Bureau – No concerns.
- f) Kyle Chenoweth – No concerns.
- g) Montana Correctional Enterprises – The CAMP Grant is coming up for renewal. Warden Hansen suggested that MCE have male and female offenders that have children together come to MCE to do parenting classes, so they are looking into that. The Department of Education approved four colleges to provide each facility with one program per year. The programs are being funded by Pell Grants. Each college will allow ten offenders from each facility to participate. The offenders will not be able to choose which classes or courses they take. MCE has over 5,500 pheasants and will eventually give 13,000 to FWP by the end of the year. MCE started the Last Mile program but are having issues finding offenders that qualify. They only have twelve offenders that are in the program and have eight on the waiting list. They are currently trying to screen offenders from the regional facilities that will be eligible to attend. Gayle and Cynthia Wolken met with MSU to discuss hands on jobs and short-term work programs for offenders. MCE is cracking down on the placement of keys, equipment, and security in general. Scott Eychner and Gayle will be going to Norfolk, Virginia to the USS Montana Submarine Commission. MCE had designed and created the plaques that will be given, as well as challenge coins and other commemorates.
- h) Kurt Aughney – No concerns.
- i) Carolyn Bright – Working on quarterly updates and should be out in the upcoming weeks. Working with Human Resources to get recruitments for staff.
- j) Alex Klappmier – No concerns.
- k) Pine Hills – They are low on staff but have not had to do mandatory overtimes. Staffing is currently their only challenge.
- l) Heidi Crowe – No concerns.
- m) Erica Wimmer – The Quality Assurance Bureau had the opportunity to visit three facilities in Canada. She stated it was very informative
- n) John Daugherty – No concerns.

- o) Seiler-McDonald – No concerns, just gave thanks for support from Committee.
- p) Kiela Harris – No concerns.
- q) Natalie Smitham – No concerns.
- r) Shane Hildenstab – Would like to offer evidence collection training and report writing for Officers.
- s) Scott Eychner – Informed the Committee that they had given an offer to fill the position vacated by Connie Winner. They will announce once the position has been accepted.
- t) Cynthia Wolken – Stated that MCE has been waiting on approval for mobile welding trailers to be able to expand technical education programs in the facilities.

XII. Public Comment

None.

XIII. Adjournment

Pat Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m. The next meeting will take place at DCCF. The exact time and date will be determined at a later date. Probably in late September or early October.