



The Illinois Department of Corrections

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Regular Board Meeting of the Adult Advisory Board

Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

9:51 am to 11:36 am

Location: Via Webex/Teleconference

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m37e69d9529f1d3d06906b791d6f354b9>

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Committee Member	Present	Virtual	Absent	
Illinois Department of Corrections Staff:				
Acting Director – Latoya Hughes			X	
Assistant Director – Alyssa Williams	X			
Confidential Assistant to Director – Shelith Hansbro	X			
Chief of Parole – Jason Garnett		X		
Chief of Programs – Jennifer Parrack			X	
Chief Inspector – Areda Johnson			X	
Chief of Operations – Justin Hammers	X			
Deputy Director Region 1 – Christine Brannon-Dortch	X			
Deputy Director Region 2 – Angela Locke	X			
Deputy Director Region 3 – Kim Smith	X			
Chief of Administration – Jared Brunk			X	
Policy Advisor to Director – Sofia Manuel	X			
Public Information Officer – Naomi Puzello			X	
Planning & Research – Sharon Shipinski	X			
Assistant Warden of Operations – Ryan Woods	X			
Planning & Research – Sharon Shipinski	X			

Mission: To serve justice in Illinois and increase public safety by promoting positive change for those in custody, operating successful reentry programs, and reducing victimization.

Chief of Women and Family Services – Melinda Eddy	X			
Kelly Lawshea – Medical Compliance Officer	X			
Steve Ryan – Staff Development and Training Manager		X		
Board Members:				
David Olson – Loyola University	X			
Jenny Vollen-Katz – Executive Director of John Howard Association		X		
Nneka Jones-Tapia – Executive Director of Chicago Beyond	X			
Marlon Chamberlain – Heartland Alliance	X			
Sadie Joseph – North Lawndale Employment Network	X			
Richard Watson – Sheriff, St. Clair County			X	
Xavier Williams	X			
John Crivellone – Cook County Public Defender’s Office		X		
Guest:				

Chairperson Remarks:

Ms. Hansbro opened the meeting and Board Chairman Olson started the meeting, roll call was verified. Minutes for the September Meeting were called for a vote. Ms. Jones-Tapia noted that for the June minutes, there were a few names that were not listed correctly on the attendance. Dave Olson requested that we make those corrections. Shelith Hansbro noted that she was unavailable to review the minutes before they were sent out and asked to have the opportunity to make a few editorial changes to the minutes. Quorum was called, minutes for September were approved. Agenda for today’s meeting were called for a vote. Agenda for today’s meeting was approved.

Director’s Remarks:

Alyssa Williams expressed that Director Hughes sends her apologies for not being able to attend today’s meeting and that she will be giving the Director’s report. We are pursuing relationships within Chicago to do some more specialty medical care, and we are also exploring our IGA agreement with our Southern Illinois. We believe that these partnerships will only further enhance our medical care.

Infrastructure remains one of our top priorities for next year. We are working with DOIT and another company to make these changes happen, and they have gone in and surveyed five of our facilities already. They go in and survey the facility, and then provide us with the information that was obtained to try and give us a timeframe and how much each facility will cost. This is a long-term process; however, Director Hughes is working with the Director from DOIT to see what we can do to expedite the process. One of the things that we are worried about is that we will be awarded the electronic health record contract, but not have the infrastructure to be able to facilitate that right away.

One thing we are looking forward to for next year, is having CDL simulators and mobile welding labs, which are second chance friendly positions for our Individuals in Custody. The General Assembly appropriated us \$2Milliion for the CDL simulators, and mobile labs, so we are hoping we can get those on board as soon as possible.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Inquired if everything goes smoothly with the Medical/Mental Health Contract, how soon does the department anticipate the provider start?

Alyssa Williams: Stated that she would anticipate that it will be done by the end of this year, but there will be a public announcement first.

Board Discussion/Inquiries:

Dave Olson: Dave passed out an editorial that he has been working with a colleague, which was also published in the Chicago Tribune. There has been a reduced use of prison in majority of the counties in Illinois, and this is due because of less crime, but also because of the change in sentencing. However, we have noticed an increase in rural communities, and most of these counties don't have proper treatment services and believe that jail is their only option.

Dave stated that he has also been working with Chief Garnett and Sharon Shipinski to analyze who falls into the population for 45-day review of individuals released from prison. They don't have any real significant insights yet, but very few individuals are getting discharged early. However, most of the individuals that are eligible have extensive criminal histories. A large portion of those who are eligible for this discharge have so much time accumulated already that they don't end up spending time in IDOC facilities. This information was shared with the Chairperson of The Prisoner Review Board, and they will share the information they have with the public once they review and make sure they have the correct numbers.

Sadie Joseph: Works for North Lawndale Employment Network and is working with people who were incarcerated to help them build their resumes and get back on their feet. They have a program called Empower Now, which allows them to offer several resources that help take the barriers out. They also offer job readiness training, which helps them to understand what types of jobs are available, the difference between wanting a transitional job and a permanent job, it also helps show them what type of benefits they want. Mock interviews are also done, and they have partnerships with Bank of America and Chase Bank that come in and do interviews as well. Interview clothes and transportation are also offered to help individuals get back on their feet.

Marlon Chamberlain: One of the organizations he works with has a fellowship that they're offering for individuals that starts 9-months before they are out and continues for 9-months post release. This fellowship has workshops that vary from resume writing to interviews to help them navigate and re-enter the community and connect with other organizations, and stipends them around \$500 a month.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Chicago Beyond loves to fund community groups that are doing quality services. She stated that if there is a community organization that is providing quality services to the individuals who are incarcerated, she would love the name so that way the organization can consider them for funding. Chicago Beyond has been working with the department to support the Staff Wellness program that IDOC has, and as the department is thinking about future goals for 2024, she wanted to point out that it is a stellar program. Chicago Beyond was a partner in a grant that was just awarded by the DJJ. They are partnered with Just Leadership USA, One Voice United, Keystone Justice Center. With that, we are going to be offering all prison systems the opportunity the offer to submit working with us. Those submissions will be requested around the end of 2024, for us to start working with the institutions in 2025.

Xavier Williams: I am part of a pilot program that provides an intervention strategy for African American males with a target age range of 14-19 years old. The program focuses on those that are in alternative schools, disciplinaries, intervention supervision, probation and DJJ Aftercare. There is a music studio and video design program where they learn coding. From that, they are provided with digital and finance literacy support. This pilot program is 13-weeks of training and then 20-weeks of professional internship, where we partner with Centerspace. It gives them the opportunity to apply what they've learned in the classroom before they enter the real world.

Jenny Vollen-Katz: Headed into next year we will continue to come visit and monitor the Illinois prisons. With much of the data already available on the website, one of the big things believed to happen in early 2024, is to finalize and publish information from the surveys that were conducted between 2022 and 2023. The goal is to make all the questionnaire responses, comment responses, as well as a summary of the reports that discuss the top issues. She looks forward to wrapping that up and using the information to further their monitoring.

Dave Olson: Stated that the Board Members are available and willing to provide assistance for the strategic planning process.

New Business

Care of People with Serious Mental Illness in IDOC

Ryan Woods:

Joliet Treatment Center (JTC) currently has a behavioral modification unit, which services the severe mentally ill, more aggressive staff assaulters who go through intense treatments daily, to work on coping skills and other ways to alleviate their aggression and focus on getting them to the other side of the facility. The other side of the facility is a little less restrictive, allowing the individuals to get jobs and move up into other areas. This facility is individual based, so facility staff comes together to create a plan on how they're going to dress that individual's needs.

At Joliet Inpatient Treatment Center (JITC), patients have mental health and medical professionals readily available for when they need it. These are our more severe type of mental health patients that staff work with to get them stabilized and back to the facility they came from. DHS helps provide mental health treatment for residents at JITC: inpatient center, behavioral modification treatment center, and residential treatment. JITC can house 156 mental health patients, but they currently only house 12 patients as of today. There are three wings for women and four wings for male patients.

Dave Olson: Inquired what are the processes in DOC to screen people for mental wellness?

Ryan Woods: The reception does their intake and meet with a mental health professional, who will do their screening and evaluate their level of care. JITC's is a longer process, they set up a meeting with all the Chief's of Mental Health to discuss the patient, and before the patient is brought to JITC, there is a team of mental health professionals at the other facilities before they get sent to JITC. If that doesn't seem to be working, they'll approve a transfer to JITC.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Inquired how the department is thinking about reconciling the treatment needs for women? There's a need to reconcile the least restrictive for mental health needs and quality of life needs. She is happy to offer some guidance and support on treatment services specifically for the women.

Shelith Hansbro: That is something that the department will be working on as we move forward with the new Chief of Women's division. We will look to you also for leadership through our subcommittee to help come up with valuable solutions.

Dave Olson: Inquired if the gap between the inpatient population and capacity level due to staffing, or not having 156 patients who need to go there?

Alyssa Williams: Stated that one of the department's biggest hardships is staffing, the department is having a very difficult time to find people who meet the qualifications to work here. Another issue is that officers can't just transfer over here to fill a vacancy like they may be able to do at other facilities. Mental Health is staffed by DHS, and they are sort staffed just like the DOC is.

Sharon Shipinski: Stated that One thing that was significantly noted in the comments of the department's staff and wellness survey was that the conditions of the facility also impact the employees as well.

Dave Olson: Asks how different is the Correctional Officer Trainee (COT) training verses the Correctional Treatment Officers (CTOT)?

Steve Ryan: States that it is the basic COT training, but when they are done, they have two weeks of specialized training they receive back at the facility for the needs of mental health onsite training. None of the department's trainers train on mental health too much, subject matter experts from DHS do a lot of the training for the department.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Inquired if there is an annual in-service training specific to the job?

Steven Ryan: States that the department created a new annual cycle training meant for the CTO's that reviews all the mental health treatment they received at the academy. This training is specific for JTC and JITC employees.

Shelith Hansbro: Stated that she has also noticed we are losing a lot of staff because people want to work from home.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Nobody wants to work in a jail or a prison, which means they are going to have to work that much harder to keep and attract new employees. She stated it's hard to keep up with that. With the department's AFSCME contract, is there something in it that states an officer can transfer if a facility closes?

Alyssa Williams: States that they can transfer other facilities where there are vacancies.

Measuring “Recidivism” of Those Released from IDOC

Dave Olson: Stated he has been looking at around 70,000 individuals who were released from prison from 2018 to 2022, to see if they returned to prison or if they were charged with new crimes. However, they excluded gate violators from this population. Part of why they are studying recidivism rates is to try and measure the impact that treatment programs have once an individual is released. It was noted that with the change in policy of arrests, and things changing during COVID were critical when evaluating these recidivism rates. In 2018, they looked at what percent of individuals were arrested within 6 months of being released from prison, for any crime, and if they were readmitted to IDOC. Recidivism rates dropped dramatically during COVID, however, new arrests for violent crimes weren't affected by COVID or change in policy of arrests. Prior to COVID, about 20% of individuals released from prison were arrested for something within 6 months of being released, and after COVID, it's around 15%, and it's continued to remain at the lower level. At 12 months after release, there was around a 10% drop in arrests during COVID, but it's getting back up to around 25%.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Stated she would love to see research done on women who are incarcerated, and what areas of the state their children are located in. This would allow her to see what services are being provided for children and families who have parents that are incarcerated.

John Crivellone: Asks if they factored age into the study? Could the decline be because the IDOC population is aging?

Dave Olson: States that younger individuals have higher recidivism rates. Other studies have shown that those who are released back to Chicago have higher rates. There's been an increase in admissions to prison for illegally possessing a gun, a lot of those involve individuals between the ages of 18 to 20.

Old Business

Annual Training

Shelith Hansbro: Reminded everyone that annual training is due by December 31st, and to make sure expenses for today's meeting are sent to her and Tara Burris.

Nneka Jones-Tapia: Asked Steve Ryan to send her instructions on everything that must be completed.

Steve Ryan: Stated that there are five basic trainings that will show up in OneNet. Members have a “training only” account, so he doesn't have access to change their passwords, they must go through DOIT to get them changed. He submitted a ticket to get these changed. He will email everyone individually with how to navigate OneNet.

Marlon Chamberlain: Gave his new email to Steve Ryan and requested that his email be changed.

Public Comments:

None

Adjournment:

Nneka Jones-Tapia made a motion to adjourn, and Sadie Joseph seconded, meeting adjourned.