

HIGHLIGHTS
COOK COUNTY CORRECTIONS BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2006
HELD AT THE COOK COUNTY CORRECTIONS FACILITY – DIV.5

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Munir Muhammad, Board Members Howard Brookins, Gilbert Marchman and Iola McGowan, Acting Corrections Director Scott Kurtovich, Undersheriff Zelda Whittler, Board Secretary Shirley Moore, and Frances Sowa, LWV Observer.

New Chair Elected: Vice-Chair Muhammad announced that the Board had elected Iola McGowan as Chairperson of the Cook County Corrections Board, during an Executive Session which had been held immediately prior to the regular Board meeting.

The Minutes of the last Board meeting were held to allow the members to review them.

Director's Report:

As of 8 A.M., February 24th, there were 8,910 detainees. All were housed in two-bed cells. No one was sleeping on a mattress on the floor. In addition, 343 detainees had been transferred to other correctional facilities during the week. 20 detainees were in various hospitals.

An additional 2,344 defendants were on community supervision and intervention. Also, 165 women were on Sheriff's Furlough, 119 were in residential treatment at the Old Cermak Hospital, and 13 pregnant detainees were housed elsewhere.

Additional personnel: Director Kurtovich also reported that 46 correctional officers (36 male and 10 female) had been hired from the last graduating class of recruits.

Recent Escapes: Board members Marchman and Brookins stated that they were uncomfortable that the Board was not made privy to information regarding recent escapes. For example, the Director suddenly left the Board meeting on Feb.10th without informing them that an escape was in progress. Further, according to the newspapers, a jail lockdown was imposed at that time, when to the contrary, the exit doors were open. Marchman, Brookins and McGowan each stated that they are unable to respond to inquiries and rumours without more information.

Director Kurtovich responded that the escape in question (inmate hid in a laundry truck) occurred in a division of the jail located in a separate complex

on the other side of California Avenue, which had been locked down immediately. The rest of the jail was locked down later.

Undersheriff Zelda Whittler stated that no further information is available while investigations are still ongoing by the Sheriff's Internal Investigation Unit and the State's Attorney. She said she would always be accessible to Board Members and would look into ways that she could share information between meetings. Vice-Chair Muhammad indicated that he had always received answers to his inquiries.

Ms. Whittler also distributed the Trotter Report on the Criminal Justice System to Board members. She requested that they read the report and present questions and recommendations in response to that report and the to staffing analysis which had previously been distributed to them.

Respectfully submitted, Frances Sowa