

## HIGHLIGHTS - COOK COUNTY CORRECTIONS BOARD MEETINGS HELD DURING FEBRUARY, 2007

**MEETING OF FEBRUARY 9, 2007:** Meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m. PRESENT: Chair Iola McGowan, Board Members, Howard Brookins, Sr., and Esequiel Iracheta, Executive Director Salvador Godinez, Board Secretary Shirley Moore and Frances Sowa, LWV Observer.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **Director's Report:**

#### **Inmate Count:**

- The jail population ranged from 9,460 on February 5<sup>th</sup>, to 9,115 at 8 A.M. on February 9, 2007.
- Additionally, as of that date, 1,561 arrestees were subject to community supervision and Intervention (Day reporting, Electronic Monitoring and Pre-release) under the DCSI Unit.
- 12 inmates were in the hospital. Also,
- 115 women were in the Women's Justice Service Residential program,
- 125 women were on furlough, and
- 8 pregnant inmates were housed elsewhere.
- 356 detainees (331 male and 24 female) had been shipped to IDOC during that week.

### **Unusual Occurrences:**

- **Suicide:** Director Godinez reported that the inmate who had been accused of murdering a woman in Morgan Park, had committed suicide in Division X on January 28th. The inmate had been under observation in disciplinary segregation, because a weapon had been discovered in his possession. (Mr. Godinez stated that the most popular way to obtain a weapon had been to pull off a piece of vent in the cell). The vents were now being welded as a precautionary effort.
- **Attempt Escape:** An inmate who was being held on a minor drug chare, attempted to escape by hanging to the bottom of a bus at the jail. After the attempt, he was sent for psychiatric evaluation.
- **Two deaths in hospital:** Two hospitalized inmates had died of natural causes.

### **Board Dissatisfaction with Sheriff's Response to Board:**

- Chair Iola McGowan stated that she has not been able to have a conversation with Sheriff Dart. Further, the Undersheriff has not appeared at Board meetings since the election.
- Mr. Brookins stressed that it was important that the Sheriff and the higher echelon Corrections Officers, appear at the Board and become acquainted with Board members.
- Brookins also requested that the Board receive reports from the other Correction's Directors (i.e. Boot camp, Women's Justice Services, Community Supervision & Intervention, etc.).

**Proposed Budget Cuts:**

Director Godinez and the members agreed on the importance of maintaining the programs which cut down on the jail population. The Director indicated that the Sheriff was accumulating statistics to support those programs which are working. Mr. Brookins asserted that the Board should be consulted before cuts are approved.

**Rumors that Sheriff was trying to eliminate Corrections Board:**

Mr. Brookins was particularly upset by rumors that Sheriff Dart was moving to have the Corrections Board eliminated by the Illinois Legislature. Brookins in turn, stated that he could work to have legislation introduced to strengthen the Board's role. He stressed that the Board had been created to monitor the department, following "improper behavior" by one of the former Sheriffs.

The Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

**MEETING OF FEBRUARY 23, 2007**

Meeting was called to order at 12:40 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair I. McGowan, Vice-Chair Munir Muhammad, Board Members Howard Brookins, Sr., and Esequiel Iracheta, Director Salvador Godinez, Board Secretary Shirley Moore, and LVW Observer F.Sowa

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Director's Report:**

- **Inmate Count:** The jail population count for the previous five day period ranged from 9,384 on February 19, to 9,170 as of 8 a.m. on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. As of that date, an additional
- 1,530 individuals were on community intervention and supervision, and 17 were hospitalized.
- 114 women were in the Women's Justice Service residential program,
- 117 women were on furlough and
- 3 pregnant detainees were housed elsewhere.
- During that week, 300 (281 males and 19 females) had been shipped to IDOC.

**Unusual Occurrences:**

Director Godinez reported that there were two incidents:

- One inmate in Div. I was pepper sprayed after he had refused orders and hit someone; In another incident,
- two gang leaders were separated and placed into segregation in Division IX.

**New Strategy to Resolve Incidents:**

Under this strategy only one-half of detainees in a tier are allowed on deck at any time; this makes it easier to sort out the facts if an incident occurs.

**Board Requests More Information re Problems and Special Events:**

Board members stressed the need to be informed, between meetings, of any unusual incident at the jail, in order to handle questions from the citizenry. Mr. Iracheta stressed that Board members should be given information, immediately, of anything, such as an escape, which impacts the community.

Chair Iola McGowan also emphasized the need for the Board to be informed, in advance of all special programs, e.g. the HIV program at the jail. She stated that if she had not heard on the radio, about the Black History Program held that day, she would not have been able to attend. Mr. Muhammad also indicated that he would be interested in bringing business people to the Jail to help with volunteer programs.

Director Godinez agreed to forward to the Board the information which he received, regarding programs and services, but he stressed that 90% of special events were subject to change by the Sheriff's office.

**Issues with Sheriff Dart:**

- **Board Compensation:** Ms. McGowan reported that Sheriff Dart told her, in a phone conversation, that "everything (in the Sheriff's Budget) is on the table." This includes the line item in the Sheriff's Budget which compensates Board Members and Board Secretary for their service. (The Board does not have its own budget).
- **Appearance at Board:** Mr. Brookins and Ms. McGowan re-iterated the need for the Sheriff and his Assistants to appear at a Board meeting, once the budget was resolved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Frances Sowa, LWV Observer