

**November 16, 2021 MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS OF JUVENILE DETENTION**

PRESENT:	Kevin Madden, Chair	Joanne Phillips
	Marie N. Williams, Vice-Chair	Elaine Schaefer
	Chris Eiserman	Monica Taylor
	Candice L. Linehan	Chekemma J. Fulmore Townsend
	Nathaniel Nichols	

Call to Order. Mr. Madden called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments on Agenda Items. There were no public comments on agenda items.

Approval of Minutes. Mr. Eiserman motioned to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2021 meeting of the Board of Managers of Juvenile Detention, seconded by Mr. Nichols. Motion carried unanimously.

Juvenile Services Report. Kiersten Keenan Fitzsimmons, Resource Supervisor for Delaware County Juvenile Probation, reported there were six (6) youth in custody as follows: one (1) in Bucks County, one (1) in Chester County , one (1) in Montgomery County, and three (3) at the Aspire facility in Uniontown, PA. Additionally, she indicated that Aspire requested the removal of one (1) youth due to continued behavior issues. A home plan was being considered for the that youth as no other secure detention beds were available, according to Ms. Fitzsimmons

Danielle DiMatteo, Director, Delaware County Court & Probation Services, reported there have been eight (8) to 10 youth in the last six (6) weeks who were returned to the community for lack of available secure detention beds. Ms. DiMatteo said that there have been instances of youth in home care cutting off ankle monitors and absconding and not reporting into Probation. The lack of secure beds for youth fitting detention requirements, which was exacerbated by the closure of a detention facility in Erie, was described by Ms. DiMatteo in crisis terms. She stated that there is a shortage of secure beds across Pennsylvania, in large part due to limited staff at those facilities.

Executive Director Report. Howard Lazarus, Executive Director, Delaware County, reviewed the process for the proposed 2022 budget. Board members were asked to provide input on the Center’s objectives, performance measurements, required resources, and appropriate staffing and funding levels. A public hearing on the proposed budget is scheduled for December 7 followed by County Council adoption on December 15.

Mr. Lazarus expected to receive information from Chester County on November 17 that will be included in a contract agreement to reserve 9 -12 secure detention beds for priority use as needed by Delaware County. He commented that prisons and juvenile detention centers are generally experiencing staffing shortages, creating challenges for detention facilities in providing adequate

oversight and supervision of juveniles placed in their care. Delaware County will likely face higher costs in negotiating priority use of guaranteed spaces in detention facilities. He explained a preferred candidate for the director of the Juvenile Detention Center has been identified and background checks completed. Negotiations on compensation are in progress to extend an offer of employment.

Mr. Lazarus plans to discuss with union representatives the possibility of offering training opportunities for former detention center staff to become corrections officers given staffing shortages at the County's George H. Hill Correctional Facility. Opportunities will also be explored for former staff to work in detention roles in Chester County, notwithstanding the situation being complicated by the ongoing Pennsylvania Attorney General investigation of the closed Delaware County detention center.

Mr. Lazarus said converting the detention center into two physically separate juvenile detention and central booking facilities is being studied. The intent, according to Mr. Lazarus, is to redesign and reimagine the detention center with the result that defining the desired function will determine what form or appearance a potentially reopened facility would take.

Discussion of future presentations. Mr. Madden invited Board members to submit names of individuals and organizations for consideration to make presentations to the Board. Dr. Taylor said that representatives of the Delaware County Intermediate Unit (DCIU) were available to present at the December meeting on the programs and services previously provided at the detention center. Ms. Linehan suggested inviting the Public Defender's Office and the District Attorney's Office to present at a future meeting.

New Business. Ms. Phillips reported that staff from her office and the Board solicitor's office visited the detention center to assess what records were housed there. She recommended having a cleaning contractor service the facility and to seek guidance from the attorney general's office regarding records retention.

Dr. Taylor suggested organizing information on programs there were offered as a matter of continuing care at the facility and to become aware of other available programs locally and nationally that potentially could be accessed. Mr. Nichols urged the Board to do something different to better serve juveniles, employees, and the general public.

Public Comments. (All relevant items.)

Patrick Farley, Glenn Mills resident and registered nurse. He provided healthcare services at the facility and praised the tireless dedication of the former staff. Communications from the County have been infrequent and former employees were encouraged to apply for open positions within the County. However, none of them to his knowledge have been transferred, reassigned, or hired for another County position.

Ashley Giles-Perkins, Attorney with Education Law Center in Philadelphia. She reflected on key themes heard during the meeting. Her organization, which addresses educational barriers for students, received complaints that some students were not being educated and students with

disabilities were not receiving special education services. She maintained the solution is not reopening and refilling the detention center but rather to have juveniles remain in their homes whenever possible, to keep them connected to neighborhood schools, and for them to build strong ties in the community.

Alicia Coffey works at CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Youth Advocates in Media and represents Voices for Children Coalition focused on enhancing child well-being. The Coalition would like to play a role in reimagining the function of juvenile justice systems to better inform their form.

Board Member Comment. Members disclosed affiliations with various non-profit boards. Ms. Linehan explained she is a member of the Voices for Children Coalition and has recused herself from discussions about the detention center in that capacity. Mr. Nichols disclosed he is a CASA board member.

Ms. Williams thanked Ms. Giles-Perkins for her remarks and urged the Board to consider them in the context of services and contracts available in the facility. Mr. Madden thanked Ms. Giles-Perkins and Ms. Coffey for their remarks and invited more stakeholders to present to the Board to better inform and educate members. He expressed that he was sensitive to what former employees were experiencing while noting the difficult situation the Board was currently working through.

Adjourn. Mr. Nichols motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Linehan. Motion carried unanimously.