

Public Safety Committee (DOC/Garner)
Regular Meeting – September 1, 2020 at 5:00 pm
This meeting was held remotely to abide by COVID-19 social distancing orders

Members Present: First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Warden Amonda Hannah, Chief Viadero, Patrick Reilly, Jennifer Chaudhary, Cathy Reiss, Stephen Sedensky,

ABSENT: Bruce Clark, Jay Mattegat, Joy Previdi and Director of School Facilities Bob Gerbert

First Selectman Rosenthal called the meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

Public Participation: none.

Minutes: P. Reilly moved to accept the minutes of June 2, 2020. C. Reiss seconded. All in favor.

Warden's Report:

The current inmate population at the Garner Correctional Facility is 521, which includes 378 sentenced and 141 unsentenced. 256 inmates are in general population; 265 are mental health. There are 13 level 5 inmates, all on the administrative segregation status; 401 Level 4 inmates, 84 Level 3 inmates, 19 Level 2 inmates and 4 Level 1 inmates. Of the mental health population 21 are Level 5, 223 are Level 4, 81 are Level 3, 130 are Level 2 and 66 are Level 1.

Incidents are averaging about 70, twelve were significant, varying from staff assault to threats on staff. An inmate groped one of the female nurses and was charged with sexual assault, fifth degree. Incidents have gone down since COVID as people want to be safe and are not gathering as much. There has been more staff conflict since COVID.

Officer staffing is at 94%. A small number of staff transferred out; there were two retirements. The top line supervisor staff is full. There is now a third shift Captain and a new second shift Captain. A Lieutenant and two Counselors were promoted. The administrative team is complete with the hiring of a new Deputy Warden. There are now two, Thomas Kenny and Mark Bonaventura, both have previously worked at Garner.

Staff and inmates are continually updated on COVID-19 protocol. Masks are mandatory for staff and inmates when out of their cell, in the common areas, using the phone or in recreation areas. Mandatory staff testing has been ongoing since July. One staff member has tested positive. Voluntary inmate testing has been ongoing. In June there were two asymptomatic positives, out of 518 tested. In August there were six asymptomatic positives, out of 502 tested, bringing the facility positivity rate to 1%. The low rate is due to mask discipline and the cleaning and sanitation of the facility. Medical staff receive new masks each day. Custody and support staff received three masks per week; there is an allotment of cloth masks for inmates. Inmate cleaning crews work crews use back pack sprayers to disinfect housing units and all areas of the facility; common areas. Hand sanitizer is throughout the facility. Temperature checks are conducted on all staff and vendors entering the building. The positive inmates were quarantined. Cell mates are isolated in a separate unit for fourteen days. Inmates suspected of having COVID, or any inmates that refuse testing, are isolated for fourteen days. Visitation has not been reinstated; professional legal visits are allowed.

C. Reiss asked about outdoor time for inmates and if there has been a difference noticed since COVID. Warden Hannah said that inmates are allowed in the courtyard, but cannot use the gym or participate in any sports as that require groups and contact. Although inmate incidents have decreased there are more mental health issues due to the lack of face to face interaction with loved ones. Family members call concerned about inmates.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: none.

Next Meeting Date: December 1, 2020

ADJOURNMENT: Having no further business the committee voted unanimously to adjourn their regular meeting 5:19p.m.

Susan Marcinek, clerk

