



Delaware County Jail Oversight Board

Report and Findings of Unannounced Inspection

On October 23, 2019, Delaware County Council, acting pursuant to 61 Pa.C.S. § 1721, *et seq.*, adopted resolution 2019-12 establishing the Delaware County Jail Oversight Board. Pursuant to state and local law, the Board is required to ensure that the George W. Hill Correctional Facility is being operated in accordance with its regulations and within state and federal law. Consistent with these powers and duties the Board is mandated to conduct at least two unannounced inspections of the jail's physical plant and to privately interview inmates, to determine the conditions within the jail.

On Thursday, April 4, 2024, members of the Delaware County Jail Oversight Board conducted an unannounced tour of the George W. Hill Correctional Facility pursuant to their statutory authority. Teams of Board members visited the Intake area, the Medical area, the Kitchen, General Population housing area, Intake housing, Medication Assisted Treatment Housing, the Juvenile and Female units. The Criminal Justice Program Manager conducted a review of documents, policies, and directives with the facility Compliance Officer and the facility Training Director. The tour commenced at approximately 4:00 and concluded at approximately 7:00. The warden, deputy wardens and ranking correctional staff were on site at the time of the tour. Security supervisors provided escorts but were not involved in conversations with inmates or staff. What follows are the Boards findings, which will be made publicly available.

Administrative Review

A review of compliance and training documents, policies and directives reveal similar findings as reported from the last tour in August 2023 with minor changes. George W. Hill has a current approved Organizational chart in place. There are current policies related to Recruitment and Promotion for all job classifications and all job classifications have detailed specifications and qualifications. The jail maintains a Code of Conduct and Ethics, which contains an anti-discrimination policy. The jail also maintains a sexual harassment/sexual misconduct policy. The jail has a detailed policy covering the Prison Rape Elimination Act. As management and labor are currently involved in collective bargaining, the jail does not currently maintain a process for conducting employee evaluations, staff discipline, or an employee grievance and appeals process. An informal process is in place until a collective bargaining agreement is ratified. The jail maintains an annually approved and updated Personnel policy manual. This policy has not been updated yet but is scheduled for review prior to year-end. There are written

policies mandating a smoke free and drug-free workplace for all staff. The jail maintains written policies and procedures that direct staff in the event of emergencies. The Fire Marshal annually reviews the jail's emergency plans. This review is scheduled for December 2023. All staff on duty received mandated pre-service training, which has been documented. The Jail had a significant improvement in the number of staff trained last year. Approximately 469 new staff received pre-service training as well as 264 current staff received in-service training. This year, the jail is already on pace to exceed those numbers. Additionally, joint training sessions with other agencies, including Delaware County Park Police and the Delaware County Sheriff have taken place. These training sessions included Basic Cell Extraction, APEX Virtual Reality Simulator, and a Mock Active Shooter Drill. The facility is also preparing for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Training Curriculum Audit scheduled for June 2024. The Training Director implemented a Field Training Officer program to support officers newly graduated from the training academy. The Training Academy added 7 additional training officers, bringing the total to 20 FTOs.

Training plans and course curricula exist for each academy class and are up to date. The jail maintains a Sanitation and Housekeeping plan that addresses all areas of the facility and provides for daily housekeeping and regular maintenance, and the control of vermin and pests. This is verified through weekly inspections by the Compliance Office as there is currently a vacancy in the Fire Safety Manager position; monthly facility-wide inspections, and quarterly inspections by the Safety Committee. Also, sanitation inspections are conducted of all areas of the jail each month and the results of these inspections are documented and maintained on file. The jail maintains an electronic maintenance log and tracking system – Maintenance Connection. All maintenance issues are entered and tracked. The status of all logged maintenance issues can be monitored. Each year the facility implements an approved post plan detailing the number of staff required to maintain care, custody, and control of the inmate population on a 24-hour basis. The facility maintains documented proof that the Warden and Deputies visit each of the jail's living and activity areas, cycling through the entire facility, at least monthly, to encourage contact with staff and inmates and observe living and working conditions. The jail maintains a secured storage area for all security equipment and weapons. Access to this area is limited to authorized staff. Written records are maintained as to the distribution of these items. A documented inventory of these items is also conducted monthly to determine accountability and condition. The jail maintains documented procedures for conducting searches of the facility as well as personal searches of inmates, vendors, volunteers, visitors, and staff. Formal, physical inmate headcounts are conducted according to policy and documented. The new body scanner was operational and being utilized. A body scanner policy has been approved and implemented, and the search policy has been updated to include this new equipment. Except for July 2023, the jail has conducted Block Rep. meetings each month with all division heads and inmate representatives.

General Observations:

All common areas appear relatively clean, well-lit, and functional. Some areas had temperature issues-perceptibly too cold. Showers in general are not in good condition and/or must be

regularly painted over and cleared of mold. Flooring in some blocks is in significant disrepair. Bathrooms in visitor area were found to be dirty, in need of repairs, and had no soap; impression for visitors and family members is critical. It seems there may be some inconsistency in adherence to procedure among staff; should ensure consistent application of policies. Oversight Board members asked incarcerated persons about physical assault from Correctional Officers, and all responded they did not experience or see any physical assaults. Also, individuals were asked about general treatment by Correctional Officers. Oversight Board members heard some complaints about disrespect from Officer's, but experiences did vary. General impression is that no overall culture or consistency of disrespect exists, but there may be occasional instances that should be monitored on an individual basis.

The following are Jail Oversight Board members' observations of conditions:

Intake:

- All inmates reported arriving that same day.
- Intake staff reported an average time of 24hrs for all inmate processing.
- Intake staff stated they have a lot more work with scanning and a new mattress protocol but have not received any new staff to assist.
- Intake staff reported that on Mondays with court and new arrivals it is challenging getting inmates scanned through the detector in a timely fashion. Average of 150 inmates. There were some suggestions around not using body scanner for inmates returning under certain low-risk circumstances to reduce the wait time, recognizing however that any reductions in use would need to be done with no loss in overall safety and security.
- Overall intake appeared organized with minimal inmates in holding.

Medical:

- While on tour, Board members had the opportunity to engaged in conversations with several of the contracted healthcare provider's staff. Medical staff raised issues concerning their interactions and cooperation with security staff as well as issues with the physical plant that impacts their ability to provide care. The specific concerns and more details will be forwarded to the warden for her and her staff to resolve.
- The new Restoration to Competency Program is still being developed. Issues are being worked out between Wellpath and jail management.
- Medical staff cautioned that the MAT program not expanded too quickly so that every participant receives appropriate supports.
- Currently, incarcerated persons are discharged with a prescription to be filled upon discharge, rather than a full supply of medication.
- Medical staff suggested that Correctional Officers working in mental health areas would benefit from Mental Health competency training.

- Medical staff suggest that more jail management staff would benefit from participating in medical staff meetings.

MAT Block Male:

- MAT leadership expressed a need for extra staffing to handle the population at its current size.
- Inmates participate in one group session a week and have no individual sessions. There is currently 1 staff member for 150+ participants and an open case manager position. The need for additional staffing has been communicated.
- Every inmate asked about the counseling and leadership of the MAT program expressed very positive views on Dimitrius and his work with the MAT population.
- Incarcerated person had issues with the way the suboxone is dispensed.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that they were being harassed by a Correctional Officer and he has filed dozens of grievances without responses. Copies of these forms were shown.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that he was in custody on a probation violation and having no counselor for 2 weeks and waiting over a month to go to inpatient rehab as mandated by his judge.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that it took 15 days for a D&A evaluation and his P/D stated that should not be that long.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that he was given a broken tablet and is now the only inmate on the block without one.
- Several incarcerated persons reported waiting months to get induced on MAT due to issues with verifying their prescriptions.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that aside from chess boards there is no activities and that causes boredom which results in fights.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that his brother got caught diverting medications, so he has been forced to be on the sublocade shot and does not want to be on it.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that people are sent to the RHU and not given a write up within the 24hrs that is mandated and sit there for 2-3 weeks with no actual write up.

MAT Block females:

- There was a report from an incarcerated person that they should not have to share a block with mental Health inmates. They stated they are required to help these inmates all day

and were told they would be paid for doing this and receive special privileges both of which they have not.

- There was a report from several incarcerated persons that they go weeks without having their sick call slip answered.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that there are no activities and that they are not being allowed to use gym equipment if it is raining so being stuck on block with nothing to do.
- There was a report from an incarcerated person that the MAT Unit is a Therapeutic Community program block but there is no program or anything going on.

Restrictive Housing Unit:

- RHU appeared clean and generally in good order.
- Several complaints where from lodgers – incarcerated persons brought in for court – stating that they have not been out of their cells for a few days and that they had no showers for several days
- One person said he was not getting his food or legal papers

The following are comments reported to members of the Jail Oversight Board in discussions with incarcerated persons and staff:

Specialized Unit:

- Blankets can be hard to come by
- Showers are available sporadically
- Occasionally there is no coffee with breakfast
- George W. Hill is one of the better run prisons

Juvenile Unit:

- There was only one juvenile on the unit at the time of the tour. The youth was working with a teacher at time of the visit

General Population Units:

- It takes too long to get to the law library
- Officers take too long to respond to call button
- It takes too long to see a Counselor
- Food portions are too small and not of good quality. Breakfast and lunch are served too close together with too much time between lunch and dinner
- No automatic refills on medications which can lead to a gap when no medications are available

- Medications do not start right away when entering the facility
- At times, Correctional Officers are disrespectful or use offensive language towards incarcerated persons. Also, Officers will lock people in their cells for insufficient reasons
- Infrequent access to barber services
- Insufficient access to nail clippers and clippers are shared among many incarcerated persons without cleanings in between
- Phone calls are too expensive
- More vocational training programs, like a barber certification program, or a flagger program, are needed.
- Access to Calm app was requested
- Incarcerated persons on 8 Max, stated they were not provided cleaning products to clean their cells and dining area
- Reports that current conditions are “way better than it used to be”
- Complaints that clothes were expensive, not cleaned regularly, sometimes not returned at all, or that clothes go missing
- Water in cell, water under sink
- Missed a meal because on lock down
- Guards giving out medications inside of nurses station
- Food better than Philly
- Some Correctional Officers are good, some are not
- It’s easy to get lost in the system as there is not enough information on provided on criminal case
- Pro Se complained of not receiving discovery documents.
- Correctional Officers complained that mandatory 16hr shifts are too much and should be reduced to 12hr shift.
- Incarcerated person complained of being denied permission to see chaplain
- Incarcerated Person complained that his Asthma is not being treated
- Incarcerated person complained of having to pay a \$5.00 co-pay per sick call visit
- Muslim incarcerated persons complained that they were not able to fully celebrate the Ramadan holiday: They were told they could not pray together, told they were not allowed to have kufis, or Noble Quran.
- Complaints that electrical problems are not being addressed resulting in inhumane conditions such as eating in the dark.
- Case workers complains of being overworked
- Incarcerated person complained that his phone PIN was stolen by others who used it and that their charges were assigned to him
- Incarcerated person alleges his bail was paid, and can be verified, yet he has not been released
- Multiple complaints were heard from incarcerated persons on several blocks concerning access to, and malfunctioning, tablets