

July 2020 Open Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11am-12:30pm
Zoom Call

I. Roll Call:

Board members present: Chairman Charles Thornton, Katherine Huffman, Nkechi Taifa, Charlie Whitaker, Calvin Woodland.

Staff members present: Director Donald Isaac, Nicole Ukaegbu, Sheila Walker, Kareem McCraney, John Kowalko, Chrisiant Bracken, Maurice Cotton, Nailah Seabron.

Guests: Myra Woods, co-chair of Pathways to Reentry, Louis Sawyer- Jubilee Housing, Dr. Ron Garrett- Regional Reentry Coordinator, Catholic Charities

January Meeting Minutes have been accepted.

II. Directors Overview:

We are in unprecedented times and the CIC has been following a 100% telework schedule. Staff meets twice a week, one check in and one staff meeting. We have produced reports, monthly newsletters, surveys, modified visits, and press releases. We have made a significant step forward in tasks by the staff that we have now. We have a great team and great support. A written report also details these items.

Budget: Our original budget asked for 2 promotions and one additional staff person. We have exercised our right to talk to the council directly. It would also be helpful for the board to chime in about the budget (Calvin Woodland). Although, the council has been very responsive. How are we doing with supplies? On the personal service side and the non personal side we are good. We have not used travel, so there was a little cushion there.

III. Staff reports:

Kareem: we have received phone calls and written correspondence from family members concerning the emergency legislation regarding the recalculation of good time credits and compassionate release (within the past 90 days).

Chrisiant: Most recent project is a survey to a smaller group of our larger population (data sampling), about 1750 people across all facilities. We have received about 500 back. Questions are primarily focused on Covid. There is also a qualitative section for people to expound upon their issues. Also- after the emergency legislation was passed we followed up with the BOP to see how the good time credits are being implemented.

Mr. Thornton: We are the only agency who has been able to get information into the BOP. We may want to ask how many of our DC inmates have gotten their good time credits? (Parking Lot).

Issues of the modified lockdown: The DOC and the BOP have been on some form of lockdown since the pandemic started.

Nicole: strategic planning- we hired a facilitator to help us as an office relating to advocacy, partnerships, and overall staff conversation. We will be examining different topics, mission, roles and responsibilities, software and communications, and outreach.

BOP MOU: The board would like to move to sign the MOU. CIC staff has some concerns. We are a t place where we need to have a MOU signed. The main concern that staff had was that there was an explicit change to not being able to go into the SHU. Mr. Thornton: the MOU specifically spoke about programming areas, and the final call is usually up to each warden at each facility. As a result of the new administration, they do not seem to be open to the CIC having access to the SHU. We have always had the confidentiality with interviews. We need to have the strongest MOU in place that we can have, but we need to have a written agreement in place. The SHU seems to be the biggest hurdle. John: The SHU is where we have the most complaints and we need to be able to see the SHU. Hazelton (visited twice last year, August and November) was the first time that we were denied access to the SHU, in all of the years that we have been inspecting facilities.

Mr. Woodland: would it help if Chairman Allen sent a letter of support.

Chrisiant: Dave Brewer stated that it is not safe for us to go into the SHU.

Mr. Whitaker: what would be the difference if we do not have the MOU? We are still able to do our inspections.

Ms. Huffman: we are still going to have access to the SHU regardless of the language.

Ms. Taifa: We need to have our eyes on the SHU. We are monitoring conditions of confinement.

Director Isaac: relationships are very important for access too. With the deteriorating relationship with the district and the federal government, it is important to maintain and build relationships. The bigger picture is that we have been able to accomplish many things during these trying times as well. It would not be good to sever ties at this point.

IV. Restore the Vote/Emergency Legislation:

The Board of Elections and some of the council members feel that we are more poised to work on an implementation process for DC inmates. The CIC would be the entity to get the ballots into facilities. How does this affect the CIC? An MOU with the BOE? The emergency legislation is 90 days, which does not take us to the election. If this does happen, we will join Maine and Vermont, to be the only other place that allows

Pat: We have learned a lot of lessons because of the compassionate release surveys that went out? We are not a middle man. One of the big issues with voting

We don't want to infringe on our relationship with the BOP, so there needs to be collaboration with the BOP, the BOE and the CIC. The BOP needs to be included.

John: We should be reporting on why the BOP isn't providing names to the BOE, as opposed to using our rosters to send out ballots to the inmates.

Chrisiant: concerned about the confusion with the ballots and why they are not receiving the information.

*Mr. Louis Sawyer: 7/5- Mayor Bowser sent a letter to EHN to move the original concept of having local control parole board. Should be happening in the next 2 years. DC local control board. They will be able to go up before a local board. CIC will post to our website to alert community.