

MINUTES

MARCH 5, 1980 MEETING

BOARD OF CORRECTION

A regular meeting of the New York City Board of Correction was held on March 5, 1980 in the Conference Room of Fox, Glynn & Melamed, 299 Park Avenue, 30th Floor, New York, New York.

In attendance were Chairman Peter Tufo, Vice-Chairman John Horan, Mr. Angelo Giordani, Mr. David Lenefsky, Mr. David Schulte and Mrs. Rose M. Singer.

Excused absences were requested and approved for Mr. Wilbert Kirby and Mr. Jack Poses.

Board staff present were Michael Austin, Michael Cleary, Sherry Goldstein, Judith LaPook and Joseph Smith.

Peter Tufo chaired the meeting and Sherry Goldstein served as secretary.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

The minutes of the February 19, 1980 meeting were adopted.

The Chairman opened the meeting by describing the escape of three inmates from ARDC on March 3, 1980. He stated that the escape was a carbon copy of an escape that occurred in February 1977. In the present escape, 3 inmates housed in 5L used a jeweller's saw to cut through the lower section of the window. Two panes of glass were then pushed out. After climbing out the window, the 3 inmates then jumped over a 9 foot fence -(it is approximately 50-60 feet from the window to the fence) - and proceeded to the East Field parking lot where they stole a correction officer's car and with the permit on the car were able to get through two check points and off the island. The stolen vehicle was found the next day near Kennedy Airport.

Mr. Tufo stated that under no circumstances should three prisoners have been allowed in one cell at the same time. The officers who allowed this to occur were negligent. In addition, Mr. Tufo stated that it probably took upwards of three hours to cut the bar out of the window. If regular patrols of the housing area had been made, these prisoners should not have had sufficient uninterrupted time to complete the sawing. These patrols also should have detected the three prisoners in a single cell. Furthermore, following the escape, Commissioner Ward stated to the press that at least 5 officers (in ARDC and on the bridge checkpoints) didn't do their jobs in order for the escape to have occurred.

The escape of February 24, 1980 was also discussed. Using a hacksaw blade, four inmates cut through the bars on the outer window in 1B of Rikers Island Hospital. Two of the four inmates turned themselves in to authorities after the

plastic bags they wanted to use to float on burst in the water. A third was sighted by correction officers walking on the water's edge and was apprehended. The fourth, Peter J. Donahue, is still at large. It is believed that he greased himself with vaseline and floated across the river on a plastic garbage bag.

The use of correction officers armed with shot guns to patrol the perimeter of HDM was discussed. Mr. Smith reported that the officers, who had been trained by the FBI in the use of firearms five years ago, were armed with double 0 buck shot.

Mr. Austin presented the staff's recommendations on the Department's request for variances from minimum standards due to take effect on February 1, 1980. After lengthy discussion the Board acted on the Department's variance requests as reflected in the attached Board determinations.

The final draft of the Board's report on the proposed Rikers Island transfer was then discussed. Mr. Tufo stated that the City Planning Commission (CPC) had unanimously approved the transfer and released their report. A concurring opinion by the Vice-Chairman of the CPC stated that the need for the State to increase their bed space had not been demonstrated. The proposed lease to the State has been scheduled for the March 20, 1980 Board of Estimate calendar. Consideration of the transfer will, in all likelihood, be tabled until April 24, 1980.

Ms. LaPook stated that the copy of the report that the Board had before them now was close to final with only some editorial changes and a summary still remaining to be completed. She stated there were three areas in which additional information would be forthcoming:

1. The independent City appraisals of the value of Rikers Island.
2. The bulk study of the proposed sites (are they adequate for the projected size of the institutions) and
3. An independent analysis of the current cost estimates to ensure that they are accurate.

Mr. Schulte then discussed those additional points which he felt must be included in the report. These related to three areas - the construction cost, bed space and external security of the replacement system.

A lengthy discussion followed on all of Mr. Schulte's concerns. It was agreed that Ms. LaPook would work with Mr. Schulte to include in the report the appropriate language addressing these issues.

Mr. Horan moved that a resolution be passed approving the draft with these amendments and a summary.

Mrs. Singer seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The next Board Meeting was scheduled for April 18, 1980 at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.