



**NEW YORK CITY  
BOARD OF CORRECTION**

**JULY 16, 2024 PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**ATTENDEES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair  
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair  
Robert L. Cohen, M.D., Member  
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.), Member  
DeAnna Hoskins, Member  
Jacqueline Pitts, Member  
Joseph Ramos, Member  
Jude Torchenaud, Member

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION (DOC)**

Francis Torres, First Deputy Commissioner  
James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner of Health Affairs  
Nancy Savasta, Acting General Counsel  
Mark Pauley, Senior Policy Analyst  
Allison Pace, Assistant Commissioner, Facility Operations  
Alexandria Maldonado, Assistant Commissioner, Strategic Initiatives  
Kathleen Zadzora, Assistant Commissioner, Health Affairs  
Chelsea Chard, Senior Policy Advisor  
Mark Pauley, Senior Policy Analyst  
Annais Morales, Press Secretary

**NYC HEALTH + HOSPITALS – CORRECTIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (CHS)**

Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President  
Jeanette Merrill, MPH, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Carlos Castellanos, Chief Operations Officer/Deputy Executive Director  
Nancy Arias, RN, Chief Nursing Officer/Deputy Executive Director  
Bipin Subedi, Chief Medical Officer/Senior Assistant Vice President  
Nicole Levy, Director of Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs

**CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS' BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION (COBA)**

Antoinette Anderson, Third Vice President

Vanessa Quinones, Bronx Borough Trustee

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Eduardo Del Valle, NYC Department of Design and Construction  
Jeff Margolies, NYC Department of Design and Construction  
Solange A. Sylvain, NYC Council, Council Member Brewer's Office  
Zayin Tilley, NYC Council  
Jeffrey Severe, Public Advocates Office  
Edwin Hernandez, Freedom Agenda  
David Lefkovits, Freedom Agenda  
Jay Edden, Women's Community Justice Association  
Rose Harris, Women's Community Justice Association  
Keith McKay, Women's Community Justice Association  
Sarita Daftary, Urban Justice Center  
Briana Gilkman, Urban Justice Center  
Mara Khanna, Urban Justice Center  
Jennifer J. Parish, Urban Justice Center/Jails Action Coalition/HALT  
Michael Klinger, Brooklyn Defender Services  
Chris Boyle, NYCDS  
Casey Deporto, NYCDS  
Natalie Fiorenzo, NYCDS  
Rachel Sznajderman, NYCDS  
Chaplain Dr. Victoria A. Phillips, Visionary V Ministries  
Scott Paltrowitz, HALT Solitary Campaign  
Ryan Acquicotta  
Jovian, Student

**Approval of July 16, 2024 Meeting Agenda**

Chair Dwayne Sampson called the meeting to order with a quorum of members present. Chair Sampson requested a motion to approve the Board's July 16, 2024 agenda. Upon being moved and seconded, Chair Sampson asked for discussion on the agenda. Board Member Cohen commented on the Board's rules of procedure, to which Chair Sampson responded that there needs to be a review of the Board's bylaws. Board Member Hoskins asked why the Chair wanted to revisit the Board's bylaws. Chair Sampson noted his absence from the June 5, 2023 session, and therefore, did not have an opportunity to make recommendations. Board Member Hoskins stated the Board voted as a majority for the current bylaws. Upon being moved and seconded, the agenda was approved by majority vote (Vice Chair Skipper and Members Cozier, Hoskins, Pitts, Ramos, Torchenaud voted in favor of the agenda. Chair Sampson abstained and Member Cohen voted no). The See this portion of the video [here](#).

**Approval of June 25, 2024 Public Meeting Minutes**

Chair Sampson asked for a motion to approve the draft of public meeting minutes of the Board's June 25, 2024 meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the public meeting minutes were approved unanimously. See this portion of the video [here](#).

**Discussion and Vote on the Board's Rules of Procedures (Bylaws)**

Chair Sampson held a discussion and requested a vote on the Board's amended bylaws. Chair Sampson stated the amended bylaws of June 5, 2023 removed some authority from the Chair position that was previously held since 2015. Chair Sampson requested changes be made to the bylaws to ensure accountability, direction, and order for Board of Correction staff. The proposed substantive changes included placing the Executive Director in a staff position, reinstating the Chair as Chief Executive Officer of the Board, and granting the Chair the authority to appoint Board members to committees. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Chair Sampson opened the floor for Board members to discuss the proposed substantive changes. Member Hoskins raised that the Chair's proposed substantive changes are related to power and control. Member Hoskins emphasized the language codified in the bylaws was rewritten in June 2023 to clarify the interpretation of the Chair's role pertaining to Board members, not BOC staff. Chair Sampson requested that any conversations regarding staff be stricken from the record; however, Member Hoskins stated discussions about staff are relevant to the amended bylaws. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Hoskins continued discussing the substantive proposals raised by Chair Sampson. Specifically, Member Hoskins stated the function of committees has improved since the restructuring of the amended bylaws, and the Executive Director serves as a member of the Board without a vote. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Hoskins raised there were Board members whose expertise was underutilized, and therefore, the bylaws were amended to create equity on the Board. Chair Sampson suggested that the 2015 bylaws were established for a legitimate reason and there was no need for revision. Member Hoskins stated that the 2015 bylaws were updated in 2023 to meet the needs of the Board. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Cohen stated the bylaws were amended to give most of the Board the authority to make key decisions such as the selection of the executive director. Chair Sampson stated that staff-related matters should be discussed in executive sessions. Member Cohen then stated the bylaws were changed due to the inaction of the Chair to be involved in regaining access to video surveillance, which is a matter that significantly impacted the Board. Chair Sampson stated that his efforts were helpful in helping to regaining video surveillance. Vice Chair Skipper read the bylaws citing that five members or more constitute a quorum and that the Board properly established the June 5, 2023 bylaws, and therefore, the discussion about the Board's bylaws is uncontroversial. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Ramos responded later stating some members collaborated with Chair Sampson, but ultimately, other members or staff determined litigation was the more appropriate strategy to regain the Board's access to video surveillance. Member Cohen responded stating all Board members were invited to strategize how to regain video surveillance but only five members participated. Member Cohen then stated that five members of the Board determined litigation was the appropriate strategy to regain access to video surveillance. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Cozier raised a point of procedure stating that the majority of the members on the current Board were not members who voted on the June 5, 2023 bylaws. Member Cozier stated that out of fairness the members and Chair who were not present should be able to revisit the June 5, 2023

bylaws, but those recommendations for changes to the bylaws must be placed in writing, must be circulated to the full Board to give all members an opportunity in advance to review those recommendations and opine on them. Member Hoskins asked for a motion to review the specific areas of changes to the current bylaws raised by Chair Sampson and that an ad hoc committee consisting of Chair Sampson *ex officio*, Vice Chair Skipper to serve as Chair of the committee, and Members Cozier and Cohen be included to review the bylaws. During discussion, Member Ramos stated not all members were invited to participate in the vote of the current bylaws and the committee should include members who did not have opportunity to participate in 2023. Chair Sampson did a roll call vote with all members voting unanimously in favor of the formation of an ad hoc committee to review specific areas of the Board's bylaws with Vice Chair Skipper as Chair, Chair Sampson (*ex officio*) and Board members Cohen and Cozier. See this portion of the video [here](#).

### **Executive Director Update**

BOC Executive Director Jasmine Georges-Yilla presented an overview of the Board's latest progress report on Borough-Based Jails, issued on July 1, 2024 and updated on July 15, 2024. In 2019, the City of New York formally committed to closing Rikers Island and building a smaller, safer, fairer, more humane jail system in the boroughs. The City Council approved a plan to build and operationalize four new jail facilities in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx by 2027. Under Local Law 192 of 2019, the Board is required to report every six months on the City's progress of closing the City's jails on Rikers and the transition to borough-based jails. On July 1, 2024, the Board of Correction released its fourth report detailing the progress of the City's Borough-Based Jails plan. The report addressed the impact of proposed designs for the borough-based facilities on people in custody and compliance with the Board's Minimum Standards. After the release of BOC's progress report on July 1, 2024, the Department of Correction and Correctional Health Services provided clarifying and factual content for the report. An updated report noting this information was released on July 15, 2024. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Executive Director Georges-Yilla provided updates on items that were discussed at previous meetings. At the Board's January 2024 meeting, DOC Associate Commissioner Pace informed the Board that the Department is looking into auditing their linen and laundry exchange process. See this portion of the video [here](#).

The Board shared condolences with the loved ones of Department members of service who passed. The Board also expressed condolences to the family and loved ones of Ms. Bernice Forrester, a former Health Service Administrator who worked on Rikers from the 1980s to 2012, and who passed away on May 27, 2024. See this portion of the video [here](#).

As of July 17, 2024, the approximate total census of people in custody is 6,397. By facility, as of July 17: BHPW (49), EHPW (4), EMTC (1,460), GRVC (967), NIC (256), OBCC (1,456), RESH (149), RMSC (378), RNDC (1,003), and WF (674). See this portion of the video [here](#).

The Board is conducting comprehensive heat monitoring in City jails this summer to ensure

the safety and well-being of people in custody and staff. The Board's monitoring efforts began on May 31 and will continue through August 30, 2024. As of July 15, 2024, staff have completed 29 out of 64 planned tours. Based on the tours completed so far, the Board finds the Department has complied with its directive. The Board has launched a heat monitoring dashboard that will be updated every Monday. The dashboard is located here: [BOC Heat Monitoring Dashboard](#). The Board intends to release their findings in a report in October 2024. See this portion of the video [here](#).

### **Committee Updates**

Chair Sampson asked whether Board members have any committee updates before moving to the next agenda item. There were no committee updates provided at this meeting.

### **Department of Correction Updates**

#### A. Status of Borough-Based Jails Project

- i. Alexandria Maldonado, DOC Assistant Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives, and Eduardo del Valle, Deputy Commissioner at the NYC Department of Design and Construction (DDC) presented on the status of Borough-Based Jails. See this portion of the video [here](#).

- 1) There will be four borough-based jails built in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens.
- 2) The Brooklyn contract for design services was awarded in June 2023 and there is 100 percent design development for the Brooklyn correctional facilities. There is currently site investigative work that is ongoing at the Brooklyn location to begin foundational work in Fall 2024.
- 3) The contract for the Bronx and Queens facilities are expected to proceed in August 2024.
- 4) The Manhattan correctional facility is in the final stages of developing schematics that lead up to the proposals that are anticipated to be submitted in Fall 2024. The best value proposer will then be identified and then ensue with limited negotiations to complete that process by the first quarter of 2025.

- ii. Outdoor Recreation

- 1) Chair Sampson raised a question of whether the proposed Brooklyn design is 100 percent in compliance with the Board's minimum standard regarding recreation.
  - a. Deputy Commissioner del Valle ensured compliance with local laws, namely Local Law 194, requiring outdoor recreation areas to be built inside the housing unit.
  - b. Associate Commissioner Maldonado expressed the outdoor recreation areas were designed in good faith. DOC will work their partners to ensure that all accommodations can be made to comply with the Board's minimum standards and to meet the needs of the population.
- 2) Member Hoskins inquired about the design of correctional facilities

and ensuring fresh air and light. Member Hoskins asked if there is space outdoors or if it is enclosed by a roof.

- a. Deputy Commissioner del Valle stated it is an open space with a terrace that has louver walls that are approximately six to seven feet to allow for fresh air. Above the louver wall is a security screen.
- 3) Member Cohen stated a window does not fit the definition of the Board's minimum standards for direct access to sunlight and air.
- 4) Member Torchenaud requested floor plans and schematics to help visualize the outdoor recreation plans.
  - a. Deputy Commissioner del Valle stated DDC would work with DOC to share those plans with the Board.
- 5) Chair Sampson requested to see a timeline for negotiations and reviews be shared with the Board to better understand the direction and to make recommendations before construction and operational plans are underway.
  - a. Deputy Commissioner del Valle stated DDC and DOC will work on sharing timelines before the Board's September meeting.
- 6) Vice Chair Skipper clarified whether each housing area would have its own recreation area.
  - a. Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated each housing area will have its own recreation area.

### iii. Staffing Levels

- 1) Executive Director Georges-Yilla asked whether DOC plans to increase the staffing levels in the Borough-Based Jails and what is DOC's plans for recruitment and retention.
  - a. Assistant Commissioner Maldonado expressed DOC is looking at ways to improve its staffing levels. Additionally, DOC intends to maximize its staffing efficiency across all future facilities.
  - b. As for recruitment, the future facilities may attract new staff because they will be modernized and will look completely different from the facilities on Rikers.
- 2) Vice Chair Skipper inquired as to whether DOC looked at RMSC as an example of a facility with adjacent recreation yards to address the staff shortage issues that led to the closure of those recreation yards.
  - a. Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated the newly designed recreational yards are fully visible from the interior (housing area) and DOC has maximized sightlines from the officers' station—allowing the officer to see the recreation yard, the dayroom, and the upper and lower tiers.
  - b. Vice Chair Skipper asked for renderings of the recreation area. DDC and DOC stated they would provide those renderings.

### iv. Borough-Based Jails Capacity

- 1) Member Cohen asked about the current capacity for each borough facility and DOC's plan to decrease the population.
  - a. Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated that each borough facility can accommodate approximately 1,040 beds, so a total of

4,160 beds. Moreover, DOC is working with the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) and looking for alternatives to incarceration.

v. Staten Island Jail and Women's Based Jail

1) Chair Sampson inquired about plans to build a correctional facility in Staten Island.

a. In its conversation with the Administration and the Lippman Commission, DOC is exploring all possibilities, including the development and buildout of a correctional facility in Staten Island.

2) Vice Chair Skipper inquired about a women's only correctional facility being gendered and culturally responsive.

a. DOC is designing the Queens facility to operate as two jails in one. The plan is to have incarcerated women completely separated from the male population.

b. Chair Sampson suggested the Women in Jails Committee to look into working with DOC to better understand and address the needs of incarcerated women.

B. Status of Plans to Transfer Parcels of Land and Unused Facilities of Rikers to the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) – Local Law 16 of 2021. See this portion of the video [here](#).

i. Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated that Local Law 16 of 2021 requires the Mayor of New York City to conduct a review of all available land on Rikers to transfer to DCAS. Currently, all land on Rikers is in active use and DOC has transferred all land that meets the specifications under Local Law 16. Associate Commissioner Maldonado states DOC conducts periodic reviews to determine whether there are parcels of land and unused facilities that meet the requirements to be transferred to DCAS.

ii. Member Ramos asked what DCAS intends to use the land for.

1) Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated that one endeavor is renewable energy for the City in the future.

iii. Vice Chair Skipper inquired about the closures of AMKC and VCBC.

1) Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated AMKC has DOC's production kitchen. There are currently no incarcerated individuals housed in AMKC; however, the facility provides approximately 10,000 meals every day.

2) Associate Commissioner Maldonado stated VCBC (also known as "the boat") is not covered under Local Law 16 of 2021. The boat is decommissioned by the New York State Commission of Correction (SCOC) and DOC is currently discussing its future use with the administration.

C. Air-Conditioned Units

i. Member Cohen asked DOC to provide a report on 1) the number of incarcerated individuals living in non-air-conditioned units and 2) how many air-conditioned units do have individuals housed in them. See this portion of the video [here](#).

#### D. Status of DOC's audit on linen and laundry exchange

- i. Allison Pace, Associate Commissioner, Facility Operations stated that laundry exchange should occur on a weekly basis and uniform exchange should occur twice each week. Associate Commissioner Pace stated incarcerated individuals are afforded the opportunity to do their laundry inside the housing unit twice each week. DOC reports that it uses grievance data as one metric to understand the pervasiveness of the issue and reports that this concern is on a downward trend. DOC states they are not experiencing supply issues. In March, the Department conducted an internal audit of linen and uniform exchange, and an audit was conducted from January 28 to February 3. DOC reviewed housing area logbooks and linen and uniform exchange logbooks across all jails. Associate Commissioner Pace stated that staff then reviewed Genetec (video surveillance) to ensure appropriate logbook entries were made and to ensure linen and uniform exchange services were provided. Overall, the audit revealed the facilities were 81 percent compliant with facilitating linen exchange and facilities were found to be 63 percent with facilitating uniform exchange. Associate Commissioner Pace announced that the pilot of EMTC's clothes box, laundry, and overall delivery of services began on July 15, 2024. See this portion of the video [here](#).
- ii. James Saunders, Deputy Commissioner, Health Affairs was asked by BOC Executive Director Georges-Yilla about plans to expand the pilot. Associate Commissioner Pace explained the EMTC pilot will be for 90 days and after review, DOC will assess the next steps. Deputy Commissioner Saunders stated DOC sampled 100 percent of all housing areas, specifically from January 28 through February 3, 2024. DOC staff took more than 5,200 logbook photos, placed that information into Excel, and used Genetec to verify the logbook entries were accurate. BOC Executive Director Georges-Yilla asked DOC to share their findings with the Board in writing. See this portion of the video [here](#).

### **Correctional Health Services Updates**

#### A. Status of Outposted Therapeutic Housing Units

- i. Patsy Yang, DrPH, Senior Vice President of Health and Hospitals for Correctional Health Services, stated that since the last update provided in March 2024, CHS has begun recruiting for positions in anticipation of the opening of new units at Bellevue Hospital in Spring 2025. The work at Woodhull and North Central Bronx (NCB) is underway. Specifically, the roof at Woodhull is currently being fortified. At NCB, CHS is waiting for approval to remove hospital services to begin the renovation of the new spaces. See this portion of the video [here](#).
- ii. Chair Sampson expressed his desire for CHS to meet with the Board to discuss the Board's oversight of CHS. See this portion of the video [here](#).

### **Correctional Officers' Benevolent Association**



- A. Staff concerns and comments regarding the Borough-Based Jails Project
  - i. Antoinette Anderson, Third Vice President, raised two concerns the Correctional Officers' Union has with the proposed Borough-Based Jails Project. First, COBA wants the Board to implement heat mitigation efforts inside the proposed borough jails. Second, COBA holds that Rikers is the appropriate land space to build modern jails, not the boroughs. Francis Torres, First Department Commissioner, stated DOC's heating plans considers staff members as well as the incarcerated population. First Deputy Commissioner Torres stated the Department is looking at what it will take to retrofit buildings with air-conditioning units and will be able to provide more information to the Board after the public meeting. See this portion of the video [here](#).

## **Public Comment**

- A. In-Person Public Comment
  - i. The Board heard public comments from Jay Edidin (Women's Community Justice Association), Darren Mack (Freedom Agenda/JAC), Dylan Erikson (Urban Justice Center), Claire Rothschild (Urban Justice Center), Dr. Victoria Phillips (Visionary V Ministries), Michael Klinger (Brooklyn Defender Services), Edwin Hernandez, Jennifer Parish (Urban Justice Center), and Rachel Sznajderman (New York County Defender Services). See this portion of the video [here](#).
- B. Virtual Public Comment
  - i. The Board heard virtual public comments from Lauren Stephens-Davidowitz (Legal-Aid Society), Eileen Maher (Vocal New York), Cleo Nevakivi-Callanan (Urban Justice Center), Toella Pliakas (Urban Justice Center), and Daniele Gerard (Children's Rights). See this portion of the video [here](#).

## **Resolution on Board Committees**

Chair Sampson announced Member Hoskins will introduce a resolution on Board committees. Member Hoskins stated the Board is not in compliance with its bylaws on Board committees. Member Hoskins requested a motion to restructure several of the Board's committees. Chair Sampson requested that the Board table the resolution to avoid interfering with the resolution related to the bylaws. Executive Director Georges-Yilla read the section of the amended bylaws concerning Board committees. The proposed resolution on Board committees' states that the modification of committees helps the members adhere to the rules of procedure and fill current vacancies while considering the preferences and expertise of Board members. Below are the proposed committees:

1. The Board's Committee on Deaths, Near Deaths, and Serious Injuries will be chaired by Member Cohen and Members Ramos and Torchenaud will serve on the committee.
2. The Board's Committee on Women in City Jails will be chaired by Vice Chair Skipper and Members Cozier and Pitts will serve on the committee.
3. The Board's Committee on Programs and Education will be chaired by Member Pitts and Members Franco and Torchenaud will serve on the committee.

4. The Board's Committee on
5. Chair Sampson would serve as *ex officio* Member of all committees of the Board.

The resolution on Board committees was moved and seconded. A roll call vote was taken and Chair Sampson and Members Cozier, Ramos, Pitts, and Torchenaud did not vote in favor of the resolution. Vice Chair Skipper and Members Cohen and Hoskins voted in favor of the resolution. The resolution failed. Chair Sampson pointed out that the Board's concerns regarding committees will likely be addressed in the established ad hoc committee to review the Board's bylaws. See this portion of the video [here](#).

Member Hoskins requested a motion for the resolution on Board committees to be discussed at the Board's September 2024 public meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, the motion was unanimously approved. See this portion of the video [here](#).

### **Board's Minimum Standards Review Committee**

Member Hoskins asked for a motion to create an ad hoc committee to review the Board's Minimum Standards. This committee would be responsible for reviewing each section of the Board's current Minimum Standards and will provide recommendations every ninety (90) days starting the first quarter of fiscal year 2025. Member Hoskins asked for the ad hoc committee to consist of Chair Sampson (*ex officio*), Member Cozier to serve as Chair of the committee, and Vice Chair Skipper and Member Cohen to serve on the committee. Executive Director Georges-Yilla read the resolution containing the City Charter rules mandating the Board's authority. Executive Director Georges-Yilla emphasized the Board's Minimum Standards have not undergone a comprehensive review for nearly two decades, and the Board's Mental Health and Healthcare Standards were last reviewed in 1985 and 1991, respectively. Chair Sampson did a roll call vote with Vice Chair Skipper and Members Cohen, Hoskins and Torchenaud voting in favor of the formation of an ad hoc committee to review the Board's Minimum Standards, Mental Health, and Healthcare Standards. Chair Sampson and Members Cozier, Pitts, and Ramos did not vote in favor of the resolution. Since the resolution neither passed nor failed, Member Hoskins requested a motion to move the resolution on the Board's Minimum Standards Review Committee to the Board's September 2024 public meeting. Upon being moved and seconded, Chair Sampson did a roll call vote with all members unanimously in favor of addressing the resolution at the next public Board meeting. See this portion of the video [here](#).