**Erie County Community Corrections Advisory Board**

**Minutes – October 2, 2012**

**1. 1:12 Call to Order** by Rev. Pierce

Motion to approve by Culhane

2nd Covert

All in favor

None opposed

Motion carried

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Roll Call**

Present

Pierce

Culhane

Covert

Haynes

Amin

Sacco

Lex

Absent

Ansari

Carr

Burgin

Cercone

Kubik

Guests in attendance:

John Rodriguez and Deborah Clay, Erie County Jail Management Division

Frank Mesiah, NAACP, Buffalo Chapter

Delphine Verdi, concerned citizen

**4. Approval of September Minutes** – Motion by Culhane 2nd by Lex

All in favor

None opposed

Motion carried

**5. Comptroller Audit of Telephone and Commissary Funds**

Comptroller Shenk unable to attend meeting.

**Rev. Pierce:**

Secretary Sacco wrote a letter requesting the Comptroller to be present at the meeting to discuss the findings of the audit.

**Karima Amin**

States maybe Sacco should call and let them know we need a response. It is important for the Comptroller to respond to our requests, because it is not trivial.

**Rev Pierce:**

Sent a letter to Sheriff Howard inquiring as to why the *Buffalo News* is not made available to inmates at the ECCF/ECHC. Waiting for a response. States if he does not get a response, he will make a phone call.

**Karima Amin:**

States we as a board refuse to be ignored. Various entities feel that we as a board don’t matter because we are an advisory board. We are a serious board, and we mean business.

**Rev. Pierce:**

Should we ask the Sheriff to meet with us regarding the *Buffalo News*?

**Karima Amin:**

Yes.

**Chief John Rodriguez:**

We have a Very busy schedule, and we are told by the Sheriff to make sure there is a staff member present at every one of these meetings. When we are notified, however the communication, we respond to all issues.

States he is not privy to respond as to why the inmates are not receiving the *Buffalo News.*

***Rev. Pierce: Discuss item #8 next so Frank Mesiah can speak***

**8. Inmate Voting**

**Rev. Pierce:**

The response was very light as far at the voter registration is concerned. There were only two who registered at the holding center, and two at the correctional facility.

**Frank Mesiah:**

We aim to maximize the number of people who vote – regardless of who they vote for. The NAACP wants to increase voter awareness and voter registration

At any given time there are at least 50 registration forms in Alden, as well as 50 in the holding center downtown. You can vote as long as you aren’t a felon in prison, or reporting to a parole officer. Other than that, anyone has the right to register and vote.

Anyone on a misdemeanor charge can vote.

What can we do to increase voter registrations/voting in the facilities?

**Chief Rodriguez:**

What I can do immediately is have the voter registration/election information displayed on the electronic bulletin boards in the housing units at the facilities.

**Legislator Hogues:**

Who is making contact with B.O.E commissioners? We are up against a deadline for voter registration.

**Frank Mesiah:**

I will follow up.

**Rev. Pierce:**

We should have monthly voter registration at the facilities. Ongoing and frequent. We need to stay on top of this.

**6. AA/NA Programs**

**Denise Clay, Director of AA/NA programs**:

Speaking points:

* Inmates must ask to take part in AA/NA programs.
* Monday afternoon NA for male inmates.
* Wednesday - Male AA.
* Saturday - Female AA 16 per meeting maximum.
* Program is always available for inmates. Lists are compiled weekly.
* Inmates are made aware of such programs via the inmate handbook.
* There is no AA/NA program at the downtown holding center.
* AA/NA information is also posted in the library.

**Chief John Rodriguez:**

If you get me more staff we can provide more treatment. The problem is manpower.

**7. Ombudsman Position** – No new business

**9. Removal of Absent Members from the Board** – Send letter to Board member who has missed three consecutive meetings. By-laws state any member that has missed three in a row should be informed and asked whether or not they choose to remain a member.

**10. Vacant Seats on the Board** – Must be filled ASAP. Recommending entities should be contacted for new appointees.

**11. Date of November Board Meeting** - Next board meeting will take place November 13. November 6th is a holiday; Old County Hall will be closed for business (Election Day)

**12. Other Business**

**Delphine Verdi - husband currently incarcerated Alden Correctional Facility**

Spoke on the deplorable conditions of the ECCF, specifically the bathrooms in the family waiting area. There was no toilet paper. Paper towels were wet and on the floor.

No soap in the dispensers.

Spoke on the general uncleanliness throughout the family waiting area.

**Karima Amin:**

Just like prisoners are people, families are people too. They should not have to be subjected to these conditions upon entering the facility to visit loved ones.

**Barry Covert:**

The men’s side of the bathroom at the ECCF in Alden is in the same condition as far as lack of cleanliness.

**John Rodriguez:**

States he can assure the board that the staff is not dirtying the bathrooms.

He has no control over the public coming in, urinating and defecating all over the bathrooms.

Agrees no one should have to endure those conditions upon entering the facility.

**Legislator Hogues:**

What is the process? Can we increase the frequency of the cleaning?

**Chief John Rodriguez:**

At this time inmate trustees clean the bathroom.

No available staff to monitor the cleanliness of the bathroom. More staff needed.

**Legislator Hogues**:

Let’s agree to look and see how we can improve the conditions overall.

People in general can do crazy stuff; we still have to provide a safe, clean environment.

**Joe Sacco:**

Notes that when working in a state correctional facility, his job was based in the visiting room on the weekends.

During the course of the day the bathrooms get very filthy.

They are cleaned by inmates at the end of every day. Bathrooms cannot be cleaned by inmates during the day for fear of contraband being left in bathroom and visiting rooms.

**Chief John Rodriguez:**

Holding center is a maximum security facility vs. Alden facility being a medium security.

We do not have the luxury of having inmates downtown help clean and work in the facility due to the nature of their crimes.

**Rev. Pierce:**

**Chaplaincy:** Asserts Sheriff Howard stated that there are more important needs of the ECCF/ECHC than providing a full-time chaplain.

**Legislator Grant**:

Will send a letter to County Executive Poloncarz requesting a full time chaplain for the ECCF/ECHC.

**Charles Culhane:**

Covert asks are there domestic violence classes at either the ECCF/ECHC

**Chief John Rodriguez:**

No.

**Barry Covert:**

A goal of our board should be to determine programs that need to be made available in the facilities; such as NA/AA, domestic violence and anger management.

**13. Adjournment** – 2:45 pm