**Erie County Community Corrections Advisory Board**

**Minutes**

**July 9, 2013**

* **Call to Order 1:06 pm Rev. Pierce**
* **Pledge of Allegiance**
* **Roll Call**

**Present**

Amin

Ansari

Cercone

Colon

Culhane

Dickman

Diina

Haynes

Marciniak

Pierce

Ranney

Russo

Sacco

Schultz

**Absent**

Covert

* **Resolutions on the table:**
* Adult GED Programs at ECCF

This resolution recommends that the legislature and the Sheriff’s Office initiate and maintain a GED Program for adult prisoners in the Erie County Correctional Facility; using part of the $700,000 in telephone fund profits at the ECHC/ECCF.

* Re-Establishment of Conditional Release Program

This resolution recommends that the Legislature, Department of Probation, County Executive and Sheriff’s office re-establish the Erie County Conditional Release Commission; that only inmates with a high school diploma or GED be eligible for early release; the commission shall meet within one month of establishment to adopt procedures for the review of applications and that the commission be funded with telephone funds.

Motion made to table resolutions before submitting them to allow a subgroup to do additional research on the GED program.

Motion made by Dr. Ansari

2nd By Bill Schultz

All in favor

Motion passes

* **Presentation of Adult GED Programs at the Jail and Correctional Facility**

**Nancy Rusinski, principal of GED program the ECHC.**

Attests that claims made against the correctional facility claiming there are not enough spots open for inmates to participate in educational programing is untrue. Came in to speak to the board to defend her program. Claims space is limited only in area, not in the spaces available for people to learn.

Currently there is no waiting list for Adult GED

States she has to follow state education guidelines in order for them to participate in the GED program. Often times an inmate will not test high enough to enter the program, so the program works with them to increase math and reading levels, until they can qualify to enlist in the program.

“Our main issue is after they leave jail, there needs to be someone on the outside to work with them to make sure they either continue their education or get a job.”

Currently there are 20 adults in the program now. Last year 120 adults were served.

**Diana Chutko, Transitional Counselor**

States many times inmates refuse to get up for the 8:00-11:00 am instruction.

States the focus on educating the youth that enter the facilities. We have a full-fledged Regents Program for high school students who have been arrested while attending high school.

Last year we serviced over 300 students under the age 21.

Morning GED from 8:00-11:00 am all ages

Afternoon 1:00-2:30 pm BOCES instruction.

Evening 630-930 pm full Regents Program

Buffalo Public Schools and BOCES fund our programs

* **6/6/2012 Letter to Supt. Thomas Diina, Re: Visitor Searches**

**Superintendent Tom Diina –**

All of our searches at the facilities are legitimate. Our primary responsibility is to protect the officers, visitors and inmates. Contact visitation is a prime opportunity for people to introduce contraband into the facility. In the past three weeks, there were two incidents where contraband was attempted to be brought into the facility.

There are no issues with the state or federal government regarding our searches within the facilities.

Any complaints that are made are taken seriously, and those officers deemed to have behaved inappropriately will be disciplined.

**John Lipsitz-National Lawyers Guild**

These searches are a violation of the Fifth Amendment based on my preliminary research. Dogs should not be putting their heads into the crotches of visitors, and this should not be permitted whether it’s legal or not. It creates a bad impression and deters visitations of inmates.

* **Erie County Public Library - Andrew Maines**

Currently the library is collaborating with the Sheriff’s office to provide law books on a computer database instead of hard copies of books. Often times pages are ripped out of the law books in the library, so we are working to implement a legal catalog at the correctional facilities.

There will be five computers with this software at the holding center, and ten at the correctional facility in Alden.

Inmates will have direct access to this information.

We have also implemented Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint on the computers and offer beginner and intermediate computer training.

Additionally, the library staff will teach resume building workshops to assist inmates in preparing for employment once they are released.

The staff of certified literacy volunteers will be available Mon-Friday full time.

If an inmate begins a program at the holding center and transfers to the correctional facility, they can continue the program in Alden. We have staff at both locations to provide training and computer assistance.

New computers will be installed this month. Currently our staff is learning the interface of the programs.

* **Rev. Pierce introduces new board member**

Neal Russo, representing the Teamsters Union

* **Chair entertains a motion to Adjourn**

2nd by Culhane

All in favor

Adjournment 2:21pm