

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
CORRECTIONS COMMISSION
March 29, 2019

The South Dakota Corrections Commission met March 29, 2019 at 2:00 pm at South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre, SD. Secretary Mike Leidholt welcomed the Commission and introduced himself as the new Secretary of the Department of Corrections.

Roll call was taken. Present in person were Judge John Brown and Mark Anderson. Attending by phone, Chairman Troy Heinert, Senator Arthur Rusch, Representative Jamie Smith and Bruce Yakley. Excused, Judge Pat Pardy, Representative Kevin Jensen and David McGirr. DOC staff attending, Secretary Leidholt, Deputy Secretary Feiler, Aaron Miller, Michael Winder, Darwin Weeldreyer, SDWP Warden Merkland and joining by telephone, MDSP Warden Fluke.

Chairman Heinert asked if there was a motion to approve the January 2019 Minutes. Senator Rusch moved to approve, Seconded by Judge Brown.

Darwin Weeldreyer provided the Commission with information regarding the Jameson medical expansion project, which received funding in the Governor's budget, after many years of work and planning. A tour of the current facility was offered to Legislators, so they could see what the current conditions are at the unit. Space is very tight, and the reality is, the DOC/DOH must provide medical services to inmates on site. It is not feasible to transport inmates off site for all medical care. Written information was provided to the Commission regarding the contractor, location, size, and other details. Discussion regarding if the expanded unit would save the department money. This is not likely but possible. That was not a primary factor when presenting the request to the Legislature. The expansion will improve the quality of services provided, including offering more privacy to patients and safety for staff. Will require additional FTEs by DOC and DOH to staff the larger unit. Chairman Heinert asked that the Commission be kept in the loop on how the project is progressing and offered his support when the department requests FTEs as he understands how difficult additional FTEs can be to get.

Darwin provided the Commission with information and updates on the DOC's role in responding to natural disasters and its recent response to the flooding going on around the state. All adult facilities are required to have inmates ready for deployment. This typically involves minimum custody inmates. Inmates who respond may have special training, such as Wildland Fire training. Inmates have been used in the past to respond to flooding, storm damage and fires. Inmates may be eligible for time off their sentence. In the past, inmates have received a commutation of sentence from the Governor for their work in the community. DOC is responsible for supervision of the inmates and transportation. Communities may be required to pay back some of the funds, depending on the situation and the costs associated with the deployment. The official notice to deploy comes from the Governor, usually through Public Safety, Emergency Management Services.

Chairman Heinert asked if there was any public comment. No comments offered from the public. Mark Anderson indicated he had a couple of items of business he wanted to discuss. Anderson noted there was a spelling error in the annual report. He also shared he was not clear if the DOC had identified annual goals. He reviews the documents and data provided each month by the DOC, but without any historical data to compare to, he is unsure of where the department is currently in things like inmate population or what it's goals are for the current year. Anderson also offered that the Commission should discuss goals for itself and identify its role as it related to Corrections. This has been brought up in the past but not developed.

Chairman Heinert asked for ideas on the next meeting date and location. Discussion about an October 2019 meeting. Possible locations included MDSP and a stop by Yankton, or SDSP, if there any work started on the Jameson medical unit.

Chairman Heinert offered his appreciation for Judge Brown's commitment to the Commission and its business over the years and wished him well in retirement. Motion to adjourn made by Representative Smith, Seconded by Senator Rusch. Meeting adjourned.