

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**  
**SOUTH DAKOTA CORRECTIONS COMMISSION**  
**Remotely via Microsoft Teams**  
**September 5, 2024**  
**11:00AM – 12:25PM CST**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mark Anderson  
Sen. Shawn Bordeaux  
Sen. Helene Duhamel  
Rep. Eric Emery  
Judge Christina Klinger  
David McGirr  
Judge Jon Sogn

**DOC STAFF PRESENT:**

Kellie Wasko, Secretary of Corrections  
Brent Fluke, Deputy Secretary of Corrections  
Amber Pirraglia, Director of Prisons  
Brittini Skipper, Director of Finance and Administration  
Michael Winder, Public Information Officer  
Nicole Gednalske, Constituent Services Coordinator

**WELCOME**

- Nicole Gednalske welcomed all to the meeting. Attendance roll call was conducted and the quorum was met.

**COMMISSION OVERVIEW**

- Secretary Wasko clarifies purview and authority of the commission as described in SDCL 1-15-1.13. Opens discussion up to commission members.
- David McGirr expresses general disappointment with the current state of the commission citing his belief that the commission is not serving its intended purpose. Requests legislative review of the commission.
- Mark Anderson agrees the commission has changed over time. Explains he as a member would like to be more involved in decision making. Expresses concern with SD recidivism rates and prison construction in comparison to ND.
- Secretary Wasko agrees the commission has changed over time. Explains SD corrections should not be compared to ND.
- Sen. Bordeaux explains his experiences in the legislature have provided him a different perspective. Expresses frustration with current state of corrections in SD and how it can be fixed. Requests that the commission meets more often.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- A motion to approve the minutes from October 16, 2023, was made by Sen. Duhamel and seconded by Mark Anderson. A voice vote was conducted with no members opposing. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

- Secretary Wasko requests motion for nomination of a Commission Chair. Rep. Emery nominates Sen. Bordeaux for Chair. David McGirr seconds the motion. A voice vote is conducted with only Sen. Duhamel opposing. Sen. Bordeaux is elected Chair by majority vote.
- Secretary Wasko requests motion for nomination of a Commission Vice Chair. Rep. Emery nominates Sen. Duhamel for Vice Chair. Sen. Bordeaux seconds the motion. A voice vote is conducted with no members opposing. Sen. Duhamel is elected Vice Chair by majority vote.

## **PHEASANTLAND INDUSTRIES SHOPS UPDATE:**

- Director Skipper provides a financial update including the profitability of each of the PI shops over the past two fiscal years. The business management policy was referenced regarding corrective measures that are required for shops that do not make a profit. Two shops, upholstery and braille, are currently on corrective measure plans. Two private sector businesses are no longer operating within PI shops. DOC is working with STC in Sioux Falls to establish a diesel mechanic program in one of the now open shops. The cabinet shop has been moved from the Sioux Falls campus to MDSP as the SD Housing Governor's House Program is their primary customer. A new ERP software has been implemented to better track inventory and offender work hours.
- Sen. Duhamel inquires about DOC staffing and turnover within PI shops.
- Director Skipper explains there is little turnover within the shop foreman positions.

## **COMMISSARY PROGRAM UPDATE:**

- Director Skipper provides overview of the new in-house commissary program which was approved by this commission in October 2023. The new PI run commissary shop creates jobs for 25 offenders in Sioux Falls at a rate of \$1/hr. Offenders working in this shop will be trained in high-demand skills such as inventory management and forklift operation. Skipper notes reentry initiative as primary force behind this transition.
- David McGirr inquires about offender wages in comparison to new commissary prices.
- Director Skipper explains DOC has done a cost comparison analysis and determined that over half of the items that were offered under the previous vendor are now less expensive or within 10 cents of the previous price. The new menu also includes over 140 new items that were not offered previously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

- Rep. Kevin Jensen expresses concern for Lifers who are excluded from prison industry jobs. States he is a former corrections commission member, and he is troubled by the current state of the commission. Recalls visiting prison campuses and speaking with offenders and staff.

- Reporter Beth Warden clarifies she respects the work of Secretary Wasko. Discusses her understanding that the Governor's Office is the final authority as to what information is released to journalists. Requests decision makers consider more transparency and quicker response to relieve community tension.
- Lynette Johnson of Sioux Falls inquires why Secretary Wasko would follow past commission agendas and whether she is in favor of the commission.
- Niemma Thasing of Sioux Falls supports the idea of a citizen's committee and would like to be involved.
- Sam Dixon of Sioux Falls would like staff to be further trained on conflict resolution. Supports the use of body worn cameras within corrections facilities.
- Rep. Duba makes outcry for Governor's Office senior staff to be more readily available to allow departments to communicate with media on urgent issues.
- Kristina Kopejtka of Yankton explains most offenders will be released one day and they need help to become good neighbors. Supports the idea of a citizen's committee.
- Reporter John Hult expresses appreciation for the open meeting and discussion. Inquires about the operating status of Hope Haven wheelchair repair shop. Director Skipper informs him Hope Haven is still operating within PI.

**SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING:**

- A date of Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 11:00 AM CST was decided upon by commission members.

**ADJOURN:**

- A motion for adjournment was made by Rep. Emery and seconded by Judge Klinger. The meeting adjourned at 12:25PM CST.