

MINUTES

Meeting: Commission on Jail Standards

Place: Texas State Capitol Building Extension
Room E2.028
1100 Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

To obtain a recording of the meeting August 4, 2023, contact staffer William Turner, at 512-463-2690.

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: August 3, 2023

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Judge Stoudt of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards at 9:00 a.m.

II. Roll Call of Commission Members

Judge Bill Stoudt, Chairman	Sheriff Kelly Rowe
Dr. Porsa, Vice Chairman	Ms. Monica McBride
Mr. Duane Lock	Sheriff Raul Gonzales
Ms. Patricia Anthony	Commissioner Ben Perry

Commission members present at roll call were Judge Bill Stoudt, Commissioner Ben Perry, Dr. Porsa, Mr. Duane Lock, Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Sheriff Raul Gonzales, Ms. Patricia Anthony and Ms. Monica McBride. Mr. Dennis McKinney, Assistant Attorney General, was also present. Staff members attending in-person included Brandon Wood, Ricky Armstrong, Jason Jouett, Byron Shelton, William Turner, Michael Gravitt, Melvin Bowser, Carol Bernhard, Leslie Speir, Martin Arnold, Richard Morgan, Chris Keith, Clarissa Fasci, Kaitlin Hickner, Zachary Aguirre and Valerie Woehl.

Others in attendance were:

Kevin Stuart, Brazos County S.O.
Chad Stroud, Hunt County S.O.
Shannon Herklotz, Dallas County S.O.
Jennifer Shumake, Bexar County S.O.
Sonya Burns, Advocate
Lisa Foster, Harris County, TX
Raymond Adams, Houston, TX
Cedrick Collier, Harris County S.O.
Lynette Anderson, Harris County S.O.
Phillip Bosquez, Harris County S.O.
Christina Salinas, Harris County S.O.
Jason Ross, Burns Architecture
Philip Bosque, Harris County S.O.
Sheriff Ed Gonzales, Harris County
Sheriff Scott Williams, Coryell Co
Juan Sandoval, Travis County S.O.
Raul Banasco, Travis County S.O.
Sheriff Stan Parker, Howard County S.O.
Randy Johnson, Howard County S.O.
Cindy Stormer, Fort Worth, TX
Sharon Hines, Justice Network, Tarrant Co., TX
Josh Lucas, Justice Network, Tarrant Co. TX
Aaryce Hayes, Disability Rights Texas
Jacilet Griffin, Missouri City, TX
Danny R. Martin, Trinity County, TX
Shelley Kellam, Fort Worth, TX
Tracy Smith, Houston, TX
Karthik Soora, Houston, TX
Lon Burnam, Fort Worth, TX
Jennifer LeBow, Fort Worth, TX
Veronica Ordonez, Laredo, TX
Kyle French, Cleveland, TX
Amy Kalmin, BCDB
Sophia Lewis, Dallas County, TX
Krish Gundu, Texas Jail Project
Clifton King, Hunt County, TX

Judge Roger Miller, Coryell County
Sheriff Scott Williams, Coryell County
Sheriff Carl L. Squyres, Runnels County
Kimberly Dunn, Runnels County
Alicia Soto-Barker, BSW Architects
Sheriff Maxey Cerliano, Gregg Co.
Maria Velásquez, Travis County S.O.
Sophia Lewis, Coppell, TX
Rev. Vernon Ozan, Houston, TX
Rebecca Delaune, Tarrant County, TX
Holly Busbee, Tarrant County, TX
Jackee Cox, Fort Worth, TX
Julie Griffin, Fort Worth, TX
Edeun Tyler, Fort Bend, TX
S. Lavonne Cockerell, Fort Worth, TX
Christina Salinas, Houston, TX
Judge Julia Miller, Runnels County, TX
Commissioner Brandon Poehls, Runnels Co., TX
Doreen Geiger, Fort Worth, TX
Nan Terry, Fort Worth, TX
Lauren Johnson, ACLU of Texas
Nathan Fennell, Texas Fair Defense Project
Fawnya Doiron, Liberty, TX
Judge Andy Reese, Van Zandt County, TX
Sheriff Joe Carter, Van Zandt County, TX
Kenny Lemons, Texas Association of Counties
Michael Starkey, Henderson Co. S.O.
Jude Feng, Tarrant Count, TX
Tracy Smith, Harris County, TX
Kevin Smith, Harris County, TX
Dennis Wilson, Waco, Texas
Donnie Dickerson Jr., Shelby County S.O.
Allison Harbison, Shelby County S.O.
Ruth Gonzales, Shelby County S.O.
Mike Ward, Senate Criminal Justice Senate
Chad Stroud, Hunt County, TX

III. Approval of Minutes

Sheriff Rowe moved to approve the minutes for the meeting conducted on May 19, 2023. Sheriff Rowe made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. Porsa seconded the motion, which was subsequently approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

Joshua Lucas, from Fort Worth spoke on behalf of the Justic Network of Tarrant County. Mr. Lucas said he was a divinity student, worked with the homeless and referenced a letter he sent to the Department of Justice requesting an independent review of the jail. He said “we’re here because we’re not really happy with the conditions in the Tarrant County jail.” He said he wanted to take a moment of silence to honor the 90 deaths that have occurred in our jails this year as well as the 75,000 that are still in custody. He referenced Jesus being taken into custody by the Romans and killed. He quoted the Bible and said it was his understanding that 75% of the people in our jails have not been to court and that they are innocent until proven guilty. He said it’s important to treat these people with dignity. He said that it is concerning to him that Tarrant County has passed all of the tests that have been procured for them and that the condition is that we are seeing more and more deaths. He said his organization began by seeking to bring the vote to those incarcerated in the jail but that shifted to focus on the deaths once they determined the condition of the jail. He said that he hopes solutions will come out of what is said today and that eyes will be open and that what they say is heard.

Julie Griffin with Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth spoke saying her words are her own. She said she supports the Justice efforts in support of those incarcerated. She said that whole words fall between the gap of the ‘Standards’ and the reality. She read letters describing lack of medical care of Tarrant County inmates and urged unannounced visits to the jails to investigate. She said it’s the right thing to do and said she knows that the Commission does not want to just be paper pushers.

Sophia Lewis, spoke about her son 24-year-old Shamond Titas Lewis who died in custody. She said her son was mentally ill and died in Dallas County September 29, 2022 after a psychotic episode related to his grandmother’s death. She said he experienced barbaric behavior and is no longer here to speak. She said she’s never received an apology from Dallas County and that are covered by this ‘qualified immunity’. She said that she doesn’t know who they are but they know who she is. She said mental health illness is on the rise and that some of them are wolves in sheep’s clothing and not there to protect and serve as the thought. She said something really needs to be done regarding the mentally ill that need to be stabilized.

Rev. Vernon Ozan from St. Paul’s Missionary Baptist Church in Houston spoke about Evan Lee who died in the jail. He talked about mental illness and suggested that we get the mentally ill together in a place where we can get them under self-control. He said that Christ is the

only one that is going to help them out of this situation. He said that we must handle them right or blood will be on our hands. He said God watches us every millisecond. He said that when you leave Christ out, damage happens and he suggested passing the bill concerning Evan Lee. He said that when you put Christ in, blessings come.

Ret. Air Force Major Sharon Hines from Tarrant County Justice network spoke about Robert Miller's death in the Tarrant County jail which was listed as sickle cell crisis when he didn't have the disease. She said that the cause of death was later changed to 'undetermined'. She it's important that the Tarrant County jail be held accountable. She said that since 2017 at least 52 individuals have died in jail and countless others have suffered serious illness and injuries. She listed off the names of 16 custodial deaths from Jan 2022 to June 2023, a 17 month period, noting that there were 5 deaths in 5 months (within 2023) alone. She said these had not been to trial and asked if we are criminalizing poverty in the Tarrant County jail. She said it warranted a 'no notice' inspection and that it was not only necessary but the right thing to do in this situation. She thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak for those who could not speak for themselves.

Aaryce Hayes from Austin spoke and said that she is a Program Specialist at Disability Rights Texas. She pointed out that she's a social worker and not an attorney. She explained that Disability Rights Texas is the protection and advocacy system designated to protect, promote and advance the rights of individuals with disabilities. She said that her organization is aware and shares concerns about individuals with disabilities languishing in county jails. She shared actions taken by DRT including a class action lawsuit (Ward v Young – filed on July, 2016) concerning plaintiffs in criminal cases found incompetent to stand trial. She described the plaintiffs as needing mental health services to stand trial but instead are languishing in county jails. She said that a bench trial is scheduled for April of next year. She said as a member of Texas Coalition of Healthy Minds, DRT successfully advocated for the continuation of Rider 35, which is \$500,000 to continue psychiatric medication to those released from State hospitals back to county jails. She said the administration of the funds has returned to TCOOMI and the language was broadened to include lab work and blood draws. She said she wants everyone to be aware of the Ryder so that it can be used to obtain additional funding in the future. She related that one of their goals is to increase cooperation between jails, state agencies, the Commission and the local MH authorities to determine the expected response when a LMHA receives a crisis call from jail authorities. She said she hasn't had a lot of opportunity to hear from individual Sheriffs or jails. She said that mail to and from an inmate and Disability Rights Texas should be exempt from being scanned.

Rev. Jocolet Griffin Lee of Brentwood Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, asked that we pause to remember those that have died while incarcerated. She said she's the next of kin to Evan Lee who was 31 years old at the time of his death. She said he was a high school and college graduate and an employee and that he had disabilities. She said he was one of 29 custodial deaths in 2022. She said that 500 days later her family still doesn't know what happened to her son. She said the hospital called to tell her he needed emergency surgery. She said when she saw him he was shackled to the bed and in a coma. She said that Evan did not deserve the death penalty while awaiting his day in court. He wrote a letter asking them

to clear the error so that he could get back to his family. She said there is no transparency at all for the Harris County jail. She asked where the cameras are and asked the Commission what the plan is to hold the jail accountable.

Tracy Smith of Houston, Texas spoke as the mother of Kevin Smith who lost his life January 31, 2023 in Harris County. She said she talked to him the day before. She doesn't know what happened to him and she said she was told various things. The officers told him he was transferred to TDCJ, they couldn't talk to her, it was an asthma attack, and there was no camera footage. She said her son liked the Darby unit better than the county jail. She explained that it has been very hard on the entire family, his small daughter especially, and that she, for the first time, has had to have counseling and therapy because she doesn't know how to cope. She said his autopsy said he died of a heart attack but that she feels that is very unusual for a 24 year-old. She said her son was loved.

Doreen Geiger, a resident of Tarrant County said that their jail needs the Commission's help to improve. She says that since 2017 at least 54 inmates have died. She said many of these deaths and beatings were preventable and caused directly by jailers. She reported that the Texas A&M law school has been involved in the DOJ filing and press articles. Examples of the jail incidents include a birth in the jail by a non-verbal mentally ill inmate where the baby died 10 days later. She related that a homeless mentally ill man with asthma was pepper-sprayed, and he was later found unconscious, dying the next day. She reported that the county tried to cover up the death by reporting it as a sickle cell death. Another example she gave was a 28-year-old man who suffered a serious seizure, had mental health issues was found dead two days after booking already exhibiting rigor mortis. She said the investigation revealed that staff had falsified records of routine checks pursuant to instructions by their supervisors. She said she assumes that Commissioner didn't know this, but now she says the documentation provides them proof. She said one supervisor reported that the Sheriff was aware of these practices, and she said that the right thing to do is to improve the jail.

Jackie Cox from Fort Worth Texas, spoke regarding Tarrant County. She said she wanted to talk about an inmate who was in the jail and three jailers entered the cell. She said one of the jailers smashed the inmate's face into a concrete bunk and broke his face up very badly. She says they also broke 5 of his ribs, deflated one of his lungs and left him on the floor of his cell for 48 hours. She said the three perpetrators were just indicted this past month, just a few days before the deadline to file due to the statute of limitations. She said the District Attorney dismissed the cases. She said the video clearly showed who the perpetrators were and that you 'saw' what they did. She said things are not going well for those who are viciously beat up in the Tarrant County jail. She asked that people be sent down to investigate and said and that they need help.

Veronica Ordonez from Laredo Texas, spoke regarding Ruben Delgado, her 30-year-old son. She said he has been a mental health patient of the state since he was 23 years old. She said he never passed beyond his freshman year of high school. She said he had learning issues but was never assessed with IDD. She said he is currently in jail in Webb County jail. She said that when he is receiving appropriate services for mental health care, he is stable. She said he

has been arrested repeatedly. She said he was assaulted by Jailers on June 22nd and that he was so traumatized that he couldn't remember what happened to him. She said when she saw him that his face was swollen and bruised. She said her son is not violent by nature. She said she was told he was beaten in the elevator and in another room, severely, by jailers. She asked for help and said her son is vulnerable. She wants the commission to hold the Webb County jail accountable for what they are doing to her son.

Kyle French a former inmate of the Harris County jail spoke saying that he is the whistleblower in the Jacoby Pillow incident. He said Mr. Pillow died at 1200 Baker Street in Harris County and says that nobody knows what happened to him. He also spoke of Kevin Smith. He said that there is a system in place to kill inmates at the jail and that the Sheriff is a liar. He asked the Sheriff to release the video. He said Jacoby walked into the "Z" cell under his own power but was beaten so severely that he was brought out on a stretcher. Mr. French said that Jacoby came out with his forehead swollen out about 2 inches and his eyeballs swollen shut and that he was put on a stretcher in front of seven nurses with Harris Health. Mr. French said that they knew that the man was going to die. He said that staff said they called an ambulance for him that night, but none came. He said that at 5:15 am the next morning they wheeled him in a chair to 1200 Baker Street where the news said he died, but that they didn't know what happened to him. He says he "saw it all." Mr. French says these jailers have since been moved to other positions but that they still work for the Harris County Sheriff's department. Mr. French said he 'risked his life today to come here' as the Sheriff is standing in the back. Mr. French said he risked his life to go on Fox 26 to break the news about Jacoby Pillow because people need to know. Mr. French said that there are expensive \$1000 dollar or more cameras everywhere in the jails. He said they work, and the footage should be released. He said Jacoby Pillow was murdered by three officers and they still work for the Sheriff. He said that 'we pay' these salaries and something should be done. He said that mentally ill people are wheeled to the basement and then are wheeled off somewhere to get lost in the numbers. He asked where the armbands are that say where you are and asked to release the camera footage.

Note: After the next speaker, Mr. French asked to interrupt and addressed the board showing them a bottle of standard issue jail shampoo in Harris County. He said there's a Prop 65 cancer warning on the back of the bottle and said it causes skin burns.

Fawnya Doiron spoke regarding her son, Zachary Zepeda. She said June 5th, he was arrested and sent to Harris County jail. She said her son suffers from anxiety, depression, and substance abuse. She related that at the end of the day he's a loved son, grandson and brother, and 33 years old. She said he had an occipital skull fracture, fractured spine, fecal and urine incontinence and was put in the infirmary where he was slammed up against walls. She said 'I Plea to you' to check into Harris County as inmates don't deserve this treatment. She said she is a director at MD Anderson Cancer Hospital and appealed to Dr. Porsa to do no harm as they are taught. She begged everyone to check into what is going on at Harris County jail. She said that she sent several emails to the Director and never received a response.

Michael Torres spoke regarding his son, Michael Brandon Torres who is currently at the Hays County jail awaiting trial. Due to overpopulation, he was moved to Maverick County

and three weeks ago he was in a fight. He said his son broke his hand and was denied medical treatment for three weeks until they got him back to Hays County where they took him to the hospital and he got a cast put on. He says his son is innocent and was stripped naked and beat down by the guards in Maverick County. He requested that the issue be addressed with Maverick County as to why he was denied medical attention.

Nathan Fennel, an attorney with the Texas Fair Defense Project spoke. He provided copies of a press release from a lawsuit they filed against the Harris County jail for ‘Overdetention’. He described it as “when you are legally free, but you are physically in jail.” He said that these conditions are such that folks have done their time yet are still in the jail and were not released until as much as an entire month after they’ve finished their entire sentence. If anyone wants copies of the actual complaint that they filed, he said he would send them. He asked the Commission to investigate this issue ‘both in Smith County and wherever else you may find it in the state.’

Lauren Johnson spoke and said that she works with the ACLU of Texas. She said she came here today to speak regarding a phone book rule that would do away with phone books. She said not everyone has a cell phone and those without probably need the book type resource the most. She said that she wanted to request that if phone books are done away with, she would encourage the Commission to consider some other options. She mentioned some county examples that have a kiosk that contains lists of attorneys, bondsmen and other resources. She suggested that jails at least have a list of laminated contacts and resources whereby an inmate could reach out for someone to represent them. She said that if this is done that it might prevent some of the situations that ‘we’ve’ heard about today. She asked that when prayers are said that the inmates are given the same consideration and included, because they are praying for all in the criminal justice system.

Nan Terry said she is a current Tarrant County resident. She said that in recent years she has noticed a large number of inmate deaths that seemed high and said that it’s important to ask if there is a pattern of systemic negligence. She asked, “Can we see a disregard for the standards established by this Commission?” She listed names of those who’ve died such as Robert Miller, Avonte Meyers, Azi Cheach, a newborn, Georgia K Baldwin and Dean Stewart. She said there may be additional lawsuits and that Tarrant County has reached a settlement in at least one case. She said that several of these deaths were due to a lack of necessary medication. She said for instance, on February 26, 2020, Ricky Farmer passed away after failing to receive crucial medication that controlled his grand mal seizures. She said that according to his family, he had gone three days without this vital medication. She referenced the Department of Justice letter that prior speakers spoke of and urged the Commission to read the letter. She said, “Perhaps you will act” in response to a Star-Telegram article that asked, “How many more must die in Tarrant County Jail, before someone acts?” She referenced citation #28 in the DOJ letter. She urged Commissioners to please make unannounced visits to the jail. She said that it’s right for Tarrant County and for Texas.

Shelley Kellam spoke on behalf of an anonymous close relative and loved one. She said he suffers from mental illness and can be disruptive when in a manic state. She reported that on

two occasions he was taken to the Tarrant County jail where he was savagely beaten after declining a strip search. The second incarceration, she said, was the most traumatic where he was beaten relentlessly resulting in a broken rib. She said that at one point he was stripped naked and strapped to a chair. She said he was not allowed to relieve himself and was forced to urinate and defecate while sitting in that chair. She reported that he wasn't allowed a phone call on either of these occasions. When he failed to return home, she said the family called the jail to see if he was there and they refused to give the family any information saying they were not allowed to. She said the instances call to mind the experiences coming out of Guantanamo or the Soviet Gulag or the abuses routinely practiced by a third world dictator. She said their experiences are by no means unique. She said many have suffered worse. She said we condemn these practices in other countries, and we should not tolerate them in our city or our country. She said she wanted to see better oversight of the jail and said she thinks that it is "ya'lls job." She said she wants to see increased utilization of Tarrant county's mental health diversion center.

Jennifer LeBow, Tarrant County resident and lifelong Texan spoke saying her family spent over 20 years in the foreign service traveling the world and living abroad in places like Honduras, Senegal, Cuba and Mexico. She referenced the phrase 'Be kind to one another, loving one another'. She said that it's important to know that there a number of citizens that are concerned about the jails that do not have direct ties to the jails. She said that in the countries she lived in, American citizens condemned these human rights violations. That it was concerning to come home and see them happening in her very own county. We're not doing a good job being an example to the world, she said. She urged the Commission to please come see the jails and the conditions themselves and help us represent our county and system in a better manner.

Lavonne Cockrell spoke and said she was in Fort Worth and taught gang members in high school but that she is more intimidated today at this meeting. She said that she didn't know if 'it was because there are not enough women on the board or what.' She said maybe it's the testimony, but 'inside I am shivering.' Ms. Cockrell read a letter from 'Emily' her tenant and friend, that outlined the myriad of mental health related issues concerning Tarrant County and its jail. The letter spoke of many drug and addiction issues and asked that the county find a way to determine which inmates are bad/dangerous and which ones are only suffering from addiction or mental health issues. The letter said that Emily never received any of the help she received from the county.

Lon Burnam from Tarrant County spoke and said served in the Texas Legislature for 18 years. He said that things have not improved much since the time of the Ruiz case, in the Tarrant County jail. He said he started going to the Commissioners court last fall. He said he asked on behalf of his faith community to tour the jail but that it wasn't until he publicly asked (on the third time) that the Sheriff got him in touch with the people to set up the tour. He said his group took a tour right before Christmas. He said one of the things that stood out to the eight people that took the tour were the cries from the women about being denied their medications. He said the Sheriff publicly admitted that by the 3rd week of July, he had not read the filed DOJ documents concerning the jail. He said these documents were available to

read in May. He told the Commission that they were not getting their job done and that they should be asking for more money. He said there are some system changes that are very difficult to achieve, but that some are not. He suggested arranging speakers so that they don't need to wait in a line that is seven deep at the meetings.

Karthik Soora spoke regarding the Harris County jail. He said he is a former teacher in Harris County. He said he met Evan Lee's mother at a protest and heard Evan's story. He said that he was appalled and astonished that after 500 days, in what we always call the greatest country in the world with the 9th largest economy in the world that the family hasn't received an autopsy report and still has no idea what happened to their son. He said we have to re-imagine the justice system' because right now it is an 'injustice system'. He said 'we should talk about over-incarceration. He said that in this building we often talk about the heritage of the West, so let's talk about it. He said these types of incidents don't happen in Scandinavia, Sweden, or Denmark. He said we are meeting in an air-conditioned room but that 75% of those incarcerated don't even have access to A/C. He said we have the 9th largest economy in the world and asked if this was the 9th best justice system?' He said that this is not working or helpful and that he is calling on all to reimagine what justice could be.

Sonya Burns, spoke about what needs to be working concerning mental health so we're not dealing with the crisis 'of the persons'. She said she sent an email with the February 15th Appropriations Committee hearing and asked that the Commission watch it. She suggested that Mr. Wood share that email with them. She said she has the minutes of this legislative Committee hearing and that the heads of HHSC literally said that the number of those in the jails with IDD is 'not of great concern.' She reminded all that we have an IDD Advisory Committee, and that it is, in fact, of great concern. She said we keep hearing the catch phrase, "The right place, the right treatment, the right time" but that it's not happening. She said we must make sure that our State Hospitals are accessible. She said we flooded the wrong system and that we filled the jails when we should have filled the State Hospitals. She said it's a misnomer because when you need that level of care it should be called residential treatment. She said Texas now has 13 state supported living centers (SSLC's) and that people are just not getting the word. She said that she knows one inmate that has been cycling in the jails for 20 years and not once was the option of an SSLC mentioned to his family. She said that the SB26 Omnibus bill says said that all state hospitals must comply with EMTLA that says you must go to the most appropriate facility. She said there is no MOU for law officers that says that can take an inmate to a State Hospital and that our entire Texas system is in violation of federal statute. She said that she is going to work on a "cheat sheet" for the County Commissioners in Texas so that they can look at their own counties and ask the right questions. She said that she is telling all that what was done last session is that we have codified that you must 'criminalize mental illness for you to get treatment'.

Cindy Stormer said that she was Chief of the mental health division of the Dallas District Attorney's Office and that they were found to have the most effective mental health division by Texas A&M, of anywhere. She also referenced her book about dealing ethically with the mentally vulnerable. Ms. Stormer recommended more mental health public defenders to solve problems. She said they'll make sure the people we're afraid of, stay in jail and that the people

we're mad at, get services. She says you have to pay attorneys anyway so it's just a matter of reallocating the money. She says this would reduce crime and recidivism, avoid lawsuits, reduce injuries to staff, save taxpayer dollars and will get those low-level nonviolent offenders out of the jails. She says this one person can be responsible for competency hearings and can put conditions on probation that make sure people stay on meds, get services and get into proper housing. She says then private attorneys will know who to go to for answers. She suggested one mental health defense attorney for every 33,000 in population. She claimed this would alleviate a lot of the problems you've heard here today. She said that Tarrant County is the largest county in the nation with no public defender office. She also suggested mandating training for various groups such as law enforcement, private attorneys and defenders. She suggested the training be done with the objective of reducing arrests and over-criminalization. She also suggested that a statewide mental health "Czar" be appointed, and she handed out a synopsis of her presentation.

Krish Gundu, Co-founder and director of the Texas Jail Project. She told the story of a young man named Michael Reyes that jumped out of an ambulance and died on the freeway because he did not want to go back to the Harris County jail. She said this is not a death in custody that you would hear about but that the jail and the Sheriff are still responsible for it. Ms. Gundu said that Sheriffs are still arresting people from group homes and hospitals. She mentioned a Smith County story whereby a young man was suicidal and taken to hospital on the advice of the local mental health authority. He tried to kill himself and they called the Sheriff's office who then took him to jail despite the psychiatrist's order not to discharge him. The man had an outstanding warrant. He sat in the jail for a week and ended up killing himself anyway. She said she's seeing no effort on the part of Sheriffs not to take these people to jail. She said that jails could have a policy in place not to take mental health patients to the jails, but they are doing it anyway. Ms. Gundu said that there's another story you won't hear because the woman survived. She related the story of a young woman who was arrested from a group home after calling the police herself, because she was hallucinating. She said the woman was then arrested for assaulting a police officer. The woman then spent over 100 days in jail, went to the hospital and was put on a ventilator, but survived. Krish asked Commissioners why this woman was arrested and taken to jail from a group home. She said that they want to see some evidence that Sheriffs really don't want to arrest the mentally ill and take them to jail. She said don't arrest them from hospitals, group homes or behavioral health hospitals. She said Sheriffs should have a policy in place where you can turn those away who are in crisis, because you certainly cannot deal with the human trauma fallout.

V. Old Business

A. Coryell County – Status Update and Remedial Order Enforcement

Executive Director Brandon Wood explained that Coryell County is on the agenda due to the existing Remedial Order that remains in place. Director Wood said he is happy to report that the county passed a comprehensive inspection that was conducted on June 16, 2023, and that the population is now below their approved capacity. He said the agency is hopeful that the county will be able to maintain compliance. Sheriff Scott Williams said that they are proud that they've been able to obtain compliance.

He said they've been working very hard since their last inspection. He said they have plumbing and concrete in place for their planned jail expansion. He said that had a very good meeting the day before yesterday with the district judges. He said their count today is 74. Duane Lock said he knows he asked a lot of questions but that he's very happy that the county has come into compliance and he's very quick to praise the county in this case. The Sheriff said he very much appreciated the critiques, and he thanked the Commission. County Judge Roger Miller spoke next and confirmed the vertical construction of their jail addition. He talked about the 2 ½ years that they have been coming before the Commission and he said they are still on track for February of 2024 completion of the addition but that there are indications that they could come in significantly under that timeline. He specifically thanked Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Shelton. He said he appreciated the input and thanked Dr. Porsa and Commissioner Lock for highlighting issues that the county is taking to heart. He jokingly said that he hopes he never sees any of them again except in a social setting. Mr. Wood recommended that no action be taken concerning Coryell County and that the remedial order remain in place while the agency monitors the county's continued compliance. Director Wood explained that the county will be subject to enforcement escalations such as comprehensive inspections and will keep the Commissioners briefed on the county's status and progress, due to their compliance history.

B. Harris County Jail - Non-compliance

Dr. Porsa excused himself from the conversation regarding Harris County. Judge Stoudt acknowledged this, and Executive Director Wood explained that Harris County is before the Commission for the notices of noncompliance that have been issued to them. He explained that at the last meeting, a remedial order was issued for inadequate staffing. Deaths in Custody related violations concerning the custody and care of inmates and holding inmates longer than 48 hours in booking areas are other areas of noncompliance that have been identified. Director Wood explained that Harris County currently has an interim Inspector due to the former Harris County Inspector's resignation. He explained that the inspection done in June indicated the county is addressing previously identified concerns. Assistant Chief Philip Bosquez gave a synopsis of the efforts made to date. He updated the Commission on the staffing and housing statistics in the jail. He explained that in July, only 11 persons went over that 48-hour processing limit, and that the percentage is down below 1% of the population. He reported that their medical and mental health vendors meet weekly to go over the processes. He said the county has helped their jail by outsourcing 1200-1300 inmates. He also explained that the processing delays they are seeing now is related to the DA's backlogs related to bringing charges. AC Bosquez said that a zero-suicide framework was started campus-wide to increase officer training and to push out information to inmates. AC Bosquez also said that they've really come together with their health and mental health providers and taken a look at those procedures. He said that the points that address these are 1) that Harris Health implemented an Electronic Medication ordering packaging system and 2) they brought on a health subcontractor called "YES CARE" who will have their staff doing medical triage on the floor as

opposed to the clinic. He reported that this has sped up and streamlined the kop's or "keep on persons". He said that they have done a kop audit which has indicated that 95% of patients are receiving their medications within 48 hours of the dispense date. He said the 5% that did not, were either at court or didn't show for medical appointments. He related how they are targeting the 5% to see how they can make those corrections. AC Bosquez said that a 'no show' audit allows the officers to go to the floors and follow up with inmates with regards to meds and suicide prevention. He explained that the non kop audit showed 100% received their meds within 24 hrs of the provider order. The jail is submitting audits weekly for Jail Commission review. AC Bosquez said the April 17th noncompliance issue related to officer checks has been addressed in the open booking area by the implementation of the new electronic monitoring system (or QR codes-just like in the cells.) With regards to the inmate observation compliance issue, the AC reported that daily they do over 17,000 checks or rounds and that their audits now show a 99.6% success rate. He said that of those .4%, the officers are in the tank interacting with the inmates but are tied up and not making the monitoring software record that. Commissioner Perry asked AC Bosquez if there is anything he can put his finger on that has caused the last few years' noncompliance issues because prior to that they had a pretty good run of compliance inspections. Covid and the increasing inmate population and lack of trained staffing were the reasons AC Bosquez mentioned, however, he said he didn't want to jump on the Covid bandwagon. He said that when officers do come in, they don't stay around a long time, often less than 36 months. A lack of institutional knowledge has been a problem. Commissioner Perry asked if there is a line of communication with the Commissioner's Court. The AC's answer was that the court has provided retention funds to help keep officers and that the communication is good. Director Wood asked if the Sheriff's Office has investigated the possibility of additional contracting out of inmates and the reply indicated that contracting more permanently with current vendors is being considered as well as additional contractor opportunities. AC Bosquez didn't want to throw out numbers, but he did say that for one of the vendors they use, the contract is in the 30-million-dollar range. He reported that they have a new contract with LaSalle for up to 96 inmates in a downtown Beaumont facility. Mr. Wood confirmed jailer vacancies as of today at 178 and that the average length of stay of inmates in the County jail is 3 or 4 times as long as other comparable municipalities. He also confirmed that the SO's representatives meet with a criminal justice coordinating council bi-weekly and that the Sheriff's office will provide TCJS minutes of these meetings. Mr. Wood asked for a description of the SO's direct filing system. The AC explained that police officers request permission for the charge to go through from the DA's office and that health and mental type processes can begin, but legal and other processing must wait on the DA's office to **Accept** or "A" the charges. He said sometimes they don't get an acceptance until 36 hours in, greatly reducing their 48-hour window for compliance activities that most jails have. The AC did say that their DA's office as of three weeks ago staffed an additional Assistant DA at a "Diversion desk" to process inmates with mental health issues to diversion centers. He thinks this might help as these inmates take a long time to process. Mr. Wood said he will be requesting data from this Council related to whether the focus is on housed inmates and whether the number of in-custody cases that are disposed of weekly by

the courts v. identify the number of inmates out on bond. The AC said the county just approved 5 analyst positions that can review such processes and that meet with the coordinating council. AC Bosquez said that they will seek to assign them this task. Director Wood said due to the fact that they've failed 2 inspections within a 12-month period, they will be subject to escalated enhanced enforcement actions and will be required to submit a plan of action for improvement. Further, he said he will request the County Judge issue a "letter of concurrence" with regards to said plan of action. Director Wood said the agency will provide weekly updates until compliance is reached. Mr. Wood also said that the County will be subject to an unannounced special inspection in the near future at which time they will review the staffing plan provided and that they will provide further recommendations at the November Commission meeting. Director Wood reminded the County they are under a remedial order and must comply with minimum standards which include adequate staff to comply. Chairman Stoudt suggested the CJC Council receive the Jail Commission's report. No further action necessary due to the remedial order currently being in effect.

C. Runnels County - Notice of Non-Compliance

Executive Director Brandon Wood reported that Runnels County is on the agenda as "Old Business" due to an August of 2022 inspection that found multiple areas of noncompliance. He explained that since that time they have been able to address the majority of the areas of noncompliance. Areas identified were failure to train and document life safety training, failure to test and document generator testing, staffing concerns, sanitation concerns, and various general maintenance issues. Sheriff Carl Squyrles spoke and said they got the transfer switch fixed last week and they have been able to conduct the monthly load test. He said a lot of the problems were staffing related and they have fixed those, however, they still need a couple of people to help monitor the trustees and cooks. He said they are working with the court to get extra people but some of the Commissioners want to cut back staff hours. The Sheriff said they are working through this and hope to get it fixed. He also said he has now taken full responsibility for the maintenance and construction related issues. Kimberly Dunn administrator spoke and said Inspector Gravitt came July 11, 2023, and identified issues needing correction. She reported that the hood inspection report was taken care of that day and the other issue (quarterly fire drill log) was emailed July 20, 2023. She said that on July 21st they emailed the late Fire Marshal inspection and that on a regular basis they are emailing the maintenance logs to their Inspector. The said these reports show what they are doing to address the other routine maintenance issues such as the mold and other areas of concern. County Judge Julia Miller spoke and said there was some miscommunication concerning the support for reduction of staff hours and she said that she is going to look at that budget item when she gets back to the office. She said that they are meeting Monday to get a game plan for the construction and repair of the jail facility and the related maintenance issues. Chairman Stoudt asked about Commissioners touring the jail facility and Judge Miller said that she absolutely thinks it is a very good idea and will implement that immediately. Commissioner Perry chimed in as a 13-year McClennan County

Commissioner, saying that he's encouraged to see the Sheriff and Judge talking together and that it's never been more important than now that everyone lets their guard down when talking about county finances. He said nobody wants to spend money, but they have to. He said they are truly in times right now where people have to talk about it. Chairman Stoudt offered his county's Sheriff as a mentor and example to on how Sheriff Squyers can come to the court and ask for something, because his Sheriff is very good at it and very open. Mr. Wood said that based upon the testimony this morning and due to the fact that they've been out of compliance since August 2022 without being able to request a reinspection, he requested that permission be given to issue a remedial order if the county fails the comprehensive reinspection that needs to occur within the next 60-90 days. Director Wood said they would continue to work with the county on what areas of the jail can be utilized properly. Dr. Porsa made the motion to issue a remedial order if the upcoming inspection fails and Sheriff Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

D. Stonewall County Jail – Non-compliance

Executive Director Wood explained that Stonewall County had noncompliance issues identified during an inspection in November of 2022. He said no county members were present. He said the county has been able to address all of the problem areas except the necessary online suicide prevention training for their five jailers. Due to the fact that this is the last remaining outstanding item, Director Wood recommended that the agency continue to work to ensure the officers get this required training and that no action be taken. He said an update will be provided at the next Commission meeting concerning the status of this training.

E. Inspection Priority Assessment

Executive Director Wood explained that the Inspection Priority Assessment is the risk-based inspection program required by the Sunset Review Process. Director Wood said they continue to work with partner agencies and SHSU while using this model and that they have a meeting scheduled on August 25th, with the Sam Houston State instructors and as they finalize their review of the risk-assessment tool. He said that the agency believes we've put all the tools in place concerning the enhanced and escalated enforcement as well as the Inspection Matrix which outlines timeframes for inspections. Mr. Wood explained that Sheriff Rowe has been part of this implementation of this program through the Administrative Rules advisory committee as new minimum jail standards were required for it. Director Wood said the Agency has provided IPA presentations at meetings, issued a Technical Assistance Memo concerning the program and the agency continues to test-drive the recommended tools. He reiterated that currently we're still in the assessment period with SHSU and are continuing to adjust risk factors. Director Wood said TCJS will be providing an update with another technical assistance memo that further describes the new

inspection program.

VI. New Business

A. Jefferson County -Automatic Sprinkler System, Deletion of sprinklers; Gov. Code § 511.0097

Executive Director Wood explained that Jefferson County is appearing before them concerning the expansion at their existing jail and is requesting that automated sprinklers not be required in the new inmate holding, detox and violent cells. He related that the variance would not apply to any other areas of the proposed expansion which will include the other life safety systems. Director Wood explained that all other areas meet or exceed the systems required, and he recommended the variance be approved. Jason Ross with Burns Architecture confirmed that they and the county have submitted plans and that local Fire Authorities are in agreement with the proposal. Director Wood recommended that the variance be approved for the new addition of the Jefferson County jail. Dr. Porsa motioned to approve the variance, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Potter County- Automatic Sprinkler System, Deletion of sprinklers; Gov. Code § 511.0097

Mr. Wood explained that this request is for a new facility currently in the planning stages for Potter County and they are requesting the same variance or exemption. Burns Architecture representative Jason Ross also explained that Potter County is planning for renovation of the booking area to incorporate the preprocessing area, one additional holding cell and additional violent cells. Director Wood stated Runnels County new areas will meet or exceed all other life safety system requirements and that all other minimum standards will be met. Director Wood recommended approval of the deletion of sprinklers. Commissioner Lock motioned to approve the variance, and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Shelby County – Non-compliance

Executive Director Wood explained that Shelby County was on the agenda due to a notice of noncompliance that was issued and that the county has addressed all of the issues except the 30- and 60-minute checks. Director Wood said that the county has made substantial progress meeting that requirement. Director Wood asked representatives from Shelby County to provide an update. Ms. Gonzalez, Chief Deputy for the county said that their Sheriff could not be here due to some health issues but that she knows he is watching. She said they lost their jail administrator back in April and that she and the Lieutenant have been working hard to get back into compliance. She reported that they've asked for additional jailers and that the court granted two additional positions. She said that they've received a quotation for a new system to do

their scanning that should fix the old system's issues that incorrectly show checks being missed. She believes that the new system should bring them into compliance. The Chief Deputy reported that Angelina County staff has been assisting Shelby County with necessary changes to get back into compliance. She said she feels confident that once everyone is certified in a few months they will move back into compliance. Allison Harbison Shelby County Judge reported on their support of the jail and that they work well together. She said that they've had some jail staff vacancies and due to that they issued some mid-season position authorizations and a \$2 bump in salary. The Judge said they put their money where their mouth is and that they approved \$2,600 raises across the board for all officers and employees. A week ago, she reported that they had several open positions, so they moved them to full time jailer positions. Director Wood asked the Chief how many open positions they currently have. Ms. Gonzales said counting the Jail Administrator they had 15 open positions and that as of Monday they filled the last positions thus making them fully staffed. Director Wood recommended that the agency be allowed to continue working with the because the county is very close to compliance. He reported that Inspector Gravitt found in his last inspection that the number of missed checks dropped significantly and that with the addition of the new staff the County is likely to obtain compliance soon. Mr. Wood said they would provide an update on the county at the November meeting and recommended no action at this time.

D. Van Zandt – Non-compliance

Director Wood reported that Van Zandt County was inspected in March of 2023. He said they identified five areas of noncompliance. He said that since that inspection, the county has corrected all but the 30-minute checks. Director Wood asked county representatives to provide an update. Sheriff Joe Carter spoke and reported that he was appointed in May of 2022 after the last Sheriff's resignation. She said last October he hired a new jail administrator and they've been struggling with turnover, positions, and salaries. The Sheriff said the Fire Marshall conducted an inspection in April of 2023 and they submitted the report to Inspector Gravitt the day it was conducted. Regarding the required observation rounds, he said staff received additional training on this and it has improved. However, left with many new people and a handful of seasoned staff, they are still struggling and getting it squared away. The Sheriff reported that the jail inspection showed restraint logs indicated that staff exceeded their observation and check logs. He said that after training last April, they are mailing the check logs weekly. He said they are using the RMS system to scan cells which uses phones to scan cell barcodes. He said some are not recording so they are going to handwritten logs and still trying to work through the software issues. He said regarding the sanitation issues, the annual inspection was late by 4 months. The Sheriff said that their county health official Dr. Daley immediately conducted an inspection upon the finding, and it was mailed to Inspector Gravitt on April 18, 2023. The Sheriff said SB22 funding has greatly helped the county and that the Judge and Commissioners are in communication regularly. He also said he wants the inmates and all staff safe and in compliance. The Judge reiterated the Sheriff's efforts and conveyed that Van Zandt is nothing more than a training ground for higher paying Kaufman and Smith counties,

making it difficult to retain staffing levels. The Judge brought up training efforts and Sheriff Rowe commented that the basic county corrections course is available online through TEEEX and that it was designed for the more rural areas wherein much of the course can be done online. Commissioner Lock commented on how pretty the county is. Director Wood confirmed the number of inmates in custody and the Sheriff related that they have 18 positions and are currently 4 online jailer positions short. Mr. Wood confirmed the submission of the county's corrective action plan and that the county is still working through the 30-minute checks issue and that TCJS is monitoring them weekly. Director Wood said that due to the fact that the county is under the 6-month mark and has made significant progress with all but one area, no action is required at this time and that staff will report on compliance efforts at the November meeting.

**E. Ward County – Automatic Sprinkler System, Deletion of sprinklers;
Gov. Code § 511.0097**

Executive Director Wood explained that Ward County is appearing before them concerning a new detention facility and is requesting sprinklers not be required in the new inmate housing and holding areas. Jason Ross with Burns Architecture spoke regarding Ward County's submitted design. Director Wood recommended that the variance be approved for the new addition of the Ward County jail as all other systems will be met or exceeded. Commissioner Lock motioned to approve the variance, and Sheriff Rowe seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. Variances

A. Dallas County Jail – 271.1(a)(4) Objective Classification Plan

Mr. Wood explained that the variance request by Dallas County will allow them to house maximum security inmates with minimum security inmates in a direct supervision environment. Director Wood asked Chief Herklotz to explain the variance and he said that he didn't want to say that they don't want to use the variance, but that they are going to try not to. Chief Herklotz explained that the officers will be in the housing units 24/7. He explained that within the higher inmate number environment it will allow them more flexibility. He said that as you know 55-60% of the inmates have mental illness and that the variance will allow them to better serve these inmates with the types of staff members that the inmates need. Sheriff Rowe asked what software they are using and Chief Herklotz said they are moving from Point Additive to Decision Tree soon. The Chief said 68% of their inmates are maximum security and that they are going to try and not when put them in there unless it is for detox, medical, mental health or programming reasons. Commissioner Lock asked about the risks of mixing inmates. Chief Herklotz said that the officer is always right there with the inmates and is able to intervene if necessary and that the variance has

been successfully used in similar situations for a long time. He also said that they have spiked in inmate population and that they have 425 beds under renovation, and both are factors necessitating this variance. Dr. Porsa commented on why he considers this request positive, including added safety reasons and he believes that Dallas County will be able to show added benefit due to the variance in the future. Director Wood recommended the variance be approved for six months allow the monitoring of the variance and report any issues allowing them a level of comfort before approving for a further timeframe. Commissioner Lock motioned to approve the variance per staff recommendation, and Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

B. Howard County Law Enforcement Center – 259.114 (c) (d) Segregation

Mr. Wood explained that Howard County was granted a variance allowing them to increase the capacity of their existing facility's dormitory increasing beds from 18-24. Director Wood asked County representatives to speak concerning the variance request. Sheriff Stan Parker spoke and said they are trying to figure out the most cost-effective way to increase capacity. The Sheriff reported that they are going to come back before them with revisions and/or plans. Judge Randy Johnson said he took office in January and wants Commissioners to know they are supportive of the Sheriff's office and jail. He said they've had a lot of changes with many new county positions. Director Wood pointed out that the variance still has not been utilized for staffing. He said the county has been very mindful of the appropriate use of the variance. He recommended the variance be extended for a year as they move through the planning process as they bring us an expansion plan for approval. Sheriff Rowe motioned to approve the staff recommendation and Dr. Porsa seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

C. Trinity County Jail – 261.134 Multiple Occupancy Cells

Mr. Wood explained that Trinity County is before them to request a variance to increase the capacity of their existing facility. He said this facility is one of the older facilities in the state with a capacity of only 7 inmates. County representatives spoke regarding the 1938 jail. Trinity County Sheriff Woody Wallace provided an update stating that they are very small and that the county is poor. He said they are paying \$75 a day for space, and it is unaffordable. He said they can make room for 9 more beds without any issues and if it is approved, they can save hundreds of thousands a year. He said this variance will allow them to move forward with plans for a new facility. The Sheriff said that housing out 3 ½ hours away creates transportation problems and others regarding attorney, court dates and family visitation issues. He said this would correct these issues and allow them to build a more modern and accommodating facility. Judge Danny Martin spoke and expressed appreciation for the Commissioners and said he understands Mr. Wood is trying to help them. Director Wood verified that before increasing the beds that they will hire two additional jailer positions and that the county will submit plans for the new facility. Director Wood recommended passing of the variance contingent upon sufficient staffing and the requirement that they appear before the Commission and provide evidence of progress on the new facility at the one-year mark. Sheriff Walsh said he would deliver that message. Sheriff Rowe

motioned to approve the variance per staff recommendation, and Commissioner Perry seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

D. Val Verde – 259.114 (b)(1) Segregation

Mr. Wood explained that Val Verde County was granted a variance to add additional beds to their facility and it was done in conjunction with the disaster declaration regarding border facility. Director Wood said they have passed their most recent inspection and have had no issues operating the facility with the variance and that this is a briefing item only.

VIII. Administrative Rules Advisory Committee

IX.

A. Rules for Adoption

- a. **§ 255.6 Advisory Committees Rules.** Mr. Wood told the commission that the agency is proposing rule 255.6 and 255.7 for adoption. Rule 255.6 would govern all of the agency’s committees. Rule 255.7 would govern the Administrative Rules Advisory Committee. This committee was recommended by the Sunset Commission. The informal workgroup will be replaced by this advisory committee. There was no public comment. Commissioner Anthony moved to approve. The motion was seconded by commissioner Porsa and approved unanimously.
- b. **§ 265.7 Telephone Use.** Mr. Wood told the commissioners that rule 265.7 was considered by the Administrative Rules Advisory Committee, it was submitted to the Texas Register, and no public comment was received. The agency requests it be published for adoption. Commissioner Porsa moved to adopt. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Perry and then approved unanimously.

B. Public Proposed Rule. Mr. Wood told the Commissioners that a member of the public proposed a rule to prohibit jails from exposing inmates to malicious credibility-damaging websites. The agency proposed that the rule be referred to the Administrative Rules Advisory Committee for review. Commissioner Sheriff Rowe moved to approve the referral and Commissioner Dr. Porsa seconded the motion, which was subsequently approved unanimously.

C. Rules proposed for public comment.

D. Four-year Rule Review

- a. **Chapter 259. New Construction Rules.** Mr. Wood informed the commissioners that the Administrative Rules Advisory Committee had reviewed Chapters 259 and 263 as part of its four-year review of all rules. Facilities may design the facility so that it exceeds current limits. Current standards permit a maximum of 48 inmates to congregate in one area. There are several facilities that practice direct supervision facilities, and it is common practice for them to supervise up to 72 beds. These new county facilities upon completion of construction must immediately request a variance. Mr. Wood requests that these rules be reviewed by the committee to find a solution so that new jails don't have to immediately request a variance. Commissioner Dr. Porsa moved to refer to the committee. Commissioner Perry seconded, and the board approved unanimously.
 - b. **Chapter 263. Life Safety Rules.** Mr. Wood told the commissioners that the agency had been working with the State Fire Marshall in regard to reviewing the current life safety rules in Chapter 263. The Administrative Rules Advisory Committee will be considering the State Fire Marshall's recommendations. No action needed.
- E. **Membership.** Mr. Wood told the commissioners that the agency is preparing and will propose a list of Committee candidates to the commissioners. Sheriff Rowe asked about the members of the IDD Advisory Committee, and Mr. Wood explained that the membership was set for the time being. No action was necessary.

X. IDD Advisory Committee Report

Director Wood explained that the IDD Advisory Committee will be meeting next week, therefore we don't have an update at this time but will provide an update at the next Commission meeting.

XI. Staff Report

XII.

A. Completed Jail Projects

Director Wood reported that for the first time in quite some time the agency did not have any jail construction projects completed since the previous quarter however the planning and construction report has now grown to three full pages and based upon the number of projects being discussed we expect that to continue.

B. Jail Planning and Construction List

The 3-page construction report is included in the packet.

C. Jails in Compliance/Noncompliance

Total in status of non-compliance - 18

D. Status of Remedial Orders

Coryell County and Harris County both appeared this morning before the Commission and updates were provided. Runnels county was granted remedial order permission and will be added if minimum standards are not met as discussed earlier this morning. We will provide an update to you at the next Commission meeting on all three.

E. Status and Composition of Jail Population

Director Wood reported that the county jail population statewide actually dipped down just a little bit after peaking at \$72,000 in the past 12-month period. We continue to see pockets across the state that continue to grow population-wise. The populations will likely continue to grow over the summer months and may begin to decrease in the fall September to October timeframe. Director Wood said we are monitoring this because staffing is in such short supply.

F. Staff Training/Activities

April 20-22, 2023 Mental Health Trainer Melvin Bowser attended training at the Texas CIT Conference.

April 24-26, 2023 Mental Health Trainer Melvin Bowser conducted three (3)8-hour Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, De-Escalation classes for 16 detention officers in College Station, Texas.

April 25, 2023 Ricky Armstrong presented at the 94th Annual West Texas County Judges Commissioners Association conference.

May 1-15 2023 Brandon Wood, Ricky Armstrong, Michael Gravitt, Jason Jouett, Martin Arnold, Byron Shelton and Melvin Bowser attend and presented at the Texas Jail Association 37th annual conference.

May 17, 2023 Staff Services Officer Carol Bernhard attended a 4-hour Security Officer training course online with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

May 17-18, 2023 Mental Health Trainer Melvin Bowser conducted three (3) 8-hour Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, De-Escalation classes for 8 detention officers in Tyler, Texas.

May 23, 2023 Mental Health Trainer Melvin Bowser conducted two (2) 4-hour Suicide Prevention Training for Jailers courses (#4901) for 40 detention officers in Pecos, Texas.

May 23, 2023- Staff Services Officer Carol Bernhard attended a 4-hour Capps HR Payroll User Training course online with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

June 7-8, 2023 Health Trainer Melvin Bowser conducted two (4) 4-hour Suicide Prevention Training for Jailers courses (#4901) for 32 detention officers in Pecos, Texas.

June 11-16, 2023 Ricky Armstrong Mentored in Huntsville Tx for the National Jail Leadership Command Academy.

June 22, 2023 Staff Services Officer Carol Bernhard attended a 4-hour SORM RMIS User Training course online with State office of Risk Management.

June 21,22,23, 2023 Mental Health Trainer Melvin Bowser conducted three (3) 8-hour Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, De-Escalation classes for 16 detention officers in Tyler, Texas.

July13-14, 2023 Inspector Michael Gravitt instructed Objective Jail Classification in Smith County.

July 17-15,2023 Inspector Jason Jouett attended a Jail Mental Health class in Tom Green County.

July 23-25, 2023 Brandon Wood, Ricky Armstrong, Michael Gravitt, Jason Jouett, Martin Arnold, and Melvin Bowser attended The Sheriffs Association of Texas annual conference.

G. Financial Report/Budget

The one-page quarterly budget report is included in the Commission book. Director Wood reported that we will be closing out the fiscal year (2023) within the next 29 days so we are closing in on that and that we will have only a limited amount of money left.

H. Inmate Complaint Report

The agency continues to experience a high number of monthly complaints. They continue to track at about 350 on average per month. This is a slight decrease. We continue to shift resources to this section due to the necessity for immediate resolution.

XIII. Other Business

- Commission-sponsored Events and Workshops

July 18, 2023- Executive Director Brandon Wood, Assistant Director Ricky Armstrong Public Information Officer William Turner and Inspector Michael Gravitt assisted with a workshop to draft rules to implement legislation and other rules proposed by staff and the public.

- Commission Staffing

No new staff. We have offered employment to Michael Garrett and Todd Allen as Inspectors and Jason Davis as Complaint Inspector.

Field Inspector Byron Shelton resigned effective July11, 2023.

- Off Duty Employment

No one is performing off-duty employment that creates a conflict of interest with duties at the commission.

- Letters of Comment

None

XIV. Executive Session – Personnel Matter:

At 12:35 p.m. the Board went into Executive Session in accordance with Section 551.074 (a) (1), Government Code, Personnel Matters, to deliberate the employment, evaluation and salary of the Executive Director. They returned to resume the Commission meeting 12:54 p.m. Dr. Porsa motioned that Director Wood receive a 5.04% raise. Commissioner Lock seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

XV. Next Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for:

- Thursday, November 2, 2023 - Texas State Capitol, Room: E2.028, 1100 Congress Ave
- Thursday, February 1, 2024 - Texas State Capitol, Room: E2.028, 1100 Congress Ave
- Thursday, May 2, 2024 - TBD

XVI. By appropriate motion to adjourn by Dr. Porsa with a second by Sheriff Gonzales, the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

The Board may meet in Closed Session on any item listed above if authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Ann. Ch. 551.



Brandon Wood, Executive Director

August 24, 2023



Carol Bernhard, Secretary of the Commission

August 24, 2023

