

JOE LOMBARDO  
Governor

JAMES E DZURENDA  
Director



FRANCISCO V. AGUILAR  
Secretary of State

AARON D. FORD  
Attorney General

## STATE OF NEVADA BOARD OF STATE PRISON COMMISSIONERS

### MEETING MINUTES

The Board of State Prison Commissioners held a public meeting on Wednesday, June 13, 2025, beginning at 1:00pm, and was conducted at the following locations:

#### Meeting Location:

Nevada Room  
Nevada State Business Center  
3300 W Sahara Ave  
Las Vegas, NV 89102

#### Video Conference Location:

Old Assembly Chambers  
State Capitol Building  
101 N. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

This meeting could also be heard and viewed via YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMkrz8L8pLk&t=317s>

#### 1. Call to Order/Roll Call of Board Members/Confirm Quorum

##### Board Members Present:

Governor Joe Lombardo  
Attorney General Aaron D. Ford  
Secretary of State Francisco V. Aguilar

##### Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC) Attendees:

James E. Dzurenda, Director  
Dr. Kenneth Williams, Medical Director  
William Quenga, Deputy Director of Prison Industries  
Emily Testwuide, Deputy Director of Programs  
Robyn Feese, Substance Use Disorder Director  
Danyele Madsen, Executive Assistant, Meeting Clerk

2. **Public Comment (1st Period ):** First of two sessions to address the Board of Prison Commissioners regarding items indicated on the agenda (3 minute maximum per speaker). Public comment is transcribed as spoken with minimal edits such as deleting a repeated word. Note: Public comments were also accepted in written form via email until 9 p.m. the day before the meeting as indicated on the publicly posted agenda. All electronic public comment submitted to [bopc@doc.nv.gov](mailto:bopc@doc.nv.gov) by the December 18, 2024, submission deadline indicated on the publicly posted agenda was forwarded to members of the Board.

#### Carson City:

- **Jared Orcutt** – I am the educational partnership programs coordinator at Truckee Meadows Community College. I oversee the Justice Involved Education Program, a partnership between TMCC the Nevada Department of Corrections and the Northern Nevada Transitional Housing. But I'm not here today in my official role. I'm here speaking on my own behalf to talk about my own re-entry and what really worked. I've been incarcerated three times for trafficking in the state of Nevada, 17 years

total. At the end of my last sentence, I was housed at NNTH when the TMCC computer lab was first installed and TMCC received funding for those who are justice impacted. At first my goals were small but they felt huge to me. I wanted to work HVAC and data centers. I saw that I could get all the qualifications and certifications through TMCC and was blown away. I immediately dug into the prerequisites online from the center; however, what I found along the way turned out to be far more important. Access to higher education builds internal architecture. A moral and cognitive framework that's missing in prison where hopelessness and survivalism dominate. I truly believe that most people in prison wish for a path to something better but inside that wish feels foolish. Nobody wants to return to the same life that got them incarcerated but there's rarely a real path forward. I had good intentions during my first two releases, but low-wage jobs and the pressures of poverty quickly pulled me back to what I knew. Wishes collapsed under that weight. What made the real difference was exposure to the world of education. While pursuing my HVAC certificate I discovered a deeper passion, helping others. Today, I'm not only in a career I love but I've rebuilt relationships with my parents and children. I've gotten married. I'm helping others find a plan like me, build confidence and imagine a future. The partnership between NNTH and TMCC opened that door and I walked through. Because of the support of Lieutenant Wilson, the NDOC administration, and the folks at TMCC, my life has changed for the better. I'll complete my Bachelor's degree in December and next I'll begin my Masters in public administration. I want to learn how to create programs and shape systems that actually work for people. Big plans? Yes. But that's what access to education can do. The computer lab gave me more than access to the internet and coursework, it gave me a second chance, and it gave me mentors who are now my colleagues. Thank you for your time and please continue to support these efforts. It's making a difference. I'm living proof.

- **Jeff Hawkins** – I represent Compagni Automotive. I'm here in representation of Northern Nevada Correctional Centers and Western Nevada College. I help support the automotive program that goes through the NNCC. We need to take it to the next level and the level we need to get to is being able to have internet to where we can teach at the standards that we work at today. I'm looking to hope to get some funding to help fund it so we can put the internet access for the students that are taking the program at NNCC so we can develop a better program and get some successful students out of it that can come out into our work world and come to work making a great wage. I've got one I've been working with right now that's been released that's been working with me for a few months. He's absolutely stellar. His attention to detail has been great and I'm looking to make this statewide if we can. But first we need to get some internet that is accessible for them to where they can learn at what we're teaching today and what we're working on today. Thank you.

**Las Vegas:**

(None)

### **3. Acceptance and Approval of Minutes – March 26, 2025**

There were no questions on minutes of the prior meeting held March 26, 2025. A motion to approve the minutes was made and passed; minutes unanimously approved.

### **4. Chief Medical Officer Report – Vincent Valiente, Environmental Health Specialist, Health Care Quality & Compliance; Nevada Department of Health and Human Services – (for discussion only)**

As required by NRS 209.382, NRS 444.330, and NRS 446.885, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health conducts regular inspections of State correctional facilities including medical, dietary sanitation, and nutritional adequacy. In the report provided, corrective actions and updates to violations identified within

six prisons during the 2024 dietary and sanitation annual inspections were described along with concerns moving forward. Common themes of the 2024 sanitation deficiencies identified among correctional facilities were lack of proper equipment sanitation, disabled and non-functioning dishwashers, non-working culinary equipment, issues with multiple walk-in cooler units, inadequate refrigeration capacity, poorly maintained plumbing and sewer systems, trash removal, presence of insects and rodents, and defective machines within the laundry facilities. Most deficient practices are addressed during these inspections by alternative operational approaches, training, and NDOC compliance enforcement follow-up. Some deficient practices have a longer timeline. Examples of these corrective actions are outlined in the report. Moving forward, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health will continue to advise the department of the corrections to enhance infection prevention and control measures at all prison facilities. For more information, please refer to the detailed report.

**5. Director's Comments & Departmental Updates – James E. Dzurenda, Director, Nevada Department of Corrections – (for discussion only)**

During the most recent legislative session the Department of Corrections received budget approvals, Capital Improvement Project (CIP) approvals, and what has been two years waiting, the start of the rollout of tablets to the offender population. Offenders will be able to utilize the tablets for video visiting but this will not replace in-person visitation. In-person visits will continue and the tablets will provide an opportunity for both visiting options. NDOC has received approval to update the Offender Management System (NOTIS) to be able to provide a more transparent calculation of sentencing on day one when the offender arrives at the institution. Currently it is all done by paper and can fluctuate depending on programs the offender has completed. This program upgrade will provide the date and will tell them as long as they continue to do everything they are doing, that is their date. The agency not experiencing a problem with correctional staffing vacancy rates right now. There is a consulting company that visited NDOC and evaluated each which posts are actually needed to operate the facilities and that is going to be the next step to see what is needed to run the facilities and stay under budget.

**Governor Lombardo** asked about the recent significant increase in gang-on-gang incidents and what is being done to address that particular issue.

**Director Dzurenda** explained that the issues right now have been happening at High Desert State Prison after the recent movement of higher custody offenders from Ely State Prison to High Desert State Prison. Staff were trained in proper procedures but not effectively utilizing those procedures so all training was revamped for the correctional officers at High Desert State Prison which resulted in a reduction of incidents. It was necessary to make sure the staff had the right tools and training.

**6. Program Division Update – Emily Testwuide, Deputy Director of Programs, Nevada Department of Corrections – (for discussion only)**

Deputy Director Testwuide provided an overview of the structure and functions of the Programs division of NDOC. The Programs division has been building up the programs menu strengthening community engagement and partnerships, increasing pro-social activities and peer-led programs, and implementing process improvement strategies. The goal is to not only continue to invest resources on evidence-based programming, educational and religious-based services, vocational training, and treatment and re-entry services, but also reduce the idle time by providing programs and activities that create a sense of purpose and discipline among offenders and promoting a safer correctional environment for all. Program staff, in conjunction with the American Job Center and Hope for Prisoners, implemented comprehensive re-entry case planning and matching residents with needed programs and services. The NDOC Re-entry team coordinates with our facilities and community-based providers state and local agencies to hold re-entry

resource fairs for those close to release. At Lovelock Correctional Center there is a newly implemented community living unit including peer-led structured activities in a level system. There are dog training programs at several facilities including a new program at Northern Nevada Correctional Center with Liberty Dogs who work with and support veterans in the community. In working with the Nevada Prison Education Project there will be an expansion of creative writing workshops to all NDOC facilities. The Hope for Prisoners Vocational Village at Southern Desert Correctional Center has been open for just about a year. With the rollout of offender tablets across the facilities, offenders will have access through free program applications to educational, vocational, wellness, spiritual and religious, behavioral health, and re-entry based content. For the first time, Nevada is represented in the Wardens Exchange Program through Prison Fellowship. This is a 24-week program to help foster relationships with peers and correctional leaders nationwide and dive deep into their values and how they want to lead change and inspire. This program began in January and in the upcoming year will continue to increase and strengthen community partnerships and program opportunities.

**Attorney General Ford** referred to a question raised in public comment regarding utilizing the internet for the auto tech program and asked if there is anything that could be shared in regard to this including the difference between internet on the tablets and security concerns.

**Deputy Director Williams Quenga** explained that he is in communications and collaboration with the partner in the community and with Western Nevada College to get more information. The ASE program needs internet access to allow offenders to complete testing for the ASE program certification.

**Director Dzurenda** explained that the tablets do not connect directly to the internet. The internet connection is through a modular system in the department's PBX room that allows the transfer of information in and out based upon what content the department approves. It does not give the offender actual internet access that is needed for the ASE program to allow offenders to complete testing for that program.

**Governor Lombardo** requested that information on the success of the Hope for Prisoners program at Southern Desert Correctional Center be included in the next meeting.

7. **Prison Industries Update – William Quenga, Deputy Director of Prison Industries, Nevada Department of Corrections – (for discussion only)**

According to NRS 209.461.2 every program for the employment of offenders established by the Director must employ the maximum number of offenders possible. The mission of Silver State Industries is to reduce government operating costs, provide offenders the skills and certifications necessary to successfully re-enter society, and enhance the safe operation of correctional facilities. Silver State Industries is a self-supporting operation providing job training certifications and marketable skills for offenders in the production of goods and services. It is mandated to be profitable at no direct cost to the taxpayer. Approximately 360 offenders work in Prison Industries programs at this time and are routinely placed in quality professions upon release. Operations are throughout the State including in Northern Nevada Correctional Center, Southern Desert Correctional Center, Lovelock Correctional Center, and High Desert State Prison. The shops mimic the structure of the outside world and are as follows; a print shop, furniture shop, metal shop, mattress shop, ranch, garment, and auto. When looking to partner with outside companies it is important that they provide the skills that can be used to gain employment in the community and/or the companies offer a pathway for the offender to continue employment upon release. Offenders who complete programs have been able to earn lucrative wages both while incarcerated and after release. Silver State Industries is working with other companies in the community to bring on more

trades. In partnership with the Bureau of Land Management nearly 1,400 horses are housed at the ranch at Stewart Conservation Camp.

8. **Medical Division Update – Dr. Kenneth Williams, Medical Director, Nevada Department of Corrections – (for discussion only)**

Dr. Williams provided an overview or staffing for the Medical division. A new Correctional and Inpatient Pharmacy System (SIPS) is being rolled out to streamline the process to issue prescriptions to offenders. The upcoming Pyxis system which controls inventory will connect directly to the pharmacy for real time audits to track when a medication is removed from the system and distributed to a patient. This will greatly reduce diversion and enhance control. The post-release medication plan has been fortified by partnering with a vendor so offenders can be provided with a card that allows them to obtain 5 days of their prescription. This allows NDOC to provide the offender with the ability to obtain their prescription without causing the department to needlessly fill prescriptions that releasing offenders have no intention of taking. Another cost avoidance for the State is a new prescription donation program that allows for a prescription not picked up for whatever reason to be provided at a reduced cost for another patient.

- **Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) – Robyn Feese, Substance Use Disorder Program Director, Nevada Department of Corrections – (for discussion only)**

Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) is an evidence-based treatment that uses three FDA medications (methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone) that coupled with behavioral health services, counseling, life skills training, and re-entry services can reduce recidivism and increase public safety. It can get people re-engaged back into the workforce and their families. In a carceral setting it decreases overdoses. It prevents people with chronic relapse and cravings from buying drugs on the prison yard and incurring debt and the ripple effect of that. About five years ago, the Department of Corrections made efforts to engage in a partnership with Behavioral Health Group to go into program units to talk to people releasing about their services. This became a partnership with Department of Human and Health Services through Director Whitley and Chief Cook where NDOC is now doing drug and alcohol screenings at the intake facilities to provide real, accurate information of those in custody what their percentage of substance use disorder is to determine what treatment is needed. Currently there is staffing at High Desert, Southern Desert, Three Lakes Camp, Northern Nevada, Stewart Camp, Florence McClure Women's, and Jean Camp. Offenders at the transitional housing centers are able to go directly to the clinics to seek the services. There are not providers at Ely or Lovelock to administer the treatment. Opioid Settlement funds are utilized through the health department and additional providers are being sought out.

**Secretary Aguilar** advised at this time that he needed to depart from the meeting.

9. **Administrative Regulations presented to the Board of Prison Commissioners for discussion and possible action.** These are Administrative Regulations NOT subject to the 233B process.

- AR 521 – Custody Categories and Criteria  
Formalize definition of High Risk Prisoner  
Eliminate term of High Minimum Security as it is not used

Action: There was a motion for AR 521 to be approved. Motion passed unanimously; regulation approved.

**10. Public Comment (2nd Period):** Second of two sessions to address the Board of Prison Commissioners. Comments are not limited to agenda items (3 minute maximum per speaker). Public comment is transcribed as spoken with minimal edits such as deleting a repeated word. Note: public comments were also accepted in written form via email until 9 p.m. the day before the meeting as indicated on the publicly posted agenda.

**Carson City:**

- **Denise Adelia** – Associate Director of Return Strong, an organization led by families and people directly impacted by incarceration. We're asking this board to restore weekly in-person visits at all facilities, especially the largest ones where access has already been reduced. Right now many families are only allowed to visit twice a month and in some cases not even that, depending on availability these changes haven't been implemented statewide yet, but where they have families are struggling. With more people trying to visit and fewer appointments available, many are being shut out. In-person visits are a core part of supporting mental health, maintaining family bonds, and setting people up for successful re-entry. We understand the staffing challenges. We know it takes adequate personnel to keep both our loved ones and staff safe inside. But while the system stretches to meet these needs families are stretching too. Working twice as hard to keep our connections intact, our loved ones grounded, and our families whole. As the oldest daughter of a first-generation immigrant family, a big sister, a mother, a wife, I know what that burden feels like. Our families do everything we can to stay together. And that fight to keep our families whole doesn't stop at prison doors. Studies show that even one visit can reduce the likelihood of someone reoffending by up to 25%. And that is public safety that is common sense. But this is also about dignity. Some families drive hours. Some drive days. They take time off work and sacrifice financially only to be told there are no appointments left. If the department's mission is truly to improve public safety by creating safe and humane conditions and preparing people for successful re-entry, then prioritizing in-person visitation must be a part of that strategy. We also want to acknowledge and thank Director Dzurenda for addressing families concerns that tablet visits would replace in-person visits by stating that that will not be happening. Thank you.

**Las Vegas:**

- **Carrie Hunstein** – You kind of touched base on why we're here. We were under the understanding that maybe the tablets were going to replace in-person visits. And for me, my husband is in the hole and he has been for almost three and a half, four months now just waiting placement into BMU. And for us in-person visits, that's the only time he gets out of the hole and he's been in there a long time so in-person visits are very important for people that are in the hole. Well for everybody, for families, and for our loved ones 's psychiatric mental health. So, our concern was that we were going to replace visits with the tablets and you kind of covered that so I it makes me feel better. And I think for all of us that, people that have kids and children and you know just human touch and being able to talk to your loved one especially when you're locked down many hours of the day. And I think that's real important. So, we just hope that that stays that way and hoping that we get the weekly visits back.

**Attorney General Ford** took a moment to express that he did not believe the current circumstance [visitation schedule changes] were meant to be punitive in nature, that Director Dzurenda has every understanding about the importance of in-person visits based on their prior discussion, and that cutting back was due to various reasons including the quite legitimate concern about overtimes costs and figuring out the best ways to allocate resources. Attorney General Ford stated that he did not personally view this as, and did not want this to be viewed as, a permanent circumstance and that he could not agree more that in-person visitation is very important not just for the offender but also the family.

**11. Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and passed; meeting adjourned at 1:58pm.

APPROVED THIS    DAY, MONTH OF    , IN THE YEAR

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GOVERNOR JOE LOMBARDO

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SECRETARY OF STATE FRANCISCO V. AGUILAR

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ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON D. FORD

Minutes prepared by D. Madsen, Executive Assistant, Nevada Department of Corrections

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