

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 Thursday, December 19, 2024, beginning at 10:00am, 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=6vT-G8RvBVc&t=322s>

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

##### Board Members Present:

Governor Joe Lombardo  
Attorney General Aaron D. Ford

##### Board Members Absent:

Secretary of State Francisco V. Aguilar

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

James E. Dzurenda, Director  
Brian E. Williams, Sr., Deputy Director of Operations  
William Reubart, Warden  
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.

#### Las Vegas:

- **Laurie Beecher-Valenzuela**, Return Strong – Reading a letter from another mother who is out of the country. Writing to express outrage and deep concern about the lack of medical care and the appalling quality of food in prison system. Issues that have been further driven into crisis by the prison swap. Thousands are struggling to survive in inhumane conditions. Loved one's pleas for help go unanswered. Are told by nurses they are just one among 500 others in need of care and are instructed to simply deal with it. This neglect is not only unethical but dangerous. The facilities need properly trained, compassionate medical professionals who are equipped to meet the needs of incarcerated individuals. Medical care should be about rehabilitation and healing, not leaving people to deteriorate behind bars. Loved ones along with countless others are being served food that is labeled

not fit for human consumption. It fails to meet even the most basic standards of nutrition and quality resulting in severe health issues and long-term damage. Nutrition is fundamental to health and well-being, yet this most basic necessity is routinely denied forcing people to eat food unfit for livestock is not just neglectful, it's humiliating and dehumanizing. Loved one have endured frequent bouts of stomach issues and tooth decay requiring extractions and injuries that go untreated, issues exacerbated by malnutrition. The prison swap only intensified these problems. Rather than addressing existing issues the swap created new ones. We as a society must ask ourselves why should someone enter a prison and leave as a broken individual sick, malnourished, and further damaged because of the lack of medical care and nutritious food. This is not justice or rehabilitation, It is cruel. The lives of all incarcerated individuals matter. These are people. These are mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, families and friends worthy of basic dignity and humane treatment. They need solutions and they need them now. Let's work together to address these issues to end the suffering that has now become the norm behind prison walls. Thank you.

- **Lori Robel**, family member of offender – Present on behalf of nephew Anthony Robel currently incarcerated at Southern Desert Correctional Center. Here to address a critical issue of medical neglect over the past 5 years. Anthony has been faced with numerous health challenges that should have never occurred. Proper nutrition and timely insulin administration are vital for his survival, however urgent please from him for help often fall on deaf ears. He is dismissed, told he is not special, and that insulin is not an emergency despite the fact that the lack of insulin can be life-threatening. It is deeply concerning the medical staff does not seem to understand the basic principles that insulin and food must go hand in hand. For example, on Thanksgiving Anthony was to have his evening shot at 2pm in the afternoon. The schedule decision rises serious questions why an evening shot would be given so early. Why was this done? Was it simply to accommodate staff convenience? Diabetes knows no holiday, and neither should any essential timing of any medications. Moreover, Anthony's experience with blood pressure medication is equally troubling. Each month he has to fill out a form requesting his monthly medication and it does not happen all the time. This last month he was three weeks without his blood pressure medication. I don't understand how this is acceptable. Additionally, Anthony has ongoing issue with an ear problem and it took months for him to see a specialist. The specialist is recommending a CT scan, but I can only imagine how long that will take if it happens at all. This is not just a matter of health it's deeply affecting Anthony and our family. I urge each of you to reflect on what you would do for your own loved ones in this situation. I am not just asking for action; I am begging for you to intervene. How many more times can Anthony be found unresponsive before someone will take this seriously? Thank you for your time and consideration.
- **Kally Cusorso**, Return Strong – Atrocities happening in Nevada prisons especially over past months are beyond comprehension. The treatment of human beings in these facilities is so egregious that it evokes comparison to some of darkest moments in human history. Sharing part of a letter from a man currently incarcerated at High Desert State Prison. He was not part of the recent transfer to High Desert, he was already there. This individual, a son of one of our family members, detailed his firsthand experiences of observed use of force, being denied meals, verbal and physical abuse by correctional officers and a schedule of lockdowns that have persisted for months. He recounted a horrifying incident in which two individuals refused to be rolled up. The cells they were being moved to were covered in feces. This filth was the result of two individuals with severe mental health challenges who had been throwing feces from the second tier which contaminated the entire first floor. Instead of addressing the root issue, correctional officers decided to move the individuals responsible for the feces to the first tier to limit the spread. When the men refused to enter such filthy and biohazardous conditions the officers called the CERT team. Both individuals were beaten, tased, and forcibly placed into those same biohazardous cells. Disturbingly, there was no video footage of the incident because the cameras were not functioning, and the handheld cameras were not being

used. One officer reportedly taunted one of the individuals by saying swing mother f-er, baiting him to retaliate. Adding to this, on November 7<sup>th</sup> Urban Hawk was murdered by his cellmate in another High Desert unit. By November 22<sup>nd</sup>, Return Strong was notified that the cell where the murder occurred had still not been cleaned. The feces filled cells were also untouched. We reached out to Deputy Director Williams regarding a reported stench in unit 3 which was so severe it was making people physically ill. While he assured us he would look into we have not yet received an update. But honestly does it even matter now? Why should it take an outside organization to pressure Nevada Department of Corrections to clean up feces and blood in the first place? Our member has also included a detailed log of yard and tier time documenting how rarely they have been allowed out of their cells. As of November 26, 2024, inmates in his unit have had a total of 10 hours and 25 minutes out of their cells in 3 months from September 1<sup>st</sup> to November 26<sup>th</sup> and zero access to the yard. I want to ask you this, what have you done since September 1<sup>st</sup>? How many times have you felt the sun on your face? Gone to bed in clean sheets without rats and [3 minutes reached]

- **Christine Essex**, This letter expresses my gratitude and a plea for support in addressing critical issues faced by my son Richard Essex. Richard is an amputee with anoxic brain damage with major neurocognitive disorder and seizures. He has faced lapses in receiving his medications particularly at High Desert where he was left 5 days without any medication endangering his health. Seizure meds cannot be missed. Communication breakdowns prevent me as his legal guardian from being informed promptly about medical emergencies and Richard's inability to recall his medical history complicates his care. I would like to emphasize Richard's compliance and good behavior since 2016. Noting his successful adherence to house arrest before incarceration with only one year remaining before eligibility for parole, my primary concern is his health including escalating seizures, need to see specialists, and urgent needs for prosthetic liners to prevent further amputation. Additionally, proper nutrition in the facility would support his physical and mental recovery, the food he eats does make a difference. As his legal guardian, I am here to advocate for Richard's release into my custody to ensure proper medical care with specialists to prevent further cognitive damage and improve his overall health whether he could be put on house arrest or whatever it would take he can't get the specialist in the facility that he's, any facility basically. We also call for better nutrition for all incarcerated individuals to support their health, rehabilitation, and decision-making. It makes a big difference what they eat. So NNCC is the best medical facility in Nevada and that's where he is currently at and I have a good working relationship with the Warden there, Warden Henley, and I am extremely grateful so I'm not here to complain, yet his hands are tied. There's not much he can do as far as giving me guidance or support oftentimes with Richard and what is possible for getting him the best care needed. With that said, I'm just asking who can help me with these issues? With his medical and nutrition needs or getting him the proper medial diagnosis. Or back in the custody where I can continue to take care of him as his legal guardian. And again, I ask that it be looked at that he hasn't had any infractions or problems. I'm just lost at how do I help him. And I understand that the system itself is it's difficult because everyone makes different decisions but that's all I say and I appreciate your time and I am grateful. Thank you.

**Carson City:**

- **Nicole Williams**, family member of former offender, Return Strong – I am the staff mail coordinator. Every single letter we receive crosses my desk. I am here today to amplify voices of those in Nevada prisons who have entrusted us with their stories of unimaginable hardship, neglect and outright inhumane treatment. Since our inception, one of the core missions of this organization has been to ensure the voices silenced behind those bars are heard. Over the past few months, we have received an overwhelmingly number of letters. We currently have 1,134 letters from people around the state. The majority from our members who are incarcerated individuals at High Desert State Prison and Ely

State Prison. Their experiences paint a devastating picture of systemic failures that undermine human dignity and violate basic human rights. These stories share common themes that demand immediate attention. 1 - Inhumane living conditions; prison units are described as filthy with cells infested by insects, toilets that don't function properly and no access to basic hygiene or hot water for weeks on end. Clothing when provided is the wrong size or insufficient, forcing people to live in squalor. Laundry services when available, reportedly use the same equipment that cleans communal mop heads leaving clothes unsanitary. 2 – Lack of basic services; many inmates describe enduring months without access to yard time, meaningful programming or even showers. Some are allowed out of their cells for as little as 15 minutes every day if at all. Medical and mental health services are either nonexistent or alarmingly inadequate with delayed or outright ignored requests for care. Even basic communication tools like grievance forms or kiosks are routinely withheld or not accessible. 3 – Dangerous environments; several letters detail a lack of protection from violence including being forced into mixed units with known enemies or being shackled and left vulnerable during transfers. Reports of staff negligence, provocation of violence, and threats of harm are common. These practices have created an atmosphere of constant fear and instability. Neglect during the High Desert State Prison and Ely transfer; the mass transfer between High Desert and Ely was disastrously executed. No one died or was assaulted during the transfer, but the aftershock continues and facilities have still returned to normal operations. We wonder if there will ever be a normal. Inmates were moved without access to their personal property for weeks. Many describe being left in freezing cells with no blankets or warm clothing while others recount being crammed into cells previously deemed uninhabitable due to prior damage or contamination. Systemic dehumanization; many letters express the profound emotional toll of being treated as less than human. From being mocked and called derogatory names by staff to the complete lack [3 minutes reached] of communication or clarity around their custody status. Thank you.

- **Morgan Darcy** – I am just going to go rogue on this. I'm going to piggyback off what Nicole just said regarding the moves. With the change, my loved one has been transferred from High Desert State Prison to Idaho. And in that time that he has been transferred he has seen a dentist, he has been outside more times in the week that he was there first than the entire time that he's been in High Desert, which according to him was only 4 times he was let outside. He has access to better food, healthcare, mental health. He has education. What we're battling with right now is NDOC has said that they have transferred all of their belongings. Nobody has gotten any of their belongings since the transfer. Nobody can find the transfers properties. Nobody can find where the monies are that were on their books or their trust. Everything's still in limbo from down here. Moving up to Idaho is more of a model for what NDOC should take into consideration on what to be a part of. At these facilities at Idaho Corrections they have access to schooling, they have access to tablets, they have visitation, they are able to work towards getting for their parole and probation versus here where it's not something that's a priority. When my loved one told everybody that he was going up for parole in a year and a half, Idaho State Corrections said that he was on the top priority to start getting him ready to be a part of society again. What he went through here is beyond horrible. The things that he has witnessed, the suicides, the stabbings, the lack of nutrition, the fact that he would give up his servings of food to feed other people and it still was not enough to maintain everybody's needs. I'm asking in consideration to think about how to better for our individuals that are incarcerated. Thank you.
- **Jodi Hocking**, Return Strong – I just wanted to actually add a little bit to what Morgan said. I was going to talk this morning about some of the unintended consequences following the mass move. Specifically for people who were not part of the reason that it happened. Many of the people who were PC at High Desert now are either still at High Desert or they have been moved to Ely. And the impact is different for both of them but I think it's significant at the same time. And it was things which I think Director Dzurenda I have said to you we call it the aftershock. The aftershock of the moves and

like the impact that has happened to people. So at High Desert now we have people who were moved out of state due to their like high level security concerns who now are doing well in other states which makes me ask why. Why are they doing well there? Was it an impact on those people? Was it their behavior or was it our system that is not working for people? On the other side we now have people who are at High Desert who were at High Desert who work in Prison Industries who are many of them are PC but they didn't get moved to Ely who are still being belly chained and shackled to go to the showers, to use the phones. They're medium security and somehow, they have gotten missed and are being impacted at High Desert and I know High Desert was supposed to go back to like normal operations. I forgot the date but I want to say it was mid-October, and we're not there. We're not even close to there and we're actually doing more harm to people who were doing well and now the people who were not doing well are going out of state and they're doing well, which is a reflection on something that's happening in our system, right? In some ways it's gone backwards at High Desert to the point that it was during COVID. COVID Prison Industries all PI workers were going to PI. They were working and they were coming and getting locked down and shackled and not getting yard and tier and all of those things because of COVID but they were in the same room working. Now it's the same impact for a different reason. At some point you know we passed SB307 which put a very strict definition on solitary confinement but people at High Desert are living for months they have been four or five months in the same conditions that exists for people who are in solitary confinement but because we changed the definition during legislative session it's been like a free-for-all for them [3 minutes reached].

- **Sandra Valentino**, loved one of offender at Northern Nevada Correctional Center, Return Strong – I am not anti-law enforcement. I come from a long line of family members who have worked in the field and I respect the work that is done. I also have incarcerated loved one and have been more than shocked to learn how people are treated in prison. Medical treatment, my loved one has been suffering with knee pain for over a year. He has submitted kites and shown up for multiple appointments with the doctor but nothing has been processing. The doctor is either not there to be seen or they act like they did not discuss getting an MRI to diagnose the problem. What is an acceptable timeframe to make a patient wait? We're not talking weeks or even a couple of months. That would be understandable. Over a year is excessive. Even more shocking is that I learned that after starting to read letters from our members that this is not an unusual occurrence. People with critical life-threatening illnesses are forced to wait months, years, some losing their lives to treatable illnesses because care is delayed for so long that they are no longer treatable. It's horrifying. I understand that there are challenges to providing care for so many people but it's unacceptable. Food service, this is not a new topic for this board so you know all of the complaints. Change is not happening fast enough and it's time to get real. We saw the reports to you included about nutritional adequacy but that is based on the first prepared tray put together in the kitchen, not what is actually served. It's also based on the posted and approved menu which doesn't include substitutions which happen all the time. We have had at least two incidents in the past six months where Wells Conservation Camp was being served a tortilla with a smear of peanut butter because they ran out of food. How does this happen? NNCC was reported for wastewater backwashing into the kitchen and it was reported due to the smell. How long was that going on? Is it even fixed now? SDCC doesn't have hot water again regularly. How are culinary workers washing their hands? Summer heat, this is another topic we've heard before. While it's crickets now, give it a few months. What is going on? What are we doing next summer? Why aren't we asking these questions? NDOC needs assistance. Incarcerated men and women are suffering. When is this issue going to [3 minutes reached] become. Thank you.
- **Tonja Brown**, Advocates for the inmates and the innocent – I want to touch on something because I have been personally affected by having a loved one die in prison for lack of medical care. We during



the wrongful death suit that we had filed and the deposition of several including the doctor Karen Gedney it revealed quite a bit. I don't know if it still exists, I know it has for years, but the prison has a board called the utilization review committee. This committee, it makes the decision on who gets treatment outside. Some do, some don't. I know in our particular case it took quite a while for him, my brother Nolan Cline, to receive Hep-C treatment. By the time they started it, it was too late. Also, he was never treated for something that was so simple to treat called hemochromatosis which is the basically it's an iron overload where all you do is take out the blood. It's like giving a blood donation every few weeks did not and how upsetting this is even speaking about it because I don't think a lot of people understand. If he had received proper medical treatment he would have lived and this is according to the expert even on both sides in the suit. If he had received proper medical treatment which was not given by Dr. Karen Gedney just months before he passed away the honorable Judge Brent Adams ordered the Washoe County District Attorney to turn over the entire file in my brother's case. When the file was turned over, all the exculpatory evidence that showed another man committed the crime and other exculpatory evidence that was so favorable to his case okay. And as his attorneys were ready to file motions for new trial and bail, my brother died. He died within 13 hours of his current attorney, Miss. Hern who was about to file motions for new trial and bail. If he had lived just an hour longer she had filed that motion I would not have to be fighting so hard to get a petition established for posthumous pardons for on factual innocence because if it had been filed first we could have got a judicial exoneration. So, it's very difficult [3 minutes reached] now I have. Ok I just want to say that I have received information from inmates who have lacked getting diabetes medication heart medication and then I'll pick it up on the ombudsman on second public comment. Thank you.

- **Jacquin Webb** – I wanted to speak about the food in the culinary in the NDOC which is in the reports on the agenda for today. I was housed in the Nevada Department of Corrections from 1999 until 2019. I was also housed in from CCDC to High Desert to Lovelock to NNCC. Along the way the food was not good. The serving portions were really bad. There was a lot of times of spoiled food and you can smell it. Portion control was at a very minimum. There was so many people that were leaving culinary still hungry. When I got to NNCC I was very privileged to work in Prison Industries and in the Prison Industries I was able to make a wage where I was able to supplement obviously what I was being fed in the culinary. There were so many men that did not have that opportunity. They were going to bed hungry which caused a lot of problems for people in general. I was able to work in the culinary for three months when I was at Northern Nevada Correctional Center. At that time I did witness the what we hear so much about the non fit for human consumption on boxes. I witnessed tons and tons of mice and the feces in the flour and the oatmeal. And just the lack of care and concern for the people that were there. There was so much hostility from culinary to the units I think that it could have been minimized by just getting a proper meal. I did notice that a lot of our problems that we did have happened right after feeding because there was so much anger over food. I think that the food service, the culinary work, free staff they did try to make the best of a lot of the situations but their hands were tied because the portions that they had we didn't we never had enough food to feed a whole yard ever. I'd never seen that while I was working there and even when I left there it was still a problem.. It was an ongoing problem. I was working with Return Strong and I got to read some of the letters recently and it sounds like it's worse. It really sounds worse. I hear of people eating things that they should not be eating to supplement what they were being fed. These problems here I feel like can be fixed very easily. I hope that we can address this situation. Thank you for your time.
- **Tammy Berg**, son at High Desert State Prison – Son was part of the transfer from Ely State Prison. I asked him to tell me some of the things that he was being fed. So, I'm going to read part of his letter. For breakfast he gets one scoop of eggs that is powdered, one juice packet powdered, one packet of powdered milk, one juice box - 4 fluid ounces, one serving of grits and one scoop of cold cereal and

two small round meat patties. I brought this as a visual, this is the size of his meat patty. For lunch he gets a sack which they receive at breakfast time because they only serve breakfast and dinner here. Includes the following: four pieces of sandwich bread, two pieces of bologna, a packet of mustard, a packet of salad dressing which I'm not sure what he's pointing that on which is supposed to be mayonnaise he says, one packet of goldfish snack crackers - a hundred calories, and a piece of celery. And then the opposite day he says they get sandwich and a packet of sunshine peanut butter and then he sees a packet of sun chips and one piece of carrot. My son is turning 25. This is not enough food for anyone. I would challenge you guys to eat what they are being asked to eat. It is not the way we should be treating fellow human beings, excuse me. My husband and I made the difficult decision to supplement so that he can get food from the commissary in order to get additional food. It is not enough. We wonder why incarcerated are angry. As Jacquin said about you know a lot of the fights and things like that happen in disturbances. They're either right before or right after a meal. You know what? I'd probably be fighting too if this was all I was eating. I also wanted to tell you because it was touched on earlier, my son has chosen to do I guess what they call a bird bath versus being chained and walked like a dog, that was his words, to the shower area where in many cases you don't even feel safe to do that. Again, not the way we should be treating our fellow human beings. He has been out, since the transfer from Ely to High Desert, he's been outside three times for I believe he said one of them was 30 minutes long and that was [3 minutes reached] thank you.

### **3. Acceptance and Approval of Minutes – June 27, 2024**

There were no questions on minutes of the prior meeting held June 27, 2024. A motion to approve the minutes was made and passed; minutes unanimously approved.

### **4. Chief Medical Officer Report – Vincent Valiente, Inspector, Division of Public and Behavioral Health**

A detailed report was provided as an exhibit for the meeting. As required by NRS, the Division of Public and Behavioral Health conducts regular inspections of state correctional facilities covering medical, dietary sanitation, and includes nutritional adequacy verifications and inspections. The division conducted medical inspections at two state prisons, Northern Nevada Correctional Center and Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center. Northern Nevada Correctional Center had 5 citations identified. FMWCC had 1 citation identified. Dietary and sanitation inspections were conducted at six state prison facilities. A total of 14 violations were identified which was an increase of 2 from the 2023 data. Ely State Prison had 3 violations, Lovelock Correctional Center had 1 violation, Florence McClure Women's Correctional Center had 1 violation, High Desert State Prison had 3 violations, Southern Desert Correctional Center had 2 violations, and Northern Nevada Correctional Center had 4 violations. Three of the six facilities had repeated critical violations. No substantial nutritional adequacy violations were identified during the 2024 inspections. The Division of Public and Behavioral Health continues to advise the NDOC to enhance infection control prevention, early detection, and control measures at all facilities. For more information please review to the detailed report.

Attorney General Ford – Ely, Lovelock and NNCC having critical violations associated with high temperature dishwashing machines. What does NDOC need to do to address the high temperature dishwashing machines because it seems that would resolve 5 of the 14 critical violations.

Director Dzurenda – This is being addressed. These violations have been repeatedly coming up for years. This is the first time that we have gotten some infrastructure help on this. Governor has approved ARPA funds to the Department of Corrections to address the kitchen areas. A national company called Cooks has made an evaluation of every kitchen to determine what can be repaired or what needs to be replaced. Those are all part of the sanitation issues with the dishwashers and cleaning supply and distribution

materials. The Governor asked that kitchen repairs and issues be prioritized. Repairs/replacements at Southern Desert Correctional Center have been completed and now repairs/replacements begin at High Desert State Prison and it will continue through all of the facilities based on what Cooks determines.

Governor Lombardo – Is there a total timeline to address all of the facilities?

Director Dzurenda – NDOC does not have the timeline. They are working with State Public Works. Repairs/replacement is based on when materials come available.

Governor Lombardo – Is funding an issue?

Director Dzurenda – Not at this time.

Attorney General Ford – Relating to medical and dental inspections including sterilization of equipment on a regular bases and the expired or outdated drug or biological supplies. Can you speak to the latter of the expired drug and biological supplies, what are we doing to address that?

Dr. Williams – It was mostly issues of how the medications are removed and discarded, not that they were in line to be dispensed. The DONS are responsible for making sure that the pharmacy nurses have the medications out of rotation sooner and that we have process even if it's with the vendor for disposal of narcotics or other medications that are non-narcotic that some you can throw in trash, some you have to be more cautious with how you dispose of them, like narcotics.

Attorney General Ford – Is it addressed then?

Dr. Williams – Yes.

Attorney General Ford – We keep hearing concerns about nutritional adequacy, public comment continues to let us know about that. In meeting after meeting, we keep hearing concerns about that. I want to continue to put on record we need to continue addressing that.

**5. Director's Comments & Departmental Updates – James E. Dzurenda, Director, Nevada Department of Corrections–**

The implementation of tablets to the offenders, the contract goes int effect as of Jan 6<sup>th</sup> with ViaPath. They cannot implement some of the IT structures until after their contact starts. They have to come into the agency but cannot do that before they take over the phone services. They will then add infrastructure to give offenders the tablets. They toured the facilities and believe implementation will be in place by April 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be training for offenders and staff, as well as the public as agreed upon by ViaPath.

Since January 2023, there were issues of vacancy rates with correctional officers. Today you do not hear of cancellation of visits because of vacancies of staff. We have worked with All Star Talent for hiring and getting people online faster. Just yesterday was last graduating class of 2024 in Las Vegas and first time in history that the southern part of state has ZERO vacancies for correctional officers. Safer for staff, offenders. It won't stay this way as there are 30 retirements pending. Norhern Nevada Correctional Center is good, Lovelock Correctional Center and Ely State Prison are a little more difficult and staff are needed. The movement between Ely State Prison and High Desert State prison changed the need for staff at Ely where they couldn't get staff, now staff vacancies are less of a concern than before but we need to



work on programs and education for offenders at Ely. The tablets should provide the majority of programs and education, but we still have other avenues due to the lower level population.

Governor Lombardo – You mentioned Lovelock Correctional Center in your recent report dated 12/2/24 shows a 4% vacancy and what was the recent graduation?

Director Dzurenda – That was 15, which will bring to below 30% vacancies.

Governor Lombardo – And Ely State Prison is it still accurate a vacancy of 43?

Director Dzurenda – No, 6 to graduate soon will bring to below 30% along with change of post charts due to the swap.

Governor Lombardo – Do you have a timeline for the tablets?

Director Dzurenda – We have a meeting with ViaPath tomorrow for them to provide an implementation and IT plan. They are being very conservative to say they will be implemented by the April 1 date.

Governor Lombardo – Do you know the total number off the top of your head since January 23, I recall +35% vacancy across the board and now you are reporting on your recent reports 17%. Is that accurate?

Director Dzurenda – 17% is accurate overall, but if you look at the more remote areas such as Ely and Lovelock the number there is higher.

Governor Lombardo – The vendor All Star, do they do POs, too? Public Safety.

Director Dzurenda – That is primarily what they do, they also do medical staff, public safety, police departments, hospitals. Currently All Star is being utilized by Health and Human Services and Department of Corrections for medical clinicians.

Governor Lombardo – Have you had any conversations with Director Togliatti for DPS?

Director Dzurenda – Yes, we shared it.

## **6. Medical Division Update – Dr. Kenneth Williams, Medical Director, Nevada Department of Corrections**

When first coming to the Department I went to all of the facilities to get an idea of some of the root causes of the number of challenges here. Had the opportunity to meet with Return Strong and hear their concerns, have reviewed grievances and sat in on discussions and would agree there is considerable room for improvement and that is where I have been putting effort since I arrived. Reviewed policies, updated and edited verbiage to bring accountability and added metrics to expectation. As we know, 97% of the incarcerated population will return home to the community. We say that correctional care is community care because they are coming back to us. It is important that we are attentive to their needs while they are with us as that can affect their direction. Spent time with the American Correctional Association and served on a number of committees: healthcare, behavior care committees. I have had the opportunity to weigh in and provide guidance on the policies and expectations nationally for correctional health care. I bring that information and that experience to the table here to bring some improvements. We have been focusing on staffing, bringing medical providers to much needed places. Put a full-time provider in place

at Ely as well as Lovelock. Ely is one of the most difficult places to staff. We have partnered with UMC to bring specialty telemedicine to the table, that will hopefully decrease some of the movement and increase security in the facilities as it does not pull officers from assignment. We have appointed a new Director of Mental Health, and we are working with DHHS and All Star to identify correctional counselors as well as nurses. That is in collaboration with DHHS and Veterans Administration and NDOC. In the Substance Use Dependency treatment area we are also working with DHHS and the Bureau of Behavioral Health and the have facilitated a contract with an outside vendor Mind Care. This vendor will help us assess our medications for opioid use disorder treatment program. We continue treatment when an offender moves from jail to prison system. We have had great success and our goal is to expand that to the population that is already incarcerated. Opioid use is one of our main criminogenic factors. We were also awarded a position in the SAMSA for the GAINS policy academy. Together with the Mind Care project the will help us with project assessment to determine best practices and ensure policies are in line with federal level and local laws. Our pharmacy has engaged in a new gate medication program. This will bring some efficiency and costs savings to the table. Instead of filling and giving out prescriptions and maybe they are used, maybe they are not, we'll be able to give offenders a card that can be used at major pharmacies and that will avoid waste. We have also enrolled in a medication donation program so we can repackage and dispense that will bring a significant cost avoidance to the agency and the state. We want to move forward with our relationship and other state agencies to utilize resources more effectively and efficient, be good stewards, and be more fiscally responsible. Our goal is to implement an Electronic Health Record system to help with accountability to ensure patients are scheduled on a regular basis and seen on regular basis. I am confident from past experiences that will address a lot of concerns and challenges with patients that are not getting the care they should be getting and are not getting refills in a timely manner. This will also be facilitated by bringing new CIPs (Correctional Inpatient Pharmacy) contract online. We are working on an RFP for Pixys, controlled substance management cabinet that will prevent diversion in our prison system. We are working on policy and culture so it is more humane and more empathetic. Our commitment is to improve healthcare for our offender population in the State of Nevada and bring in line with the expectations and practices that are observed nationally.

Governor Lombardo – For the Northern Nevada Correctional Center, 5 out of 6 reporting period failed for expired medications or disposal, how can we not fix that from 2007 to 2024?

Dr. Williams – I cannot speak to previous performance, but my perspective is that by updating the policies and procedures, by defining accountability and metrics, I am confident we will get where we need to be. I believe we have a good team. We have to make sure we have right person in right seat on the bus. If they are not a good fit, then we have to give them an opportunity to do something else.

Governor Lombardo – Do those people report to you or to the Warden?

Dr. Williams – It is both. On site they report to the Warden first but ultimately to me. I have every intention to hold people accountable.

Governor Lombardo – Would like to make this an agenda item for next meeting for an update.

Governor Lombardo – Electronic Health Record, is there a funding void or something else in the state holding up the process?

Dr. Williams – There is funding void but have working with Director Dzurenda and Director Whitley, and we believe there is an opportunity for DHHS to help support initiate.

Governor Lombardo – Is that something you would ask for my support in?

Director Dzurenda – The funding or resources piece is coming through Health and Human Services. We have been working together to find a company to provide the Electronic Health Records.

Dr. Williams – We did narrow it down to 2, and received proposals. One entity stood out and came to table with software and computers and scanners.

Governor Lombardo – Please advise if you need help in that position. The holding cabinet diversion in the pharmacy, is that another bid? Is that a software or labor thing? What is the issue?

Dr. Williams – That is an actual tool, like a safe but not as simple. It is a medication cabinet that has software associated with it to deter diversion because the staff have to actually log in with their code.

Governor Lombardo – What is preventing it from taking place?

Dr. Williams – I believe it is needing an RFP.

Governor Lombardo – Electronic Health Records and pharmacy diversion has been in place for decades. We need to move that along as soon as we can.

**7. 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 362 – Weapons Training and Qualifications  
Changes made as a result of an audit of Use of Force by the Legislative Counsel Bureau. Made changes to align with national standards of position titles as well as providing additional practice time with supervision of a firearms instructor.
- AR 412 – Armory Weapons and Control  
Changes made as a result of an audit of Use of Force by the Legislative Counsel Bureau. Made changes to define which staff can occupy particular posts as well as equipment and storage that is authorized for use. Also creates a review committee to ensure new equipment is consistent agencywide.

Action: There was a motion for ARs 362 and 412 to be approved. Motion passed unanimously; regulations approved.

**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.

**Las Vegas:**

➤ **None**

**Carson City:**

- **Tonja Brown**, Advocates for the Inmates and the Innocent – provided documents to Clerk. I wanted to touch on something in 2023 AB452 passed, it was the Ombudsman bill for NDOC. A few weeks ago I had received some information regarding an inmate in Ely. The person I contacted I suggested they reach out to the Ombudsman thinking it had been filled by now. I called NDOC there's no information on the Ombudsman on the website, staff doesn't know about it, the administration offices doesn't know there's an Ombudsman. It hasn't been filled or they know nothing of it. Ok so, anyways this individual ultimately had to go to the Inspector General's office because of my concerns over this inmate in Ely. His life was being threatened by inmates and prison guards were causing some problems and issues. So, it was becoming a concern. Then I've also, and Jodi can also agree to this, during the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary, a recommendation was passed, I won't say what it is but, anyways it was passed there was a bill moving forward and her Return Strong organization, my organization, Mass Lib organization, is working together on this bill moving forward. So during the discussion that we had in August with the organizations it was suggested that you know if you want to reach out to your families you know or whatever and with some input from the inmates which I did. This is where the issue is, there's no Ombudsman and then there was an inmate filed a grievance against another inmate for supposedly making false or spreading false information about letters. I have received letters dealing with this legislation and the way that the grievance was handled was not done properly. I was never contacted to clear up anything at all. And it bothers me because this information will ultimately go into the other inmate who got the grievance filed against them record which will ultimately affect possibly any future pardon that they are looking for. Any parole hearing. Because it's a write up is a grievance it stays there. And so, I just wanted to make sure that these letters that I have received from men and women and because of what our organizations because we're collaborating together will not, they won't be impacted because they want to give their input into the legislation in the future. So I'd like to know when [3 minutes reached] the Ombudsman's going to be so I don't have to go to the Inspector General's office anymore. Thank you.

Attorney General Ford – If you have additional comments, you can write it down and submit it for consideration.

- **Jodi Hocking**, Founder and Director of Return Strong – I have a unusual comment for the second comment period. I don't usually stay for this one but one of the things as an organization, first I just want to say that one of our core values that we really believe that everybody desert to be treated humanely and respectfully regardless of their convictions and that when we allow the dehumanization of people that we've heard about today that we've been hearing about regularly and ongoing, and we don't do anything it makes us part of that broken system. And so, the reason that we are here all the time is to try to make sure that accountability happens. One of the things that and I'm talking more to the board than I am to NDOC today, you get of the hook on this one, we've gone back through BoPC meetings since January 2023, reviewing the questions that are asked, what they're asked, how they're asked and we have concerns that this committee even though there are questions that are asked they tend to focus more on like infrastructure issue than getting to the root of the problems that are plaguing our prisons. Our belief is that there are a few issues that underly why that happens. AG Ford sits on the board, and thank you very much for participating, this is not a bash at all but, we believe there's a conflict of interest in terms of the AG's office being on an executive board that also that office has, Randy's here now, that also represents NDOC in lawsuits. So, at what point is there a conflict or a lack of meaningful accountability or oversight occur when those two roles are really inherently at odds. The Secretary of State, no offense again, this isn't his wheelhouse, prisons. So sometimes we think it's just that people don't know what questions to ask. For instance, the food today and the nutrition reports. The reason that they are not failing the simple answer is the first meal

to come off of that line gets wrapped on a tray with saran wrap and that's the one that they inspect. That's not the one that's being served on units. That's not the amounts that are being served on units. Its not after bugs are found in units. If they were they were they would take that out and wrap a different one. There's simple answer to some of why these things are going wrong if we don't aske the write questions [3 minutes reached] we don't get the right answers.

Attorney General Ford – If you have additional comments, you can write it down and submit it for consideration.

- 8. Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and passed; meeting adjourned at 11:29am.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTORNEY GENERAL AARON D. FORD

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