State Prison Complex – Board of Trustees
Jones Farm Conference and Training Center
July 17, 2026

A regular meeting of State Prison Complex Correctional Institutions, Jones Farm Conference and Training Center, 721 Bear Tavern Road, Ewing NJ at 10:00 AM, Friday, July 17, 2026

Call to order at 10:13 a.m. Reading of the public meeting statement.

PLEDGE

ROLL CALL By: Ashling MacDonald

Present: John Fuqua, Charles Albino, Deborah Corbett, Aisling MacDonald, Carl Styles (via teams).

Nomination to vote on a new Chairperson

- D. Corbett – nominated D. Venable
  - C. Styles – 2nd motion of D. Venable
  - Motion carried

Nomination to vote of Vice Chairperson

- C. Albino – nominated A. MacDonald
  - J. Fuqua – 2nd motion of A. MacDonald
  - Motion carried

Nomination of Board Secretary

- C. Albino – nominated J. Fuqua
  - D. Corbett – 2nd motion of J. Fuqua
  - Motion Carried

Approval of Meeting Minutes: April 17, 2026.

- Meeting Minutes approved by the committee.
  - J. Fuqua – motion to approve
  - C. Albino – 2nd that motion
  - Motion Carried, meeting minutes approved

Presentation by Assistant Commissioner Patrick Nogan and Director Marc Sim, Division of Operations

- Isolated Confinement Restriction Act (ICRA): Assistant Commissioner Nogan and Director Sim provided an overview of ICRA requirements governing restrictive housing and out-of-cell time in New Jersey correctional facilities.
- Protections for Vulnerable Populations: The presentation reviewed statutory protections that prohibit isolated confinement for designated vulnerable populations, including individuals with certain diagnosed mental illnesses or developmental disabilities, individuals age 21 or younger or age 65 or older, individuals who are pregnant or within 45 days postpartum, and individuals whose LGBTQ status would result in isolation based solely on that status.
- Exceptions: Limited exceptions to isolated confinement requirements were discussed, including temporary medical isolation for mental health emergencies, communicable disease precautions, pending investigations and circumstances in which an individual's presence in the general population presents a danger to the individual, staff, other incarcerated persons or the public.
- Population and Housing: Approximately 93 percent of the State-sentenced population remains in general population settings with access to movement and programming. Approximately 7 percent are serving disciplinary sanctions in Restorative Housing Units (RHUs), where structured schedules provide a minimum of four hours of out-of-cell time.
- Due Process and Administrative Review: The presentation reviewed processes for placement decisions, administrative oversight and opportunities for incarcerated persons to challenge restrictive housing placements.
- Medical Monitoring: Clinical staff conduct physical and mental health evaluations associated with restrictive housing placement and provide ongoing monitoring in accordance with applicable requirements.
- Confinement Limits: ICRA limits the duration of isolated confinement, including limits on consecutive days and aggregate days within a defined period.

- Out-of-Cell Access: Facilities are required to maximize opportunities for eligible incarcerated persons to spend time outside their cells for recreation, education, treatment, programming and other activities.
- Compliance and Operational Reforms: NJDOC has implemented policy and operational changes to support compliance with ICRA. These include a level system within RHUs, revised recreation and programming schedules, single-use hygiene products, body-worn cameras and Special Administrative Review Committee processes that provide opportunities for earlier release from disciplinary housing based on behavior.
- Specialized Housing: NJDOC has established specialized housing units at multiple facilities to reinforce positive behavior and address specific operational needs. Initiatives discussed included elevated privilege units, a Senior Unit and specialized housing addressing cell phone possession and contraband.
- Programs and Services: Incarcerated persons have access to educational programming, recreation, religious services, social work activities, structured personal development and other services.
- Out-of-Cell Services: The presentation reviewed activities and services that contribute to out-of-cell access, including showers, haircuts, outdoor recreation, indoor congregate interaction, non-contact window visits, medical and dental services, mental health appointments, medical and court trips, access to secure tablets, books, religious materials and law libraries, telephone calls, structured games and clinical and social services.
- Operational Challenges: The presentation addressed behavioral and operational issues that can affect RHU operations and scheduled out-of-cell time. These include serious behavioral incidents, assaults involving bodily fluids, attempts to ignite contraband, damage to facility infrastructure and other security concerns.
- De-escalation and Safety: Staff use de-escalation strategies and follow applicable use-of-force requirements when responding to incidents. Critical Incident Negotiation Teams may assist with resolving incidents while minimizing the need for physical intervention. Certain incidents can temporarily affect movement and scheduled out-of-cell activities.
- Movement and Security Considerations: The presentation addressed logistical and movement challenges associated with maintaining separation and other security requirements while providing required services and out-of-cell opportunities.
- Safety Measures: NJDOC discussed measures implemented to reduce risks to incarcerated persons and staff within restrictive housing settings. These include deployment of Critical Incident Negotiation Team personnel, installation of contactless food ports and modifications to cell doors intended to reduce opportunities for assaults and improve security.

Discussion:

- Tracking Out-of-Cell Time: Board members asked how NJDOC records out-of-cell time across facilities. Assistant Commissioner Nogan explained that the Department is developing a digital tracking system to replace paper-based processes and accommodate operational differences among facilities and housing units. NJDOC is working with its technology team on a tablet-based tracking application and has begun implementation at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility.
- New Jersey State Prison Tracking: Board members referenced findings in a recent Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson report concerning out-of-cell data at New Jersey State Prison. Director Sim explained that the facility relied on paper records through 2024 and has since implemented a tracking system. Additional data will become available as the system is used to document out-of-cell activity.
- Staffing: Board members raised concerns regarding staffing levels observed during facility visits and asked about the Department's efforts to address vacancies. Assistant Commissioner Nogan discussed the relationship between staffing, safety and security and outlined ongoing recruitment efforts.
- Recruitment and Academy Classes: Department representatives reported progress in recruitment, including the graduation of one of NJDOC's largest Academy classes in more than a decade. Additional recruits were progressing through the Academy, with another group preparing to enter training.
- Hiring Process: Chief of Staff Sperrazza discussed changes intended to strengthen and streamline correctional police officer recruitment. NJDOC established a specialized unit to manage the hiring process and now handles recruitment steps directly following changes to the Civil Service testing requirement.
- Military Recruitment: Board members asked whether NJDOC specifically recruits candidates with military experience. Chief of Staff Sperrazza reported that the Department has a recruitment lieutenant who specializes in military recruitment.

Presentation by Commissioner Kuhn

- Board Engagement: Commissioner Kuhn discussed her plans to attend Board of Trustees meetings periodically to provide updates on Department priorities, operations and major initiatives.
- Secure Devices and Telemedicine: The Commissioner reported that funding was approved for a telemedicine application accessible through secure devices provided to the incarcerated population. The initiative is intended to expand access to healthcare services.
- Population: The Commissioner provided an overview of the approximately 13,000 individuals in NJDOC custody and discussed characteristics of the population, including technical parole violations, recidivism, mandatory minimum sentences, violent offenses, mental health needs and substance use treatment.
- Edna Mahan Correctional Facility: The Commissioner provided an update on plans for the replacement women's correctional facility. The project remains on its anticipated timeline, with permits expected to be submitted in 2027, construction projected to begin in 2028 and completion targeted for late 2029.
- Federal Consent Decree: The Commissioner discussed the termination of the federal consent decree concerning Edna Mahan Correctional Facility and advised the Board that related court documents, the Department's announcement and information from the federal monitor would be provided. She also discussed the Incarcerated Women's Protection Act and its role in maintaining reforms and protections established for women in NJDOC custody.
- Department Mission: The Commissioner discussed the Department's updated mission statement, "Enhancing public safety through rehabilitation, accountability, and reentry."
- Housing Investment: The Commissioner reported that NJDOC received $7 million to support housing initiatives for the incarcerated population as part of the Department's continued investment in reentry.
- Mail and Contraband Interdiction: The Commissioner reviewed NJDOC's efforts to reduce contraband entering correctional facilities through the mail. Personal mail is processed and scanned off-site, while facilities use scanning technology for other incoming materials. NJDOC is also developing a Centralized Search and Sorting Center (CSSC) at Garden State Correctional Facility to process legal and privileged mail, packages, books and other designated materials. The Commissioner reported that these measures have contributed to reductions in contraband entering facilities through the mail.
- Capital Improvements: The Commissioner discussed major capital needs and NJDOC's work with state partners to prioritize projects based on operational need and available funding. Projects discussed included the Garden State Correctional Facility water system, air-conditioning chillers at South Woods State Prison, improvements to the New Jersey State Prison West Compound and replacement of fleet vehicles.
- Staffing: The Commissioner reported that NJDOC requires 4,127 correctional police officers and was 334 officers below that level as of the reporting period, with an additional 243 officers on leave. She noted that officer attrition had reached its lowest recorded level, averaging approximately eight separations per pay period.
- Recruitment and Training: The Commissioner reviewed efforts to increase correctional police officer recruitment and Academy graduations. NJDOC graduated a class of 157 recruits in February 2026, its largest graduating class in more than a decade. Another class of approximately 103 officers was scheduled to graduate in August, with an additional Academy class expected to begin in September.
- Labor Agreements: The Commissioner noted progress made through recently negotiated labor agreements and advised that work on the next contract would begin in connection with the upcoming fiscal year.
- Police Training Commission Requirements: The Commissioner discussed recruitment challenges associated with Police Training Commission physical standards and ongoing discussions with the Police Training Commission and Attorney General's Office regarding standards that reflect the operational and physical requirements of correctional law enforcement.
- Healthcare and Mental Health Services: The Commissioner discussed the reinstatement of statutorily required medical copayments effective July 1, 2026. NJDOC reduced the medical visit copayment from $5 to $2, with a $1 prescription copayment. Copayments apply to incarcerated person-initiated medical appointments, and individuals who cannot afford the copayment continue to receive necessary care.
- Technical Parole Violations: The Commissioner discussed the approximately 1,100 individuals in NJDOC custody for technical parole violations and ongoing legislative considerations related to that population. The discussion included alternatives to incarceration and diversionary approaches associated with Second Chance and Rehabilitative Release initiatives.

Board of Trustee – Welfare Commissary Funds – Director Fisher.

- Revenue Projections: The Board requested projected Welfare Commissary Fund revenue for the coming year to assist with its review of funding requests. Director Fisher advised that the Office of Financial Management would be consulted and that revenue projections would be included with future funding materials.
- Advance Review of Financial Information: The Board requested that financial statements and funding materials for each facility be provided approximately one week before future meetings to allow members sufficient time for review. Director Fisher confirmed that the materials would be provided to the committee in advance.

Approval of Welfare Commissary Funds for all Adult Male Facilities: July 17, 2026.

- J. Fuqua made a motion to approve the Welfare Commissary Fund requests.
- D. Corbett seconded the motion.
- The motion carried, and the Welfare Commissary Fund requests were approved for all adult male facilities.
- Attendance: C. Styles left the meeting at 12:48 p.m.

Presentation by Deputy Commissioner Erin Nardelli and Assistant Commissioner Patrick Miller – Bayside State Prison - OCO Report Follow up

Highlights from the presentation:

- Facility Overview: Deputy Commissioner Nardelli and Assistant Commissioner Miller provided an overview of Bayside State Prison, which was constructed in 1969 and absorbed a portion of the population and staff from Southern State Correctional Facility following its closure in 2022. Bayside has approximately 478 staff, including approximately 350 custody staff and 128 civilian staff, and a total capacity of approximately 1,377 beds across medium, minimum and closed custody housing.
- Infrastructure and Capital Improvements: The presentation addressed ongoing improvements to Bayside's aging infrastructure, including upgrades to the facility's camera and electrical panel systems. A 168-bed unit was scheduled to close temporarily to complete additional upgrades. NJDOC continues to advance capital projects intended to bring areas of the facility up to current standards and meet the needs of the population housed there.
- Population: Department representatives provided an overview of the incarcerated population and offense categories at Bayside, including homicide, weapons offenses, assault, robbery, drug offenses, sexual assault, other sexual offenses and kidnapping.
- Emergency Response Tools: The presentation addressed concerns identified in the Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson report regarding access to emergency cutting tools. Department representatives clarified that the tools are maintained within each housing unit and available to designated staff during emergencies rather than issued individually to every correctional police officer. The practice reflects safety and security considerations associated with maintaining sharp instruments within the facility.
- Specialized Housing: Bayside established specialized housing units focused on cell phone offenses and drug diversion. The cell phone unit operates as a controlled environment with staff selected and assigned based on the specific security needs of the unit.
- Facility Cleaning and Sanitation: Department representatives addressed concerns in the Ombudsperson report regarding cleaning needs, including showers, kitchen areas and bird control. NJDOC was working to engage vendors to conduct deep cleaning in identified areas, with similar services being considered across Department facilities. The Department was also reviewing policies related to incarcerated person work assignments and facility cleaning responsibilities.
- Dining Hall: The presentation addressed the former dining hall, which has been closed since the late 1990s. NJDOC does not plan to reopen the dining hall because of current population management, movement, programming, scheduling, safety and security considerations. Department representatives noted that Bayside now offers more than 50 programs and educational classes and that the additional movement required for centralized dining could interfere with access to programming. The facility's courtyard was also determined to present security concerns for use by the current population.

- Logbook Oversight: Department representatives addressed concerns identified in the Ombudsperson report regarding completion of custody logbooks. Facility administration, the major and custody staff reviewed the issue, and NJDOC reinforced existing requirements and provided additional direction to staff regarding proper completion and oversight of logbooks.

Board Discussion/Questions

- License Plate Shop: A Board member raised concerns regarding noise levels in Bayside's license plate shop and asked whether hearing protection was available to incarcerated persons working in the area. Deputy Commissioner Nardelli stated that the matter would be reviewed with facility administration, including applicable workplace safety standards and hearing protection requirements.
- Logbook Compliance: A Board member requested additional information regarding the logbook oversight concerns identified in the Ombudsperson report. Deputy Commissioner Nardelli reported that facility leadership had met with administration, the major and custody staff and reinforced existing policies and oversight requirements to ensure staff follow required procedures.

Chairperson Report:

- Board Role and Responsibilities: The Chairperson discussed the Board's function, scope and responsibilities and noted the need for greater clarity regarding its role within the Department.
- Attendance and Participation: The Chairperson emphasized the importance of consistent attendance, participation in follow-up discussions and completion of assigned responsibilities. The discussion also addressed the process for removing Board members and the importance of member accountability.
- Board Responsibilities: The Chairperson reviewed responsibilities that include engagement with the Commissioner, development of executive reports, planning, coordination across facilities and recommendations regarding Department programs, including healthcare. Members were advised that fulfilling these responsibilities may require additional volunteer hours.
- Board Leadership: The Chairperson discussed the transition to Damon as the new Chairperson and emphasized the importance of continued engagement and participation by all Board members.
- Continued Support: The Vice Chair indicated continued availability to support the Chairperson and other Board members in carrying out the Board's responsibilities.
- Accountability: The report concluded with an emphasis on the Board's responsibility to remain accountable and contribute to improvements within the correctional system.

Old Business:

- None at this time

New Business:

- Regional Board Assignments: A Board member proposed establishing regional assignments based on members' proximity to correctional facilities. The Board agreed to place the proposal on the agenda for the next meeting to allow discussion with the full membership.
- Board Communications with Incarcerated Persons: A Board member raised the need to establish appropriate parameters for questions received from incarcerated persons, including the potential role of facility staff in reviewing questions. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring responses remain consistent with the Board's role and responsibilities.
- Condolences: A Board member acknowledged the passing of Mr. Leone and extended condolences to NJDOC staff.

No private session needed.

Adjournment

- C. Albino– Motion to Adjourn.

- J. Fuqua– Second the Motion.
- Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.