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# The Downeast Correctional Facility Board of Visitors Annual Report for 2011

To: Director Scott Jones  
Commissioner Joseph Ponte

The Downeast Correctional Facility Board of Visitors met three times this year; June 6<sup>th</sup>, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, and December 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **June 6, 2011**

The Board learned Commissioner Ponte's 40 years of experience includes private and public correctional facilities and he understands the pro's and con's of both, bringing the best to Maine. The Commissioner is focused on employee/staff recognition. Discussed that a committee is forming to improve current employee recognition practice. McGee suggested 'selling services such as restoring old automobile and selling for profit to go to employee benefit fund. Discussed that DCF is beginning the ACA process in order to determine percentage of compliance with ACA standards. Irving wants this to be advertised to that this may benefit the facility for potential expansion. Discussed changes in length of sentences for prisoners housed at DCF increasing to 15 year sentences. Prisoners with more that three (3) years remaining must remain inside the fence. Prisoners with specific/certain crimes must receive approval for off-ground jobs and transfer to minimum facility must receive approval at Augusta level. Dale noted that DCF restitution crews have a "stellar performance record" and questioned if this change affected current crews. Dale discussed more focus is being placed on the connection between combat veterans who are diagnosed with PTSD and their involvement with corrections in order to put treatment services in place to support veterans. A new program will begin in about one month, Veteran's Justice Outreach (VJO) in order to treat this specific issue. Dale also notes that the acuity of prisoner mental health issues is increasing and there is a need to increase the services for these prisoners.

## **October 3, 2011**

The Board discussed that all member terms have expired. All members present want to be reappointed to the board. Director Jones will contact Rebecca Irving to determine her availability for re-appointment. Discussed the staffing matrix. Bob has been approached by prisoner family members who expressed concern for the safety of the prisoners. Bob has also had conversations with staff members who are first and foremost grateful that the positions will go away through attrition but the staff knows that this facility has a positive security history and don't want to see that change. DCF has positive long-term working relationships with other state agencies that would come to our aid if necessary. Questions were asked about additional security equipment supplementing correctional officers. Discussed job openings; Correctional Maintenance Mechanic Supervisor position was

filled yesterday; Vocational Trades Instructor (carpentry) position will be announced by end of this business day; Vocational Trades Instructor (garments) continues to have no applicants. State nurse retired which will be filled by Corizon. The storekeeper and correctional cook supervisor both retired. The storekeeper position will be funded by the vacant captain's position. The correctional cook supervisor is filled by acting capacity for the next six months. Each cook will take a two month turn in the position. There is a possibility that the food services will be handled by private contract. The canteen for prisoners is also under review for private contract. Discussed zero-based budgeting which begins soon. Dale asked about a facility tour. Discussed that members can come anytime individually or as a group.

**December 5, 2011**

The Board discussed the Fire Marshal's inspection and reviewed the discrepancies and the plan to make the corrections. The committee agreed that the violations were overall minimal and were impressed with the corrective action taken to date. Clarified that the rumors regarding various agencies coming to the facility to conduct inspections are not true. Discussed that an employee met with the Governor this past weekend and she extended an invitation to tour the facility. The Governor indicated to the employee that he would put the tour on his schedule. Discussed the need to extend invitations to the Board of Corrections as well as the Criminal Justice Committee. These committees may be called upon for input from the Governor as well as legislators and first hand information will be essential. Discussed that the staffing matrix was initiated effective 12/04/2011. For example, on tonight's shift an officer called in sick. The decision had to be made about how to best utilize the officers. The option of canceling evening recreation or canceling hair cuts. Each decision must be approved by the Chief of Security or the Director. Discussed the medical contract and the fact that medical decisions are based on Medicaid standards. Discussed that geriatric services are necessary across the state and perhaps DCF could fill that niche. Members asked how and why there is a disparity in cost from one facility to another; can we compare apples to apples? Discussed that Craig Smith has located four surplus generators and he is pulling the parts together to make one good generator to be used at the sewage treatment plant. Discussed the meeting schedule for next year and moved the meeting from the first Monday of the last month in each quarter to the second Monday of the last month in each quarter. The schedule for 2012 will be as follows: March 12, 2012, June 11, 2012, September 10, 2012, and December 10, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan West, Chairperson

Rebecca Irving

Robert Peacock

Dale McGee

Donald Smith