

Sullivan County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

SCCJ Coordinating Committee

Date: February 9, 2004

Tour of Department of Corrections (DOC) / Transitional Housing Unit (THU) facility's

Members Present: Scott Hagar, Ed Gil de Rubio, Rudy Adler, Richard Anderson, Phil Wyizk, Cindy Vezina, Alex Scott, Marc Hathaway, Jan Peterson.

Members Absent: "Butch" Quentin Estey, Judge Cardello, Terra Geer, and Sherrie Curtis.

Ed Gil de Rubio began by explaining the mission of the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Transitional Housing Unit (THU).

Superintendent Scott Hagar then explained the changes and the terms of sentencing of inmates. He added that the DOC has:

- 75 In-house
- May be up to 110 in July
- 40-45 inmates
- 12 Offenders (8 in transition)

Superintendent Hagar indicated it is in a low right now but will rise.

Superintendent Hagar continued explaining the entrance and the visiting room and pointed out that the visitors sit on one side of the window and talk to inmates by phone. He also explained they used a small speaker vent to communicate through, but had to do away with that because they would pass things through the vent. Superintendent Hagar said that if there were a weakness anywhere in the facility an inmate would find it.

Superintendent Hagar was asked if inmates contribute any money to the facility. He said a small amount comes from the

- Inmates
- Social Security finders fees
- Telephone commission

They have about 60,000 for Revenue.

He also added that there are 29 employee positions; 26 are filled and 2 corrections officer positions are empty.

Superintendent Hagar continued the tour on to the Radio Room; this is where the officers store their things. Also it has a control center with closed circuit cameras, which viewed 6 images at a time. He said when this section is up-dated it would increase the viewed images to 27, so you can view the needed sections at all times.

Superintendent Hagar commenced tour to the 3-housing units and explained how they were set up:

Unit 1. Minimum sentencing

Unit 2. Medium sentencing & Pre – trial

Unit 3. Maximum Inmate separated by behavior

Unit 1 the sentenced inmates have 4, 5, or 6 bunks the dry cell has no bathroom, that area has 1 general bathroom also has 1 extra cell for separation.

Cindy Vezina asked how many does unit 1 hold?

Superintendent Hagar said 16-20.

Superintendent Hagar commented on the electrical outlets and how the inmates would tamper with them so they have to keep a close watch on this. Also, the inmates have no TV unless their area has been inspected and cleaned. He commented on the doors that have been replaced and said some will have to be replaced again.

Unit 2 Juveniles, this was a very confined space the floor tiles will be removed and the floors painted in most areas.

Tour commenced on to the Recreational area where Superintendent Hagar explained this area is gated and fenced off from unit 2.

Superintendent Hagar commenced tour on to Unit 3 west side. This is where females where held in a block unit with lock down for in and out of the unit. He explained the female population is limited there is no option of discipline for this area except to be locked in cell so there is a constant juggling of inmates if they do not get along. He also explained it was difficult for females to have work release because they are pressured for contraband from the other inmates.

Group brought back into the waiting area and then left the DOC main facility to regroup at the entrance of the Transitional Housing Unit (THU).

The THU is located on the second floor of the old nursing home. Superintendent Hagar requested entrance to the locked outer doors, by pressing a buzzer (which is hooked to main DOC facility) and was admitted. As group walked up flight of stairs to second floor, Superintendent Hagar explained that the inmates assigned here have work release and are here basically by themselves and checked on periodically through the night. Also the doors are fire safety released and would automatically open in case of fire.

Here, the group was introduced to Correctional Officers; including Sergeant Douglass Roberts; the THU Director. Superintendent handed the tour over to Officer Roberts.

Group was brought around the THU to the shower / bathroom and Officer Roberts explained that the inmates do their own laundry.

Jan Peterson asked what the inmates had for clothing. Officer Roberts said they have 4 or 5 sets of clothing.

Phil Wyzik asked about 30-day transition.

Superintendent Hagar explained the inmate serving 90 days or longer and has been well-behaved will go to THU, and then maybe to home monitoring with frequent checks.

Phil asked how electronic monitoring worked.

Officer Roberts explained the unit is set to a certain range and they have to stay in the range, and random alcohol checks are done also. The cost is about \$7.00 a week.

Jan Peterson asked what happens if they mess up. Officer Roberts said it all depends on the infraction, if it were severe enough there would be a violation of probation.

Tour commenced to the library where Officer Roberts explained this is where the inmates can write their résumés.

Tour Commenced down the hall to see the kitchenette used for group meetings.

Group was then introduced to Terry Hackett – Unit Supervisor Hackett served 4 years in the Air force and, in the past, was employed at Rutgers.

Jan Peterson asked what the inmates do on the days they do not have work release?

Officer Roberts explained that on the days they do not have work release they will have them work at the DOC or at the THU.

Tour commenced to the lounge where the inmates have downtime to relax, this room is open until 11:00 pm.

The inmates sleeping quarters – each sleeping quarter holds four beds, four bureaus, and each THU participant receives two plastic carry cases to hold things other than clothes. There is nothing on the walls. Shoes are placed at the end of bed and their clothes are all folded. The inmates work on a merit system; if they get demerits they can earn them back to the good if they clean up. Officer Roberts said they try to get them to work, be responsible and work as a group.

Scott Hagar commented on the freedom that the inmates earn. They earn more freedom but with harder penalties if they get caught. They actually sign an agreement and understand these rules.

Officer Roberts also added they are not allowed out of their room without uniform. He showed uniforms to the group. The pants are jeans with narrow white stripe down each outer leg side and the shirt is blue cotton short sleeve buttons up the boots are black.

The tour commenced down the hall to the room where they hold classes for the inmates on; life skills, financial skills, and substance abuse evaluations. They also teach life skills such as finding a place to live and completing resumes. They do allow contact visits at the THU.

The Sullivan County Criminal Justice Committee members thanked Superintendent Scott Hagar, Officer Roberts and Terry Hackett for the tour and discussions. They indicated they had seen great improvement.

The tour adjourned at approximately 1:37 pm.