

**Texas Board of Criminal Justice
235th Meeting**



Minutes

**June 14, 2024
Amarillo, Texas**

TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Trinity Fellowship Church
Student Ministry Center
5000 Hollywood Road
Amarillo, Texas 79118**

**Friday, June 14, 2024
10:45 AM – 1:30 PM**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Call to Order

Convene Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) Meeting

I. Regular Session – Student Ministry Center

A. Recognitions

B. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items

1. Hazardous Duty Pay Authorization Requests
2. Personal Property Donations
3. 234th TBCJ Meeting Minutes

C. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Amendments to Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections

1. 151.75, “Standards of Conduct for Financial Advisors and Service Providers”
2. 152.61, “Emergency Response to Law Enforcement Agencies or Departments and Non-Agent Private Prisons or Jails”
3. 163.36, “Supervision of Offenders with Mental Impairment”

D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Readoption of Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections

1. 151.77, “Purchasing and Contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses”
2. 155.21, “Naming of a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Owned Facility”
3. 163.3, “Objectives”
4. 163.5, “Waiver to Standards”
5. 163.25, “Strategic Plan”
6. 195.71, “Drug and Alcohol Testing Program”

E. Report from the Executive Director, Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)

F. Report from the Chairman, TBCJ

G. Body Worn Cameras Presentation

H. TDCJ Parole Division Spotlight

- I. Internal Audit Status Report
- J. Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman
- K. Staff Impact Presentation
- L. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Purchases and Contracts Over \$1 Million
- M. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Facilities Division Construction Projects
 - 1. Request to Replace Roofs, Stringfellow Unit, Brazoria County, Rosharon, Texas
 - 2. Request to Replace Agriculture Building #4, Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas
 - 3. Request to Replace Agriculture Building #5, Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas

Recess Texas Board of Criminal Justice Meeting

The TBCJ may discuss and/or take action on any of the items posted on this meeting agenda.

II. Executive Session – Family Room

- A. The TBCJ may convene into Executive Session.
- B. Discussion of personnel matters relating to the Board of Criminal Justice, the Executive Director, the Inspector General, the Director of the Internal Audit Division, the Director of the State Counsel for Offenders, the Director of the Office of the Independent Ombudsman, and the Prison Rape Elimination Act Ombudsman or to hear a complaint or charge against an employee (closed in accordance with Section 551.074, Government Code).
- C. Discussion regarding deployment of security personnel, devices, or security audits (closed in accordance with Section 551.076, Government Code).
- D. Discussion regarding security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology, confidential network security information, or the deployment, or specific occasions for implementation, of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices (closed in accordance with Section 551.089, Government Code).
- E. Consultation with legal counsel regarding pending or contemplated litigation or settlement offers; to receive legal advice on items posted on this agenda; or consultation on a matter where the TBCJ seeks the advice of its attorney as privileged communications under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas (closed in accordance with Section 551.071, Government Code).

Adjourn Texas Board of Criminal Justice Meeting

The TBCJ may discuss and/or take action on any of the items posted on this meeting agenda.

**MINUTES OF THE
TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Meeting No. 235**

The Texas Board of Criminal Justice convened on Friday, June 14, 2024, in regular session at 11:28 a.m. at the Trinity Fellowship Church Student Ministry Center in Amarillo, Texas, recessed in executive session at 1:58p.m., and adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

TBCJ MEMBERS PRESENT:

Eric J.R. Nichols, Chairman
Hon. Faith Johnson, Vice Chairman
Rodney Burrow, M.D., Secretary
Thomas Fordyce
Hon. Molly Francis
Ambassador Sichan Siv
Nate Sprinkle
Bill Welch
Sydney Zuiker

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF
CRIMINAL JUSTICE STAFF
PRESENT:**

Bryan Collier, Executive Director
Oscar Mendoza, Deputy Executive Director
Andrew Barbee Bobby Lumpkin
Chris Carter Mary McCaffity
Jason Clark Ron Steffa
Marvin Dunbar Rebecca Waltz
Rene Hinojosa David Yebra
Ron Hudson April Zamora
Bill Lewis

TBCJ STAFF PRESENT:

Chris Cirrito Wyvonne Martin
Jill Durst Brian Patrick
Cris Love

Convene the Texas Board of Criminal Justice

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the 235th meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ or board) on Friday, June 14, 2024, at 11:28 a.m., noted that a quorum was present, and declared the meeting open in accordance with Texas Government Code Chapter 551, the *Open Meetings Act*. He stated the TBCJ would be conducting business from the agenda posted in the *Texas Register*.

Chairman Nichols stated that the TBCJ is committed to providing the opportunity for public presentations on posted agenda topics and public comments on issues within its jurisdiction in accordance with Board Rule 151.4, "Public Presentations and Comments to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice." No registration cards were received for public comment prior to the deadline, so the board will not hear public presentations on posted agenda topics today.

Recognitions

Chairman Nichols recognized Pastor Larry D. Miles for his service on the board and stated there will be a renaming ceremony for the chapel at the Clements Unit in his honor and name. The construction of the chapel at the Clements Unit was made possible by Pastor Miles' tireless efforts and support. More than \$1 million was raised by private supporters to build the house of worship at the Clements Unit. Since 2019, that chapel has served as a place of spiritual respite and as a beacon of light for the incarcerated population. For 25 years, Pastor Miles has been a certified volunteer chaplain, ministering to staff, inmates, and those who are on parole. Pastor Miles has shown the power to uplift others and be a positive impact. This service is in addition to his commitment to the community of the Trinity Fellowship Church as an elder and a pastor. Mr. Nichols stated Pastor Miles has shown that same level of faithful commitment to the board. Pastor Miles was appointed to serve on the board for a total of nine years and elected as board secretary in June of 2020. While on the board, Pastor Miles made outstanding contributions, including offering ideas such as the establishment of the Reading is Freedom program at the Clements Unit, which developed into a collaborative partnership between the Windham School District and the TDCJ Rehabilitation and Programs Division. The program provides support of emerging readers through resident field ministers, who are members of the population assigned to a unit who are trained to serve and minister to their peers. Pastor Miles' service to the board continues today as an active member of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. Chairman Nichols recognized Pastor Miles' spouse Becky and concluded with an expression of appreciation for Pastor Miles. Pastor Miles thanked Chairman Nichols for his kind words and expressed his support for the TDCJ and ministry throughout the agency. He stated he looked forward to seeing everyone at the Clements Unit for the chapel renaming ceremony.

Chairman Nichols recognized a remarkable group of men and women who demonstrated extraordinary bravery, selflessness, and an unwavering dedication to protecting their fellow officers and staff, as well as inmates in TDCJ custody. These Actions of Valor recipients have gone above and beyond to exemplify the agency's values of integrity, courage, perseverance, and commitment. Their actions have made a significant impact within their respective units and contributed to the overall safety and well-being of their communities.

Correctional Institutions Division (CID) Director Bobby Lumpkin and Warden Kevin Smith recognized Correctional Officer Russell Epperson for his courage and swift actions during a staff assault with a weapon at the Allred Unit.

Mr. Lumpkin and Warden Adam Gonzales recognized Correctional Officer Guy Pigg from the Clements Unit for his swift and effective response to the Smokehouse Creek wildfire, utilizing his agricultural equipment to create fire breaks around the nearby residences and businesses.

Mr. Lumpkin and Regional Director L.E. Townsend recognized Correctional Officer Cody Cabler from the Roach Unit for his immediate response to an attempted escape.

Chairman Nichols expressed his and the board's gratitude for the courage and selflessness of the recipients. He stated their efforts have truly made a direct impact on the lives and safety of others, and their dedication to excellence and the safety of all citizens in the state of Texas is an inspiration.

Mr. Nichols recognized the TDCJ Crisis Response Team, which includes the Crisis Negotiation Team, specializing in de-escalation and conflict resolution, and the Tactical Response Team, which is deployed when negotiations prove ineffective. He stated this is a diverse and highly motivated team composed of officers from across the state. These men and women not only met the qualifications for this role but

actively sought it out, demonstrating commitment to keeping communities safe. In addition to regular duties, the team takes on additional responsibilities in this specialized role.

In 2022, Executive Director Bryan Collier challenged the CID and the Training and Leader Development Division (TLDD) to build a strong tactical response team to assist in de-escalation and provide a tactical response in emergency situations. Mr. Collier recognized the newly created Crisis Response Team. He stated Phase I of training began in December of 2022, and the team members have completed over 200 hours of intensive training since then. This training is focused on physical conditioning, tactical skills, extractions, and firearm proficiency to ensure the team is prepared for various high-risk scenarios. Phase II of the training is scheduled for August and will enhance the team's skills with a focus on field craft and developing techniques in movement, survival skills, navigation, observation, and reconnaissance, communication, use of terrain, evasion, and escape, tracking, planning, and the execution of weapons handling. The tactical team is operationally ready to respond to statewide situations, such as riots, disturbances, hostage rescues, and victim extractions. The team also supports unit operations with contraband interdiction, quick response training, and high-profile transports. Recently, the Crisis Response Team participated in a mock prison riot skills competition in West Virginia. The team finished 17th out of 34 participants, demonstrating operational readiness. Mr. Collier recognized Correctional Officer Matthew Rascon for completing the super squat competition in record time. He also recognized Major John Ragazincky, Sergeant Tyler Arbuckle, and Correctional Officer Jordan Bradley for placing in the Iron Operator Challenge. Additionally, there was a successful crisis negotiation event with participants Warden Amanda Simpson, Major Angela Davis, and Major Britney Wilcox. The Crisis Response Teams have shown exemplary performance and commitment to maintaining safety and security within the agency's facilities. Mr. Collier thanked the CID and TLDD for their work with the teams. Mr. Collier recognized the following crisis response team members:

State Commander, Training Specialist James McClellan from the TLDD
Crisis Negotiator, Warden Amanda Simpson from the Halbert Unit
Crisis Negotiator, Major Angela Davis from the TLDD
Crisis Negotiator, Major Britney Wilcox from the TLDD

Tactical Response Team

Assistant State Commander, Major John Ragazincky from the Wynne Unit
Team Leader, Captain Brian Sifford from the TLDD
Assistant Team Leader, Sergeant Joshua Hammons from the Wainwright Unit
Assistant Team Leader, Sergeant Eric Anderson from the TLDD
Assistant Team Leader, Sergeant Ambur Hale from the Allred Unit
Assistant Team Leader, Correctional Officer Matthew Rascon from the Travis State Jail
Team Member, Sergeant Tyler Arbuckle from the Roach Unit
Team Member, Laundry Manager, Scott Kruszewski from the Johnston Unit
Team Member, Correctional Officer Andrew Greelish from the Stiles Unit
Team Member, Correctional Officer Jordan Bradley from the Allred Unit

Mr. McClellan stated it was an honor to speak for the team and commented on the team's dedication, motivation, stamina, agility, and camaraderie.

Mr. Collier recognized Administrative Review and Risk Management Division Director Marvin Dunbar for his 35 years of service. Mr. Collier highlighted Mr. Dunbar's career which began in 1989 as a Correctional Officer at the Byrd Unit. He stated Mr. Dunbar is a focused leader whose experience combined with his commitment to oversight has helped the agency to maintain a strong system of checks

and balances within its critical operations. Chairman Nichols thanked him for his service. Mr. Dunbar thanked the agency and the board for the opportunity.

Chairman Nichols recognized the TDCJ employees who have dedicated 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 years of service to the state of Texas. He stated these individuals represent the strong commitment of this agency's staff systemwide. On behalf of the TBCJ and Mr. Collier, he expressed deepest gratitude for the continued service of these employees. During the months of May and June 2024, 60 employees attained 25 years of service, 56 employees attained 30 years of service, 12 employees attained 35 years of service, nine employees attained 40 years of service, one employee attained 45 years of service, and one employee attained 50 years of service. Chairman Nichols stated that the names of these individuals would be submitted for inclusion in the official board meeting minutes. He thanked them for their unwavering loyalty and dedication to the citizens of Texas. As a symbol of appreciation, these employees will receive a board certificate along with a personal letter of gratitude.

(Attachment A – Employee Names)

Consideration of Approval of Consent Items

- 1. Hazardous Duty Pay Authorization Requests**
- 2. Personal Property Donations**
- 3. 234th TBCJ Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any amendments, abstentions, or objections to the proposed consent items. Hearing none, the consent items were approved.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Amendments to Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections

151.75, “Standards of Conduct for Financial Advisors and Service Providers”

Deputy General Counsel Eric Miller presented Board Rule 151.75, “Standards of Conduct for Financial Advisors and Service Providers,” with proposed amendments that add language to specify the disclosure of a relationship or pecuniary interest by a financial advisor or service provider along with additional minor word changes and grammatical updates. The rule will be posted in the *Texas Register* and available for public comment.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Ambassador Sichan Siv moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve for publication in the Texas Register the proposed amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 151.75, “Standards of Conduct for Financial Advisors and Service Providers,” to receive public comment as presented.

Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

152.61, “Emergency Response to Law Enforcement Agencies or Departments and Non-Agent Private Prisons or Jails”

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 152.61, “Emergency Response to Law Enforcement Agencies or Departments and Non-Agent Private Prisons or Jails,” with proposed amendments that revise the word “rule” to “section” and “offender” to “inmate” with no other substantive changes. The rule will be posted in the *Texas Register* and available for public comment.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Judge Molly Francis moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve for publication in the Texas Register the proposed amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 152.61, “Emergency Response to Law Enforcement Agencies or Departments and Non-Agent Private Prisons or Jails,” to receive public comment as presented.

Judge Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

163.36, “Supervision of Offenders with Mental Impairment”

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 163.36, “Supervision of Offenders with Mental Impairment,” with a proposed amendment that revises the spelling of the word “judgement” to “judgment.” The rule will be posted in the *Texas Register* and available for public comment.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Dr. Rodney Burrow moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve for publication in the Texas Register the proposed amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.36, “Supervision of Offenders with Mental Impairment,” to receive public comment as presented.

Sydney Zuiker seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Readoption of Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections

151.77, “Purchasing and Contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses”

Deputy General Counsel Eric Miller presented Board Rule 151.77, “Purchasing and Contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses,” for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Thomas Fordyce moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 151.77, "Purchasing and Contracting with Historically Underutilized Businesses," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Bill Welch seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

155.21, "Naming of a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Owned Facility"

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 155.21, "Naming of a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Owned Facility," for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Sydney Zuiker moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 155.21, "Naming of a Texas Department of Criminal Justice Owned Facility," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

163.3, "Objectives"

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 163.3, "Objectives," for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Bill Welch moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.3, "Objectives," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Judge Molly Francis seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

163.5, "Waiver to Standards"

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 163.5, "Waiver to Standards," for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Pastor Nate Sprinkle moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.5, "Waiver to Standards," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Judge Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

163.25, "Strategic Plan"

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 163.25, "Strategic Plan," for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Judge Faith Johnson moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.25, "Strategic Plan," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Judge Molly Francis seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

195.71, "Drug and Alcohol Testing Program"

Mr. Miller presented Board Rule 195.71, "Drug and Alcohol Testing Program," for readoption with no changes. Notice of this rule review was published in the April 19, 2024, issue of the *Texas Register*. No public comments were received.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Judge Molly Francis moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice readopt Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 195.71, "Drug and Alcohol Testing Program," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.

Judge Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Report from the Executive Director, **Texas Department of Criminal Justice**

Executive Director Bryan Collier provided an update on air conditioning and excessive heat along with the Legislative Appropriations Request process for the agency.

Air Conditioning and Excessive Heat

Mr. Collier discussed the Texas heat and stated the agency is working through a variety of air conditioning projects including installing air conditioning on all transportation busses. He stated the agency now has

over 45,000 air-conditioned beds in the system. The agency is currently adding air-conditioning to almost 2,000 beds and has over 11,000 beds under design for air-conditioning installation next year. When these projects are complete, the agency will have almost 60,000 air-conditioned beds in the system. In addition to the steps the agency is taking to improve its air-conditioning footprint, the agency is also taking a multitude of steps to help ensure that staff and inmates remain safe during times of temperature extremes.

The agency operates under the guidelines of Administrative Directive AD-10.64, “Excessive and Extreme Temperatures in the TDCJ.” This directive provides guidance to the agency on a variety of topics including temperature monitoring protocols; excessive heat conditions and steps to be taken by the Office of Emergency Management, division directors, and wardens to reduce the risk to inmates and staff during times of excessive heat; precautionary measures such as respite areas, wellness checks, additional showers, relaxed clothing requirements in housing areas, regular provision of water and ice in housing areas, and the distribution and use of fans; and direction for the management of inmates who have a heat sensitivity score determined by the agency’s medical partners. Inmates with a heat score are housed in air-conditioned areas. The directive also includes emergency treatment protocols; instructions on staff training provided at pre-service, in-service, and at the unit; and training for the inmate population. In addition to the directive, the agency takes additional steps to include having the unit risk managers monitor unit protocols and the deployment of strike teams who make unannounced visits to units to ensure compliance with the agency’s policies and procedures. While this is not an exhaustive list of all the agency does to keep staff and inmates safe during hot temperatures, Mr. Collier emphasized that the agency takes these protocols seriously and remains focused during the summer months on keeping staff and inmates safe during the Texas summer heat.

Legislative Appropriations Request

Mr. Collier discussed the agency’s Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR) process. He stated the agency is developing the LAR for the upcoming 89th Texas Legislature which will begin in 2025. As the agency goes through this process, the agency’s needs are reviewed with division directors and board reports as plans are made for the next biennium. A key component of the process is to ensure that the agency has enough prison capacity for the projected demand over the next biennium. The agency will also be monitoring the population projections for probation and parole to ensure those needs are met. The funding success last session has helped to move the agency in a positive direction with significant funding provided for facilities infrastructure, enhancements to the agency’s technology footprint, security enhancements, and well-deserved pay increases for staff.

As the request for the next legislative session is developed, the agency again looks to move forward with a variety of initiatives to help the workforce and the populations it serves be even more successful. Mr. Collier expressed his excitement about the opportunities that are on the horizon with a solid statewide financial outlook and the sunset process that offers an opportunity for positive system change. He looks forward to presenting the LAR to the board in the near future.

Report from the Chairman, TBCJ

Chairman Nichols recognized a rehabilitative and vocational program in the Clements Unit Shoe Factory. Established in 1990, this factory focuses on rehabilitation by equipping inmates with job skills in shoe making. Participants in the program learn essential techniques like cutting, stitching, and assembling shoes. Participants learn how to produce a variety of footwear, such as canvas and rubber shoes while also learning how to produce other personal items, such as blankets and thrust vests that are worn by Correctional Officers. The factory produces an impressive 268,000 pairs of shoes annually. This program

is part of Texas Correctional Industries (TCI), a department within the TDCJ's Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division (MAL). TCI offers work programs and manufactures goods and services sold to government agencies and educational institutions. The MAL division reports through the recidivism program that inmates assigned to MAL jobs prior to release, such as those who work in the shoe factory at the Clements Unit, have a recidivism rate of approximately 8% which is lower than the recidivism rate associated with the population at large. Leading the helm at the shoe factory are two valuable TDCJ and TCI employees who are vital to the factory's operations and inmate success.

Mr. Nichols introduced Shoe Factory Manager Gilbert Rodriguez to share his experience. Mr. Rodriguez has dedicated 13 years to the TDCJ and TCI. Mr. Nichols stated Mr. Rodriguez has excelled as manager for his incredible knack for empowering teams and that his leadership extends beyond the title as a lifestyle choice. His dedication to fostering empathy and integrity in both staff and inmates makes him an effective leader. Beyond his managerial duties, he actively contributes to the Unit Classification Committee and support valuable programs, such as Peer Education and the Prison Fellowship Academy. Mr. Nichols also introduced Assistant Manager Jacob Meroney. As a former Correctional Officer, Mr. Meroney began his career with the TDCJ in 2015. Over the years, he has demonstrated a remarkable dedication to both production and staff development. His leadership style emphasizes recognition, motivation, and commitment. He sets clear goals and works collaboratively with his team to achieve those goals while also providing positive reinforcement. He believes that the largest motivator is showing appreciation and respect for staff and inmates who are participating in the program.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked the agency, the board, and TCI leadership for the factory's success. He stated the factory's mission is to equip and empower inmates with practical skills to find good jobs upon release. The factory aims to develop a strong work ethic needed to be successful in the workforce and life. The factory is well-equipped to provide inmates with hands-on experience with a variety of machinery, including injection machines, clicker presses, and a variety of sewing machines. The inmates can learn how to operate and maintain complex machinery and can earn a forklift certification. These skills are highly sought after by employers in the manufacturing industry.

Mr. Meroney stated not every participant comes to the factory with the same level of experience which is why the factory provides individualized training to all inmates. The agency makes every effort to provide incarcerated individuals with opportunities that will prepare them for employment upon release through the combined efforts of on-the-job training, documented work experience, and certification opportunity. Mr. Meroney showed a video of the shoe factory inmates sharing their experience. By offering the inmates the opportunity to gain skills and experience, the shoe factory is making a difference in inmates' lives and increasing the chance of success upon release. Mr. Meroney expressed his pride in contributing to inmates' development. Chairman Nichols expressed his appreciation for the presentation. Ambassador Siv asked who designed the shoes. Mr. Rodriguez stated the factory uses a standard design, but new molds have been received to imprint TDCJ on the bottom of the shoe. Pastor Sprinkle asked who the consumers for the shoes are. Mr. Rodriguez stated the inmates are the consumers. Pastor Sprinkle asked how many inmates currently work in the shoe factory. Mr. Rodriguez stated the factory has 255 inmates currently.

Body Worn Cameras Presentation

CID Director Bobby Lumpkin presented information on body-worn cameras for the correctional staff awarded by contract at the April board meeting. The 88th Legislative session appropriated \$23.9 million, and the agency contracted for \$21.7 million. The CID, Information Technology Division (ITD), and

Business and Finance Division (BFD) worked with the vendor, Axon, to rollout approximately 13,000 body-worn cameras at 23 facilities across the state, which is more than the Chicago Police Department.

The first facility, the Polunsky Unit, received body-worn cameras on June 8th. The initial rollout was to all supervisors and now all uniformed staff and unit administration are wearing a body-worn camera. The use of the body-worn camera has already demonstrated positive de-escalation events as well as a full video capture of incidents. The full rollout of the program will take approximately one year which requires coordination between the ITD, Facilities Division, and vendor. AT&T and other providers are conducting site walks of the remaining 22 facilities, and the agency will have a report soon. The next three facilities to receive body-worn cameras will be the Robertson, Skyview, and Scott units. Currently, it takes approximately 60 days to initiate a program. The body-worn camera in a correctional environment is a multi-layered benefit for the agency, the state of Texas, and for staff and inmates. It provides an objective record of incidents which promotes a sense of fairness and transparency. It is used as a de-escalation tool in defusing confrontational or potential confrontational situations. It helps streamline investigations by capturing clear and concise evidence regarding alleged incidents and actual incidents.

Mr. Lumpkin presented photos and an overview of the Axon Body 4 camera features, discussing the differences in clarity between event mode and duty mode recordings. Event mode creates a bookmark for the incident being recorded and has a higher resolution recording. The employee will use an ID card to scan and check out a body-worn camera, which automatically assigns the camera to that employee, a useful feature during investigations. Mr. Lumpkin stated duty mode recordings will be retained for 90 days, which means grievance or ombudsman investigations can review footage up to 90 days for any allegations. Event mode recordings, such as a de-escalation attempt, will be retained indefinitely. The display on the top of the camera will allow the employee to categorize the event mode recording at the time of the incident. Mr. Lumpkin showed video footage of a body-worn camera in use. At the end of a shift, the camera is placed on a docking station to charge and upload footage to the evidence management system. Mr. Lumpkin stated Texas is the only state to use the body-worn camera during the entire shift. He stated the body-worn cameras create transparency for the agency as it shows the interactions between staff and inmates. He stated information will be released on social media and inmate tablets to spread the word that body-worn cameras will be used.

Chairman Nichols asked how the deployment of body-worn cameras has been received by correctional staff at the Polunsky Unit. Mr. Lumpkin stated it has been well-received by correctional staff as it shows what type of interactions occur and holds correctional staff to a more professional standard. Mr. Nichols asked if there will be a way to determine the impact on the population. Mr. Lumpkin stated the agency will track metrics such as use of force incidents or injuries. Ambassador Siv asked if the battery life is affected by the hot or cold weather. Mr. Lumpkin stated it lasts as advertised, which is 13 hours. He stated select correctional staff will be responsible for monitoring if the body-worn camera is not performing as it should. Judge Johnson asked if the use of the body-worn camera will still be effective in the dark. Mr. Lumpkin stated it would depend on the lighting of the area. Judge Johnson asked if there are consequences for correctional staff who turn off the camera while on duty. Mr. Lumpkin stated the camera can be put in sleep mode during certain times, such as a restroom break or strip search. He stated the camera will alarm the employee if the camera stays in sleep mode for more than 15 minutes. He also stated the camera has a red or green light which will allow a supervisor to recognize if the camera is on. Judge Johnson asked if there would be training for staff. Mr. Lumpkin confirmed. Ms. Zuiker asked if each employee is issued a specific camera. Mr. Lumpkin stated some will have a unique camera assigned but not all. Mr. Collier thanked all of the divisions responsible for working to get the program started. Chairman Nichols thanked him for the presentation.

TDCJ Parole Division Spotlight

Parole Division Director Rene Hinojosa introduced Parole Officer Amber Arguello who began her career with the agency in October 2017 at the Lubbock District Parole Office. She currently supervises the administrative caseload and has also overseen the sex offender caseload, special needs caseload, and regular caseload. She communicates professionally with clients to ensure the expectations of the agency are known and adhered to. Ms. Arguello thanked the agency and the board for the opportunity to highlight her clients. She chose to work in parole to make a meaningful impact on public safety and the lives of her clients. She stated the administrative caseload identifies clients with a lower risk of reoffending based off the client's offense, risk level, and overall compliance with the parole stipulation. It provides the client opportunities to report to a Parole Officer virtually, reducing time and travel to focus on rehabilitation. The success of virtual visits enhances family and social connections which contributes to effective supervision. She introduced client Daniel Whitley as a good example. Mr. Whitley has been on parole since 2013 and started a job at the Ranch at Dove Tree as a program manager for an outpatient sober living facility. In the spring of 2022, Mr. Whitley enrolled at Texas Tech University to study counselling and recovery science. He is also part of multiple organizations on campus and will be a Junior this year with a 4.0 GPA.

Mr. Whitley expressed his honor at attending the meeting. He stated the support and accountability of parole allowed him to accomplish many achievements. He thanked his family, Parole Division staff, and Windham School District staff who encouraged him along his journey. He stated he is now on minimal supervision which still holds him accountable and provides resources. He has five years of consistent sobriety and is in a healthy relationship. He has recently purchased a new home with his partner and has three kids. Chairman Nichols asked for his family in attendance to be recognized. He spoke about his education and stated he was working toward a degree in human sciences for Counselling and Addiction Recovery Sciences. He is a member of the Association of Students Acting in Service and Providing the Outside World with Empowerment and Resources. This has allowed him to connect with incarcerated individuals in jails, treatment centers, and TDCJ units, and individuals currently on probation or parole. He encourages those individuals to make a positive change by sharing his experience including his current achievements. He has been working in the recovery field for over three years and is currently employed by the Aspire and Fire Sky inpatient facility in Lubbock. After graduation, he will become a licensed counselor. He thanked the board for acknowledging his rehabilitation efforts. Chairman Nichols thanked him for sharing his story and stated the role of Ms. Arguello and other parole officers are instrumental to the rehabilitation of clients.

Internal Audit Status Report

Chris Cirrito, Internal Audit Director, presented updates to the Internal Audit Status Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023:

- **2302 – Parole Division Culture:** Project is in fieldwork.
- **2309 – Investigation of Sexual Assault Allegations:** Project is a revised draft report.

Mr. Cirrito continued with updates to the Internal Audit Status Report for FY 2024:

- One consultation is ongoing.
 - **2401 – Correctional Information Technology System**

- Eight full scope projects:
 - Three are complete.
 - **2403** – *Commissary Operations Supply Chain*
 - **2405** – *Correctional Officer Hiring*
 - **2407** – *Public Funds Investment*
 - Three are in reporting.
 - **2402** – *Mental Health Assessments*
 - **2404** – *Travel Services*
 - **2406** – *Office of Independent Ombudsman Investigations*
 - One is not yet assigned.
 - **2409** – *Incident Reporting*
 - One has been postponed.
 - **2408** – *Inmate Identification Documents*
- **2411 – Emerging Risks:** *Classification and Records State Ready* is ongoing and concerns the 45-day duty to accept. *OIG Assistance – Contractor Issue* is ongoing.
- **2412 – Walkthroughs:** *Artificial Intelligence Readiness* is ongoing.
- **2413 – Follow Up and Action Plan Taking:** *Pre-release Placement Investigations* is ongoing and *Rehabilitation Tier Tracking and Placement* is complete.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Cirrito for the status report.

(Attachment B – Internal Audit Division Status Report)

Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman

Independent Ombudsman Brian Patrick presented a report on the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO), encompassing the months of March 15th through May 15th of 2024. The OIO received 838 inquiries during this time period that required substantive work.

The OIO responded to 806 inquiries from the general public or an inmate and 32 elected official inquiries. The three most common inquiries received were related to life and safety; facility issues, which may involve maintenance or food service concerns; and medical issues. He stated the OIO does not investigate medical inquiries due to privacy laws but does refer them to the TDCJ Health Services Division and maintains documentation of those inquiries.

Chairman Nichols asked if the OIO is still able to conduct investigations within the units when necessary. Mr. Patrick confirmed and stated the OIO has even conducted unannounced investigations without any significant issues. Chairman Nichols thanked him for his presentation.

Staff Impact Presentation

Deputy Executive Director Oscar Mendoza presented information on the Staff Impact Team concerning how it started, how it has evolved, and where it is going. Serious Incident Reviews (SIRs) take an in-depth look at serious incidents to uncover potential findings and operational observations and provide a detailed report for executive leadership of any potential corrective action that may be necessary. SIRs were reassigned from the Correctional Institutions Division to Executive Administration. Team composition

went to a multi-disciplinary approach which allowed the agency to take tenured and experienced staff from various divisions to contribute to the SIR process. Feedback from SIR team members revealed a concerning impact on the wellbeing of staff as staff often struggle to process incidents. This led to the development of a volunteer-driven initiative, known as the Staff Impact Team. Initial team members consisted of deputy division directors who were trained and equipped by the Victim Services Division (VSD) on how to effectively interact with staff who have been impacted by critical incidents. Staff Impact Team members received training on critical incidents, traumatic situations, crisis intervention, and scenario-based training.

As trust was developed in the field, employees were appreciative of the interaction. Additionally, team members embraced the concept and openly shared with agency leadership how fulfilling it was to assist staff impacted by critical incidents. Those deputy division directors on the Staff Impact Team often promoted to division directors and requested to continue participating. In Fiscal Year 2023, there were 69 staff impact deployments, serving 649 staff. For Fiscal Year 2024, there have been 43 staff impact deployments so far, serving 401 staff. The agency continues to provide essential support to staff focusing on the individual, not just the incident. The agency will be expanding the Staff Impact Team with additional volunteers who express a desire to participate in this fulfilling initiative. The agency currently has 43 volunteers and is working on finalizing training for those individuals. Mr. Mendoza introduced Administrative Review and Risk Management (ARRM) Deputy Division Director Leonard Echessa, Crisis Response Intervention Support Program (CRISP) Coordinator Linda Gonzales from the VSD, Facilities Division Director Ron Hudson, and MAL Division Director Bill Lewis to share their Staff Impact Team experiences.

Mr. Echessa stated the Staff Impact Team is simply service to the employees in the field. It is filled with compassion, empathy, and no judgment. He accepted this position because of his experience in the field for 26 years, which began as a Correctional Officer. He experienced serious incidents during his career but did not have the resources available now, such as the team. He stated he had burdens from his time in corrections that were never released and the ability to serve on this team gives him satisfaction because he is able to give back to people who helped him.

Ms. Gonzales stated it is a privilege and honor to work for the agency's staff, as they are the backbone of the agency. She expressed how open and communicative the staff are with the team. She stated the team provides resources to staff and validates their experience. She emphasized the team's commitment to confidentiality. She stated working on the team is a healing process for herself and has helped her give back to the agency.

Mr. Hudson stated, in the initial request for volunteers, so many deputy division directors knew what this team would mean to staff and readily volunteered. He stated being able to give back to the employees on the frontline and on the unit, including educational and medical staff, is the most rewarding experience. He also emphasized the confidentiality aspect of his experience on the team. He asked to remain on the team when he promoted to division director as the experience allowed him to give back to the staff and the agency.

Mr. Lewis stated Mr. Collier challenged the deputy division directors which led to the creation of the team. He stated the prison environment is challenging and discussed the perception of weakness for staff who express difficulties with it. He stated these difficulties are brought home to family if not dealt with appropriately. He described the correctional officer as a thankless job without an avenue to process and recover. He spoke about the connections that were fostered from his participation on the team and how those connections helped him when he experienced a loss in his family. He stated serving the staff on this team is the way to achieve the 2030 plan of becoming the best employer.

With the full support and encouragement of Mr. Collier, the TDCJ remains committed to recognizing the importance of staff wellbeing, especially after experiencing a critical incident. As a result, the Staff Impact Team will continue to serve employees affected by these events.

Chairman Nichols stated these types of peer support initiatives are mission critical for providing support for staff who work in difficult conditions and thanked him for his presentation. Mr. Collier thanked Mr. Mendoza for his leadership and discussed the difference the Staff Impact Team has made for the agency's culture.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action **Regarding Purchases and Contracts Over \$1 Million**

Chairman Nichols abstained from taking action on this agenda item due to his firm representing entities listed. Bill Welch abstained from taking action on this agenda item due to being a shareholder in an entity listed.

Ron Steffa, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the purchases and contracts over \$1 million. Mr. Steffa stated there will be twenty-three items brought for the board's consideration and approval. Item one is an increase to FY 2022-2023 Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments contract for case management and continuity of care services due to increased expenditures. Items two through ten are increases to FY 2023-2026 contracts for design professional services that provide architectural and design services for the agency's major repair projects. These increases are to accommodate funding the agency received for those major repair projects. Item eleven is for FY 2025 purchases of bulk fuel used at the agency's fuel depots. The agency is requesting a 10% variance on these items to accommodate any fluctuations in pricing or usage. Item twelve is the FY 2025 purchase of soybean meal to produce livestock feed. Item thirteen is the FY 2025 purchase of micro prismatic reflective sheeting for the manufacturing of highway signs. Item fourteen is the FY 2025 purchase of aluminum sign blanks for the manufacturing of highway signs. Item fifteen is the FY 2025 purchase of cloth blend greige sheeting for the manufacturing of inmate sheets, pillowcases, and clothing. Item sixteen is the FY 2025 contract for AT&T cellular telephone equipment and service. Items seventeen and eighteen are procurements for additional contraband detection equipment consistent with the funding provided last legislative session. Item seventeen is the FY 2024-2025 contract for security millimeter wave scanners. If approved, this contract would be awarded to LINEV Systems US, Inc. Item eighteen is the FY 2024-2025 contract for x-ray security scanners. If approved, this contract would be awarded to OD Security North America LLC. Item nineteen is the FY 2025 contract for the purpose of FedEx delivery services. Item twenty is the FY 2025 purchase of commissary items for sale in unit commissaries. An itemization for each category is provided for informational purposes. The agency is requesting a 10% variance on this item to accommodate any fluctuations in usage or prices. Item twenty-one is the FY 2025 purchase of food items for inmate meals. An itemization for each category is provided for informational purposes. The agency is requesting a 10% variance on this item to accommodate any fluctuations in usage or prices. Item twenty-two is the FY 2025 contract for the purchase of green beans for use by the Terrell Unit cannery. Item twenty-three is the FY 2025 contract for feed supplement for agency livestock.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Judge Molly Francis moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve the purchases and contracts over \$1 million as presented.

Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action **Regarding Facilities Division Construction Projects**

Request to Replace Roofs, Stringfellow Unit, Brazoria County, Rosharon, Texas

Facilities Division Director Ron Hudson presented a new project for consideration to replace multiple roofing systems at the Stringfellow Unit as briefed during the Business and Financial Operations Committee Meeting. The total estimated program cost is \$3,673,400.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Ambassador Sichan Siv moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve the request to replace roofs at the Stringfellow Unit, Brazoria County, Rosharon, Texas, as presented.

Pastor Nate Sprinkle seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Request to Replace Agriculture Building #4, Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas

Mr. Hudson presented a new project for consideration to replace agriculture building #4 at the Wainwright Unit as briefed during the Business and Financial Operations Committee Meeting. The total estimated program cost is \$3,806,000.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Pastor Nate Sprinkle moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve the request to replace Agriculture Building #4 at the Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas, as presented.

Dr. Rodney Burrow seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Request to Replace Agriculture Building #5, Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas

Mr. Hudson presented a new project for consideration to replace agriculture building #5 at the Wainwright Unit as briefed during the Business and Financial Operations Committee Meeting. The total estimated program cost is \$3,806,000.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second.

Sydney Zuiker moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice approve the request to replace Agriculture Building #5 at the Wainwright Unit, Houston County, Lovelady, Texas, as presented.

Judge Faith Johnson seconded the motion, which unanimously passed when called to a vote.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Nichols thanked everyone for attending the meeting and announced that the next meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice will be Friday, August 23, 2024, in El Paso, Texas, and adjourned the 235th meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice at 3:34 p.m.

Chairman*

Secretary*