

**Texas Board of Criminal Justice  
238th Meeting**



**Minutes**

**December 12-13, 2024  
Huntsville, Texas**

---

## TEXAS BOARD OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**Texas Prison Museum  
491 Highway 75 N  
Huntsville, Texas 77320**

**Thursday – Friday**

**December 12, 2024**

**2:30 – 4:30 PM**

**December 13, 2024**

**9:15 AM – 12:00 PM**

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

---

*Call to Order – Thursday, December 12, 2024*

*Convene Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ) Meeting – Recess to Executive Session*

I. Executive Session – H.E.A.R.T.S. Veterans Museum

- 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 Office of the Independent Auditor, 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).

*Recess Texas Board of Criminal Justice Meeting*

II. Regular Session – Texas Prison Museum

- A. Recognitions
- B. Consideration of Approval of Consent Items
  - 1. Hazardous Duty Pay Authorization Requests
  - 2. Personal Property Donations
  - 3. 237th TBCJ Meeting Minutes
- C. Report from the Presiding Officer, Judicial Advisory Council
- D. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Amendments to Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections
  - 1. 159.1, “Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities Eligibility Criteria”
  - 2. 163.21, “Administration”
  - 3. 163.33, “Community Supervision Staff”
  - 4. 163.35, “Supervision”
  - 5. 163.41, “Medical and Psychological Information”
- E. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Adoption of Amendments to Board Rules Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections
  - 1. 152.1, “Correctional Institutions Division”
  - 2. 152.21-.27, “Correctional Capacity”
  - 3. 163.31, “Sanctions, Programs, and Services”
  - 4. 163.37, “Reports and Records”
- F. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Revisions to Board Policy BP – 01.09, “Internal Audit Policy Statement”
- G. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Revisions to Personnel Directives
  - 1. PD-21, “Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in the Workplace”
  - 2. PD-22, “General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees”
- H. Report from the Chairman, TBCJ
- I. Report from the Executive Director, Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)
- J. Report from the Agricultural Advisory Committee
- K. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Purchases and Contracts Over \$1 Million
- L. Internal Audit Status Report
- M. Report from the Office of the Inspector General
- N. Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman

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

- O. Report from the State Counsel for Offenders
- P. Report from the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman
- Q. TDCJ Parole Division Spotlight
- R. Facilities Division Infrastructure Projects Overview
- S. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Facilities Division Construction Projects
  - 1. Request to Renovate Icehouse, Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas
  - 2. Request to Install HVAC – ISF, Goodman Unit, Jasper County, Jasper, Texas
- T. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Land Transactions
  - 1. Request for a Drainage Easement, Segovia Unit, Hidalgo County, Edinburg, Texas
  - 2. Request for a New/Extension of Electric Power Substation and Power Lines, Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas
- U. Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding the Selection of the Inspector General

*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. 238**

The Texas Board of Criminal Justice convened on Thursday, December 12, 2024, in regular session at 2:53 p.m. at the Texas Prison Museum in Huntsville, Texas, recessed in executive session at 2:53 p.m., reconvened in regular session on Friday, December 13, 2024, at 9:19 a.m., and adjourned at 12:35 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  
Pastor Nate Sprinkle  
General Bill Welch  
Sydney Zuiker

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

Bryan Collier, Executive Director  
Jason Clark, Chief Programs Officer  
Bobby Lumpkin, Chief Operations Officer  
Ron Steffa, Chief Financial Officer  
Richard Babcock                      Rene Hinojosa  
Andrew Barbee                         Ron Hudson  
Kate Blifford                             Bill Lewis  
Chris Carter                               Mary McCaffity  
Tina Clark                                 Angie McCown  
Marvin Dunbar                          Rebecca Waltz  
Jennifer Gonzales                       Rachelle White  
Carey Green                               April Zamora  
Stephanie Greger

**TBCJ STAFF PRESENT:**

Chris Cirrito                               Cris Love  
Lance Coleman                          Cassandra McGilbra  
Jill Durst                                   Brian Patrick

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Marsha Moberley, Board of Pardons and Paroles  
Tim McDonald, Board of Pardons and Paroles

**Convene the Texas Board of Criminal Justice**

Chairman Eric J.R. Nichols convened the 238th meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ or board) on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 2:53 p.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 recessed to executive session at 2:53 p.m. and reconvened in regular session on Friday, December 13, 2024, at 9:19 a.m.

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.

## Recognitions

Chairman Nichols recognized Consul General Valérie Baraban of the French Consulate in Houston. On November 19th, the French Consulate joined Ambassador Siv and Chief Programs Officer Jason Clark for a tour that highlighted TDCJ's commitment to public safety, rehabilitation, and innovation, which began with a visit to the George Bush Presidential Museum in College Station, demonstrating mutual interest in effective leadership and diplomacy. The delegation toured the Luther Unit in Navasota where Mr. Clark presented on TDCJ missions and initiatives. Following this, Luther Unit Warden Deborah Booker and her staff provided a tour of the facility including a tour of the exceptional work being done in the education and food service departments and in vocational CTE training areas including the Stainless-Steel Plant. During this tour, the group had the opportunity to meet one of the life coaches.

Mr. Nichols stated life coaches are women and men from the TDCJ population who have stepped forward to engage in life coach training that benefits both them and their peers. The life coach shared with the group his inspiring journey and what led him to this meaningful role and the work he does in the system to guide and empower fellow inmates. Mr. Nichols expressed gratitude to Ms. Baraban and her team for taking the time to engage with the TDCJ and fostering an opportunity to exchange ideas and build connections between the organizations. Ms. Baraban thanked Mr. Nichols for the kind words and expressed her gratitude to the agency and all the people who were instrumental in the visit, in particular Ambassador Siv. She stated it was interesting to gain insight into what the agency is doing and how it works. She stated the Consulate will always be an available partner to engage in discussion.

Chairman Nichols recognized Ambassador Sichan Siv as a dedicated member of the board and Board of Trustees for the Windham School District and stated his contributions to public service extend far beyond that. Ambassador Siv also serves in the Civil Air Patrol, the civilian auxiliary of the United States Air Force, where he holds the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Ambassador Siv had the honor of participating in an extraordinary flight that marked a historic moment in aviation, and Mr. Nichols invited Ambassador Siv to share his experience.

Ambassador Siv recalled the tragic events of 9/11 and stated that only one plane was still in the skies after the attack, which belonged to the Civil Air Patrol. That plane was sent to Ground Zero to take high-resolution pictures of the remains of the World Trade Center after the terrorist attack and now resides in Dayton, Ohio, at the National Air Force Museum. Ambassador Siv stated he had the privilege to fly that plane in honor of President George H.W. Bush and the 80th anniversary of his last mission as a pilot. He recalled feeling emotional while landing in New Haven, the place where he arrived as a refugee in 1976. He presented the board with a collection of mementos. Chairman Nichols expressed appreciation for Ambassador Siv's continued efforts to ensure that that terrible day in the nation's history is never forgotten nor are those who perished and the families of those who were left behind.

Chairman Nichols recognized the TDCJ employees who have dedicated 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 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 November and December 2024, 48 employees attained 25 years of service, 43 employees attained 30 years of service, 19 employees attained 35 years of service, eight employees attained 40 years of service, and one employee attained 45 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)*

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. Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division Director Bill Lewis recognized Correctional Officer Aaron Cottrell and Correctional Officer Chinedu Ezenwa for their immediate and effective response to a transportation bus fire. Chairman Nichols expressed his and the board's gratitude for the integrity and selflessness of the recipients. He stated their efforts exemplify the highest standards of conduct, and their dedication to the safety of all citizens in the state of Texas is appreciated.

Executive Director Bryan Collier recognized Chief Financial Officer Ron Steffa for his new role after the recent restructuring of the agency. He highlighted Mr. Steffa's career which began in 1992 as an administrative technician in the Human Resources Division. He described Mr. Steffa as an accomplished leader who is highly respected within the agency. Mr. Steffa stated it has been an honor and privilege to serve the agency, and he looks forward to the opportunities that the reorganization brings to better position the agency for the future.

Mr. Collier recognized Chief Operations Officer Bobby Lumpkin for his recent promotion. He highlighted Mr. Lumpkin's career which began in 1990 as a correctional officer at the Diagnostic Unit, now known as the Byrd Unit. He stated Mr. Lumpkin's operational experience and proven leadership will continue to serve the agency. Mr. Lumpkin stated it is an honor to continue to serve the agency.

Mr. Collier recognized Chief Programs Officer Jason Clark for his recent promotion. He highlighted Mr. Clark's career which began in 2006 as a public information officer. He stated Mr. Clark has proven to be an innovative self-starter, and his strong agency knowledge will serve him well in his new role. Mr. Clark stated he is excited and humbled to serve in his new role, and his intention is to be as impactful as possible for agency staff, victims of crime, and the population.

Mr. Collier recognized Business and Finance Division Director Jennifer Gonzales for her recent promotion. He highlighted her career which began in 2001 as a purchaser. He stated she is a focused leader, and her experience with the Business and Finance field will serve her well. She expressed her appreciation for the opportunity and her excitement at collaborating with other divisions to work toward the agency mission.

Mr. Collier recognized Classification and Transportation Division Director Richard Babcock for his recent promotion. He highlighted his career which began in 1997 as a correctional officer at the Darrington Unit, now known as the Memorial Unit. He stated Mr. Babcock will bring a wealth of experience and creativity

to his new role. Mr. Babcock stated he is looking forward to building a place where all divisions and stakeholders collaborate to move forward.

Mr. Collier recognized Chief of Staff Rachelle White for her recent promotion. He highlighted her TDCJ career which began in 2021 as the director of Legal Affairs. He stated she is a solid, proven leader with a diverse background that will serve the agency well. Ms. White stated it is an honor to serve as the chief of staff, and she looks forward to advancing the mission through teamwork with staff and leadership.

Chaplaincy and Volunteer Services Division (CVSD) Director Chris Carter recognized CVSD Deputy Division Director Ruby Davis for her recent promotion. He highlighted her career which began as a correctional officer at the Estelle Unit. He stated her vast experience, education, and passion for helping others will serve her greatly in her new role. Mr. Nichols stated the CVSD is mission-critical for the board and thanked Ms. Davis for the important work she does. Ms. Davis expressed her excitement and honor for the opportunity and stated she looks forward to serving agency staff, volunteers, and the population.

Chairman Nichols recognized Inspector General Cris Love for his service to the state and his impending retirement. He highlighted Mr. Love's career which began in 1979 as a state trooper with the Texas Department of Public Safety. He recognized Mr. Love for his professionalism, integrity, and commitment to justice. Mr. Love expressed his honor to serve the agency and the Office of the Inspector General staff. Chairman Nichols read a Resolution of Commendation detailing Mr. Love's contributions during his 45 years of service to the state of Texas and presented him with a Proclamation signed by Governor Abbott.

### **Consideration of Approval of Consent Items**

- 1. Hazardous Duty Pay Authorization Requests**
- 2. Personal Property Donations**
- 3. 237th 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.

### **Report from the Presiding Officer, Judicial Advisory Council**

Chairman Nichols stated that due to the unexpected absence of the designee for the Judiciary Advisory Council, there will not be a report from the Judiciary Advisory Council.

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

#### **159.1, "Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities Eligibility Criteria"**

General Counsel Stephanie Greger presented Board Rule 159.1, "Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities Eligibility Criteria," with proposed amendments that revise the title of the *Substance Abuse Treatment Operations Manual* to the *Substance Use Treatment Operations Manual* to reflect current

terminology, remove the reference to the *CJAD/SAFPF Procedure Manual*, revise language in section (b) to align with current verbiage, and clarify eligibility requirements in section (d). Grammatical and formatting updates were also made. 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 159.1, "Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facilities Eligibility Criteria," to receive public comment as presented.*

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

### **163.21, "Administration"**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.21, "Administration," with proposed amendments that revise "continuum of sanctions" to "progressive sanctions" throughout; remove the *Human Resources* category from the policies and procedures that shall be included in the administrative manual maintained by the Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) director; revise the *Standards* category of the administrative manual; revise language referencing an application process to specify a proposal; add language to state documentation of training hours shall be maintained at the CSCD and available on request; and make grammatical and formatting 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.

*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 Sections 163.21, "Administration," to receive public comment as presented.*

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

### **163.33, "Community Supervision Staff"**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.33, "Community Supervision Staff," with proposed amendments that revise "rule" to "section" throughout; remove the definition of "direct supervision" and replace it with a reference to Board Rule 163.35, "Supervision"; and make grammatical and formatting 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 163.33, "Community Supervision Staff," to receive public comment as presented.*

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

### **163.35, “Supervision”**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.35, “Supervision,” with proposed amendments that revise “rule” to “section” throughout; revise and reorganize the definitions of “direct supervision” and “indirect supervision,” to allow the acceptable use of technology for direct supervision for state funding purposes; and make grammatical and formatting 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.

*General Bill Welch 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 163.35, “Supervision,” to receive public comment as presented.*

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

### **163.41, “Medical and Psychological Information”**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.41, “Medical and Psychological Information,” with proposed amendments that update the reference to model policy guidelines with the corresponding Texas Health and Safety Code section 85.141 and remove the website address. 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.

*Sydney Zuiker 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 163.41, “Medical and Psychological Information,” to receive public comment as presented.*

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

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

### **152.1, “Correctional Institutions Division”**

General Counsel Stephanie Greger presented Board Rule 152.1, “Correctional Institutions Division,” for the adoption of amendments that revise “offender” to “inmate” and remove a reference to transfer

facilities. These amendments were posted in the *Texas Register* for public comment. 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 adopt amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 152.1, "Correctional Institutions Division," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.*

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

### **152.21–.27, "Correctional Capacity"**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rules 152.21–.27, "Correctional Capacity," with proposed amendments that were presented at the August board meeting. These amendments were posted in the *Texas Register* for public comment. The primary change to this series is the increase of capacity by 2,084 beds, which is necessary to keep up with the projected growth models for the agency. Texas Government Code provides a detailed process to increase capacity, which has now been met. Divisions within the agency have presented findings to Executive Director Bryan Collier that an increase is necessary and achievable while upholding agency standards. The notice has been posted at the affected units, and no inmate comments were received. Both the Governor and the Attorney General have reviewed the recommendation and have approved the capacity increase. The proposed amendments were posted in the *Texas Register*, and one comment has been received from a civilian who had concerns about the Stiles Unit. The commenter assumed the entire population at the Stiles Unit would be housed with someone else rather than having an individual cell, which is not the case. The commenter also had concerns for individuals with mental health or behavioral health concerns who may not be suitable for having a cellmate. Discussions with the agency determined that regular protocols will be followed and, if an inmate has mental health or behavioral concerns that would warrant having a single cell, then their single-cell status would continue.

Chairman Nichols asked for clarification that the increase in capacity being proposed will not result in operational changes at that particular unit. Ms. Greger confirmed.

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 adopt amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Sections 152.21–.27, "Correctional Capacity," 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.*

### **163.31, "Sanctions, Programs, and Services"**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.31, "Sanctions, Programs, and Services," with proposed amendments that revise presentence and postsentence investigations to mirror statutory language; revise continuum of sanctions to progressive sanctions; update references to Texas Government Code; and make

grammatical and formatting updates. These amendments were posted in the *Texas Register* for public comment. 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 adopt amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.31, "Sanctions, Programs, and Services," 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.*

### **163.37, "Reports and Records"**

Ms. Greger presented Board Rule 163.37, "Reports and Records," with proposed amendments that revise presentence report and postsentence report to mirror statutory language. These amendments were posted in the *Texas Register* for public comment. 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.

*Dr. Rodney Burrow moved that the Texas Board of Criminal Justice adopt amendments to Board Rule Title 37 Texas Administrative Code Section 163.37, "Reports and Records," as published in the Texas Register, and that the Chairman sign the order to this effect.*

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

### **Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Revisions to Board Policy BP-01.09, "Internal Audit Policy Statement"**

General Counsel Stephanie Greger presented Board Policy BP-01.09, "Internal Audit Policy Statement," with a summary of revisions that included renumbering the directive from BP-14.02 to BP-01.09 to align with other policy statements of offices reporting directly to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice; revising the directive name to remove "Division" from the title; revising all references of the "Internal Audit Division (IAD)" to the "Office of the Independent Auditor (OIA)" throughout, to reflect the name change approved by the TBCJ in October 2024; and incorporating the new *Global Internal Auditing Standards* throughout the directive, detailing the responsibilities of the TBCJ, as they relate to the internal audit function. These new standards add a requirement for the Internal Audit Resource Plan and require specific details on the internal auditing function, which required extensive additional language throughout. Much of this language relates to communication and reporting between the OIA, TBCJ, and TDCJ. Additional revisions include revising the policy statement for clarification; removing the Sunset Advisory Commission from the list of recipients who will receive a copy of each final report; updating the signature authority; and formatting and editing for clarity and grammar.

Chairman Nichols asked if Ms. Greger coordinated with the OIA with respect to the revisions. Ms. Greger confirmed. He asked if the revisions reflect the actions of the board to reinforce the independence of the OIA. Ms. Greger confirmed.

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 proposed revisions to Board Policy BP-01.09, "Internal Audit Policy Statement," as presented.*

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

### **Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Revisions to Personnel Directives**

#### **PD-21, "Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in the Workplace"**

General Counsel Stephanie Greger presented the proposed new directive PD-21, "Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in the Workplace." The directive merges PD-13, "Sexual Harassment and Discourteous Conduct of a Sexual Nature," PD-31, "Discrimination in the Workplace," and the EEO disciplinary processes that were removed from PD-22, "General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees." It allows more processes to be conducted via email or virtual applications to reduce paper usage; adds a Code of Conduct and Performance Standards based on the TDCJ's ethical code of conduct and core values; allows supervisors to coordinate with warden/department heads to implement interim remedial action when deemed necessary; outlines a 90-day investigation timeline with a possible 30-day extension; adds verbiage to define protected classes, protected activities, and the forms of discrimination

Chairman Nichols stated the board received an extensive presentation on the revisions at the Human Resources Committee meeting and those questions and comments will be incorporated into the board's consideration.

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 revisions to Personnel Directive PD-21, "Diversity and Anti-Discrimination in the Workplace," as presented.*

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

#### **PD-22 (rev. 18), "General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees"**

Ms. Greger presented proposed revisions to PD-22, "General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines for Employees," which include revising definitions for "inmate" and "workday"; revising all attachments and forms; replacing certain terms; and adding and outlining progressive corrective actions to be implemented before resorting to disciplinary actions, designed to foster behavioral change, positive performance, or conduct among employees. New progressive corrective actions include verbal guidance,

temporary suspension of telework, counseling, and an employee development plan. Additional revisions include changing use of force violations to mirror *Behavioral Intervention Plan* terminology; adding a Code of Conduct; adding new term of active period; renumbering and grouping violations; merging tardiness and unexcused absenteeism into one violation named Attendance; adding a new violation of Unsustainable Performance; defining the considerations a conduct official may use in making a determination; replacing terms guilty and not guilty to be substantiated and unsubstantiated; making probation a stand-alone action with new conditions or in conjunction with other disciplinary actions; making demotion no longer temporary, as employees must apply or requalify; and requiring a rehire review for an employee separating while on probation. EEO disciplinary processes were removed to create PD-21, "Anti-Discrimination in the Workplace." Ms. Greger stated these revisions seek to move the agency forward in its mission to improve employee morale and retention.

Chairman Nichols stated the board received an extensive presentation on the revisions at the Human Resources Committee meeting and those questions and comments will be incorporated into the board's consideration.

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 revisions to Personnel Directive PD-22, "General Rules of Conduct and Disciplinary Action Guidelines," as presented.*

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

### **Report from the Chairman, TBCJ**

Chairman Nichols recognized the License Plate Factory at the Wynne Unit in Huntsville. He stated he had the opportunity to visit the facility in June, and it is always rewarding to see members of the agency's population actively engaged in productive activity, and in this case, under the leadership of the tremendous staff at the factory. The License Plate Factory is responsible for producing all vehicle license plates for the state of Texas. On average, the facility produces 80,000 general and 2,500 personalized license plates every day, more than any other such facility in the world. Originally established in 1935 at the Huntsville Unit, the License Plate Factory was moved to the Wynne Unit in 1975. In addition to providing this vital service to the state and its citizens, the License Plate Factory equips members of the TDCJ population with marketable job skills, such as graphic design, forklift operation, quality assurance, machine operation, and warehouse management, in addition to the soft skills needed to be an effective and productive member of a production team. TDCJ's Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics (MAL) Division, which oversees the operation of the License Plate Factory among other factories within the TDCJ system, reports through its Work Against Recidivism program that members of the population who work these TDCJ factory jobs prior to release have a recidivism rate of approximately 9.6%, significantly below the rate applicable to the entire TDCJ population. Work, activity, and engagement matter.

Essential to the success of the License Plate Factory are two devoted TDCJ employees, who are members of a great team at the factory. Mr. Nichols stated Factory Manager Michael Thomas has commended these two individuals for their dedication, as the first to come into the factory and the last to leave. Mr. Nichols introduced Assistant Manager James Stewart and Industrial Specialist Isaac Cohen to discuss the License Plate Factory.

Mr. Nichols stated Mr. Stewart followed in the footsteps of his parents when he began his career with the agency 11 years ago. He has worked in the License Plate Factory for the last nine years. As the Assistant Manager, he oversees all production at the factory, ensuring the factory stays on track to fulfill its contract of ten million plates a year. Prior to joining TDCJ, he served ten years in the United States Army, and Mr. Nichols, on behalf of the board, thanked him for his service to the country. Mr. Stewart graduated from the University of Maryland with a bachelor's degree in history and is working on his master's degree in business administration from Sam Houston State University. Mr. Nichols congratulated him on his upcoming graduation in August.

Mr. Nichols recognized Mr. Cohen and stated his career with TDCJ began as a correctional officer over fourteen years ago. After serving in gray for five years, he transitioned to textile and then the license plate factory. In his current role, he oversees the cutting and quality control of the license plates. He is instrumental in assessing production needs and creating production plans. He earned an associate's degree in human services from Lone Star College and was previously a special education teacher prior to joining the TDCJ.

Mr. Stewart stated license plates were originally made using a traditional embossing process. However, in 2009, the factory converted to an all-digital manufacturing process. The process begins when the factory receives a list of sequences, which are the set of letters and numbers for each plate, from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). These sequences are inserted into the design of the plate and sent to print. After printing, the license plates go through the cutting process. Plates are inspected for quality assurance purposes and packaged using boxes created at the Polunsky Unit Box Factory. Boxes of plates are moved to the warehouse for storage until the DMV schedules for them to ship to the counties. In addition to general license plates, the agency also produces personalized license plates. Individuals purchasing these plates can select from 850 different designs. Each morning, the DMV provides a copy of the orders recently placed, so the factory can fill them in a timely manner. Personalized plates are picked up three times a week.

Mr. Cohen continued and stated, as the only License Plate Factory in the state of Texas, it provides a unique experience for incarcerated workers to gain job skills. All inmate workers at the factory receive training for their individual duties. Additionally, there are seventeen on-the-job training programs for individuals to complete while working in the factory. These range from accounting clerk and graphic designer to machine operator and production coordinator. In line with business standards, performance evaluations are completed on all inmates once a quarter. This provides an opportunity to not only improve job duties but enhance soft skills. Working in the License Plate Factory is a great opportunity that prepares inmates for employment and success upon release to their communities. A video from one of the inmate workers was presented about his experience working in the License Plate Factory. He stated, every time a person walks outside, a license plate produced by the hard-working staff and inmates in this factory will be seen.

Mr. Nichols thanked them for educating the board on the process and for all their hard work. He asked Executive Director Bryan Collier how the public can be informed with content like this. Mr. Collier stated the Communications department, through social media or the agency's online magazine, will highlight different areas. In addition, work fairs bring in employers to see what skills the inmates are learning in those factories. Chairman Nichols stated a short presentation, such as the one shown today, illustrates the impact those programs have on the agency and the population.

Chairman Nichols asked if the factory is using state-of-the-art equipment. Mr. Stewart stated the factory is using the most modern equipment. Mr. Nichols asked if the factory could produce plates at a rate that

would allow dealerships to replace the paper tags with real plates when a customer purchases a vehicle. Mr. Stewart stated HB 718 will eliminate all paper tags and permits, and the factory will start producing metal plates to replace those. Currently, the factory runs one eight-hour shift and can produce 1.2 million plates per month. Additional shifts will be added if needed. Mr. Nichols stated this will be a tremendous effort in terms of protecting public safety because law enforcement agencies are concerned about the abuse of paper tags. Ambassador Sichan Siv stated the number of plates produced is staggering and asked if the factory was making Tennessee plates at one point. Mr. Stewart confirmed that in 2020, after a tornado destroyed the Tennessee facility, the TDCJ License Plate Factory stepped in to make those plates. Judge Faith Johnson asked if any other states have made a similar request. Mr. Stewart stated it has occurred before but not currently. Executive Director Bryan Collier stated the factory is working on a special order currently for an event in Washington, D.C. General Bill Welch asked if there were two thermal machines that do the primary printing. Mr. Stewart stated there are five thermal printers and one inkjet printer. General Welch asked if that is sufficient equipment to maintain the same level of production if any of the machines need to be serviced. Mr. Stewart stated the factory has sufficient equipment and any issues are handled immediately through the manufacturer.

Mr. Nichols stated everyone has survived being stuffed for Thanksgiving and are rolling into the next holidays including Christmas and Hannukah. During this holiday season, everyone has many reasons to give thanks. On behalf of the entire board, he expressed gratitude for the men and women who serve the state as employees of the TDCJ. He encouraged those staff to take pride in their accomplishments over the past year and encouraged them to enjoy the holidays with their families as those staff prepare to continue to make the valued efforts that the state needs in 2025 and beyond. He stated, whatever specific job assignment the staff have, staff are part of and contributor to a team that carries out the missions of the agency, to provide public safety, promote positive change in offender behavior, reintegrate offenders into society, and assist victims of crime. He stated their individual contributions to those missions are much appreciated throughout the agency and the state. Their work ultimately helps make Texas a safer and better place to live. On behalf of the Governor, the board, and the citizens of this great state, he thanked those staff for their dedication and performance. The board wished all TDCJ employees and their families happy and restful holidays, a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

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

Executive Director Bryan Collier provided an update on the Sunset Commission hearings and preparing for the next legislative session. Mr. Collier expressed pride for the many things the agency accomplished in a short period of time. The new organizational structure, approved by the board in October, is in place, and the remaining chairs will be filled by the end of this month.

#### **Sunset Commission Hearings**

The agency's Sunset Commission hearing in November went well and was followed by the second hearing this week. The agency will continue to work closely with the Sunset Commission members and staff as the legislative session begins, and Mr. Collier stated he will keep the board updated on the agency's progress.

#### **Legislative Session**

The agency has been preparing for the upcoming 89th legislative session. Mr. Collier stated the agency has had several meetings with committee and leadership offices to provide details on the

agency's Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR). The session will begin on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, and the agency stands ready to work closely with members and committees on issues that impact the agency. Mr. Collier stated he would keep the board updated on the agency's activities as it moves into this session.

### **Holiday Message**

Mr. Collier stated 2024 had many challenges yet TDCJ staff worked hard to ensure success. A few notable accomplishments included the historic rollout of body cameras on maximum-security units; the implementation of a significantly improved behavioral intervention policy and related training; transitioning data systems from servers to cloud storage; adding air conditioning to more than 2,700 beds; opening the first ever innovation unit; receiving a new mobile command center, which is ready for deployment; and staff retention rates have continued to improve throughout the year with staffing that has increased by more than 1,200 compared to this time last year. Overall, 2024 has been a very good year.

Mr. Collier wished everyone a Merry Christmas and stated Christmas brings hope and an opportunity to focus on the things that truly matter. He asked to please keep the agency's staff and families in our thoughts and prayers this holiday season and remember that there are thousands of women and men at TDCJ hard at work as everyone enjoys time with family and friends this holiday season. He expressed his gratitude to the board for their support and assistance to the agency over the past year and wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### **Report from the Agricultural Advisory Committee**

Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division Director Bill Lewis provided an update for the last quarter of the Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC). He stated TBCJ member Thomas Fordyce is the committee chairman and Walt Roberts represents the Texas Department of Agriculture. Texas A&M University veterinarian, Dr. Cliff Lamb, and former TBCJ member Pastor Larry D. Miles are also on the AAC. In July 2024, the AAC met at Buffalo Ranch to review the agricultural operations. Mr. Fordyce challenged the AAC to improve the calf operation and increase the current calf operation numbers. Currently, it operates at 8,000 head of cattle, and the goal is 12,000-13,000 head of cattle.

Mr. Lewis stated 500 head of females have been held back into the herd to build the herd back up. The agency reviewed artificial insemination practices for use in the calf operation. Natural cover is used for most of the cattle or bulls, and the agency coordinates synchronization technology at the development center with Texas A&M University. MAL Deputy Division Director Ron Givens works with Texas A&M on synchronization patterns to get cattle bred within the same timeframe to be approximately the same poundage. The committee also discussed farming and grazing contract operations and implementing consistent contract operational practices to update the contract language to reflect agricultural industry standards. Current language in certain contracts prevents individuals previously incarcerated from being hired by businesses that contract with the agency's agricultural program. As one of Mr. Collier's visions focuses on reentry, the agency is reviewing contracts to remove such language.

Walkthroughs were conducted to assess preliminary damages from Hurricane Beryl. Two poultry cage systems were damaged at the Memorial Unit with approximately 48,000 laying hens affected. Both houses were repaired. Swine operations at the Clemens trusty camp were impacted greatly; therefore, swine were moved to the Wainwright Unit until repairs could be conducted. The agency is coordinating with Dr. Lamb

for the possible development of a Vet Tech certification through Texas A&M University for inmates working in the agricultural program.

The AAC's September 2024 meeting was at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to discuss what the TDA provides to the agency and the agriculture industry throughout the state of Texas. During that meeting, Mr. Fordyce led the discussion on the agency's capital equipment request. Mr. Lewis briefed the board on projects related to the capital equipment request. Two chicken houses are scheduled to be completed by June which will each have a 50,000 capacity; there are plans for the cannery system to transition to a continuous retort system, which will increase production from 300,000 cans to approximately 600,000 cans; and a cotton gin press was purchased in FY 2024 and is scheduled to be installed in 2025, which is anticipated to eliminate the need for private contract vendors to produce cotton.

Additional topics at the September AAC meeting included the solar energy industry and the ability of the agency to provide alternative energy. The agency is preparing land near the Segovia and Lopez Units to install solar panels and continues to work with solar vendors in numerous areas of the state to have solar panels installed on TDCJ property. Possibilities for continuing education for inmates, such as agricultural certifications for inmates working the field crops, tractor drivers, and diesel mechanics were discussed, along with deforestation and land reclamation to accommodate an increase in the beef cattle herd. Mr. Lewis stated the agency is currently cultivating land and timber between the Estelle and Ellis units, and that the Buffalo Ranch and Goree, Coffield, and Ferguson units will be extending as well. He expressed his appreciation for several of the board members attending the Labor Day horse sale, where 50 horses were sold for \$662,000. He thanked Mr. Fordyce for his leadership and the board for supporting the AAC.

General Bill Welch asked if there is any setback for the loss of crops due to hurricane damage. Mr. Lewis stated the crops in reserve prevent significant setbacks, and the only potential outside purchase will be for corn to feed livestock. Judge Faith Johnson asked if the horse sale improved in earnings. Mr. Lewis stated it has improved by approximately \$150,000. Pastor Nate Sprinkle asked how many swine were relocated due to Hurricane Beryl. Mr. Lewis stated 2,000. Mr. Fordyce commented that the AAC is researching the use of carbon credits in the future. Chairman Nichols stated initiatives like that help the agency diversify its ability to generate the energy needed for its system but also is a potential area for bringing some money back to the taxpayers of Texas.

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

Ron Steffa, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the purchases and contracts over \$1 million. Mr. Steffa stated there will be one item brought for the board's consideration and approval, a replacement contract for electronic monitoring utilized by the Parole Division. If approved, the base period would begin January 1st through the end of this fiscal year with three option periods remaining. It would be awarded to BI Incorporated.

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

*General Bill Welch 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.*

## **Internal Audit Status Report**

Chris Cirrito, Chief Audit Executive, presented updates to the Office of the Independent Auditor (OIA) Status Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 and noted that this report is a snapshot in time and will include updates that have changed since submission to the board office:

- **2302 – Parole Division Culture:** Project is a proposed final report.

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

- Four carry over projects:
  - Three have been issued as draft reports.
    - **2402 – *Mental Health Assessments*** is a proposed final report.
    - **2404 – *Travel Services***
    - **2406 – *Office of Independent Ombudsman Investigations*** is a final report.
  - One is ongoing.
    - **2409 – *Incident Reporting*** is in report writing.
- **2411 – Emerging Risks:**
  - *Classification and Records State Ready* is a draft report.
  - *Time Scan Application* has moved from Office of the Inspector General (OIG) assistance to an audit.
  - The OIA is currently assisting the OIG on one project.

Mr. Cirrito continued with updates to the Internal Audit Status Report for FY 2025:

- Two consultations are ongoing.
  - **2502 – *Inmate Custody***
  - **2508 – *Purchasing*** began as a full scope project and was changed to a consultation to assist the Business and Finance Division with the implementation of the CAPPs system.
- Nine full scope projects:
  - Two are ongoing.
    - **2507 – *Career and Technical Education Tool Control***
    - **2504 – *Inmate Communication Contracts*** is a compliance audit for contracts in place for inmate tablets, telephone calls, and digital mail.
  - Seven are not yet assigned.
- **2514 – Walkthroughs:** *Digital Mail System* is ongoing.
- **2515 – Follow-Up and Action Plan Tracking:** *Investigation of Allegations of Improper Vendor Payments. Structural Integrity* was placed on hold due to Hurricane Beryl but will be signed next week.

Mr. Cirrito recognized his staff and agency staff for their work and accomplishments. Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Cirrito for the status report.

*(Attachment B – Office of the Independent Auditor Status Report)*

## **Report from the Office of the Inspector General**

Inspector General Cris Love presented a report on the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Mr. Love recognized three OIG peace officers, Lieutenant Lee Duren, Investigator Scott Saragoza, and Investigator J.D. Wallace. He stated J.D. Wallace and Scott Saragoza were presented with the Top Forensic Examiner award by the United States Secret Service (USSS) Houston field office. This achievement marked Investigator Saragoza's third consecutive year and Investigator Wallace's second consecutive year of achieving this prestigious recognition. The USSS National Computer Forensics Institute recognizes annually its top 100 state and local law enforcement graduates trained in digital forensic examination techniques. In fiscal year 2024, Investigator Wallace ranked number 41 and Investigator Saragoza ranked number 100 overall out of more than 3,800 participating examiners nationwide. Lieutenant Duren received the honor of graduating from the Texas Police Chiefs Association officer program which consists of a series of classes that provide comprehensive leadership development for Texas law enforcement leaders.

Mr. Love discussed the Strike Force Team, which works in collaboration with OIG's Criminal Investigative Operations and the TDCJ Fusion Center to combat the introduction of illegal contraband into the prison units throughout the state. This team proactively initiates potentially complex investigations and can involve various TDCJ and OIG regions throughout the state. Since June, the Strike Force Team has made 43 arrests directly related to the introduction of contraband into Texas correctional facilities, and there have been over 150 charges in conjunction with those arrests. The team continues to develop leads and methods to counteract and reduce the flow of illegal contraband into the prison system. Mr. Love mentioned the OIG Special Operations which supports the Strike Force Team and OIG Criminal Investigative Operations, who have established a successful team to enforce Texas Penal Code § 38.112, "Tampering With Electronic Monitoring Device." In the first quarter of fiscal year 2025, 80 violations were reported to the OIG with 28 arrests by OIG staff, 48 arrests by other law enforcement agencies, and 62 charges being filed. He stated those updates are a snapshot of the work accomplished daily by the men and women of the OIG who protect and serve the TDCJ community and the citizens of this great state.

## **Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman**

Independent Ombudsman Brian Patrick presented a report on the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO), encompassing September 16th through November 15th of 2024. The OIO received 802 inquiries during this period that required substantive work.

The OIO responded to 778 inquiries from the public or an inmate and 24 elected official inquiries. The three most common inquiries received were related to life and safety; medical issues; and facility related issues, which could be a food service issue or concerning the physical structure of the facility.

Judge Faith Johnson asked if elected officials referred to state representatives. Mr. Patrick stated it does refer to state representatives, senators, judges, etc., and will sometimes come from a consulate. Ambassador Sichan Siv asked if one elected official made 24 inquiries. Mr. Patrick stated those were 24 separate inquiries. Ambassador Siv asked for further information about the life and safety inquiries. Mr. Patrick stated there is a code specific to those inquiries, and the investigation begins by determining if the unit is aware of the issue. If the unit is unaware, the OIO directs the administration to evaluate

whether a protection investigation is necessary. General Bill Welch asked if any of the inquiries were serious enough for the board to be notified. Mr. Patrick stated he is required to bring any overly concerning issues to the board's attention. Chairman Nichols expressed his appreciation for the OIO staff and holiday wishes.

### **Report from the State Counsel for Offenders**

State Counsel for Offenders (SCFO) Director Wyvonne Long presented a report on the SCFO. Ms. Long stated, over the past year, the SCFO was able to hire five new attorneys, four new legal assistants, and one legal secretary. One of the attorneys hired is a retired medical doctor, and she has proven to be invaluable when crossing medical experts at trial. The SCFO still needs eight attorneys and continues to reach out to law schools and stays proactive with individuals reaching out to the SCFO. Over the past year, the SCFO opened more than 1,800 cases, closed more than 1,200 cases, and handled approximately 21,000 pieces of correspondence. The SCFO received three no verdicts and civil commitment cases in the last year, and recently Staff Services Officer Angela Jeter worked with Systems Administrator Cynthia Rutherford with TDCJ to create a GoAnywhere account, which helps make the exchange of discovery between the Special Prosecution Unit and state counsel seamless, safe, and quick. Ms. Long expressed her appreciation for the collaboration.

Chairman Nichols asked if the SCFO is in the process of changing the name of the office. Ms. Long stated the Office of Independent Counsel will be the likely choice to align with the other offices that report directly to the board. Judge Molly Francis asked where the new hires came from. Ms. Long stated advertisements were placed on LinkedIn, and the SCFO has been more proactive with law schools. Chairman Nichols thanked her for her report.

### **Report from the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ombudsman**

PREA Ombudsman Cassandra McGilbra presented a report from the PREA Ombudsman office. She stated the seven PREA Ombudsman Compliance Specialists have assisted with eight PREA audits at TDCJ facilities, including privately operated facilities, from October through November 2024. There were 346 PREA inquiries, with 156 from the general public and 190 from inmates. She recognized Manager James Booker for his recent promotion. He began his career in 1998 as a correctional officer at the McConnell Unit and has held previous positions in the Community Justice Assistance Division, Parole Division, Administrative Review and Risk Management Division, and Human Resources Division. He has a bachelor's degree and twenty years of management experience. Mr. Booker expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to grow and pledged to do his best.

Chairman Nichols expressed his gratitude for the PREA Ombudsman office and asked Ms. McGilbra to convey best holiday wishes to her staff.

### **TDCJ Parole Division Spotlight**

Parole Division Director Rene Hinojosa thanked Chairman Nichols for his suggestion to create a Parole Hotline, which officially launched on December 1st. It provides an opportunity for individuals on parole who are in crisis and need assistance with issues such as housing or substance use to call and receive help.

Mr. Hinojosa thanked Executive Director Bryan Collier and Special Programs Director Lela Smith for assisting with the hotline project. Chairman Nichols stated the idea came from a member of the population who expressed how this may have kept him from incarceration had it been available. Mr. Nichols expressed appreciation at the implementation and stated he would be interested in learning about the level of service provided through the hotline in later meetings. Mr. Hinojosa stated it is being tracked and those numbers will be provided. Mr. Hinojosa introduced Parole Officer Andrew Mojica who began working with the Parole Division (PD) in October 2023 at the Huntsville District Parole Office. He currently supervises the administrative caseload and is a graduate of Sam Houston State University. Mr. Mojica joined the PD to be part of something positive and help people change their lives.

Mr. Mojica thanked the board for the opportunity to highlight one of his clients and for his career as a parole officer. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, he stated he was motivated to understand why people continue unsustainable behavior and do not believe in change, which led him to the PD. He supervises a regular caseload, which includes clients who do not have parole stipulations requiring a high level of supervision. He described his client, Jason Scott Jackson, as a good example of someone who has earned this type of supervision. Mr. Jackson was released in 2022 into super intensive supervision and substance use supervision. He successfully completed the super intensive supervision program and phase two and three of the substance use program. He was transferred to regular supervision in 2023 and has completed the New Beginnings grant qualification program provided by Lee College since then. He is a graduate of Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary and Theological Studies located at the Memorial Unit. He began employment as a machine operator two weeks after release and has since been promoted to gauge lab technician. Mr. Mojica stated Mr. Jackson attributes his success to gaining and maintaining employment, sobriety, and successful participation and completion of treatment programs while on supervision. Mr. Hinojosa presented a video of Mr. Jackson detailing his journey to success.

Chairman Nichols thanked Mr. Mojica for his work and asked to convey holiday wishes to PD staff.

### **Facilities Division Infrastructure Projects Overview**

Facilities Division Director Ron Hudson provided an update on the agency's infrastructure projects. He began by recognizing Facilities Division staff who work tirelessly to take care of the agency. He stated there are over 1,100 employees who deserve recognition, and he recognized the employees who were in attendance by name. Mr. Hudson recognized Facilities Deputy Division Director Paul Glass, Facilities Deputy Division Director David, Director of Engineering Dell Cox, Environmental Manager Jason Pierce, Manager Jamie Reynolds, Manager Larry Kent, Program Supervisor Rhonda Nation, and Program Supervisor Karen Johnson.

Mr. Hudson discussed the correlation between the amount of funding received with the number of projects the agency can complete in a biennium. In Fiscal Years (FY) 2018 and 2019, the agency received \$45 billion and completed 1,088 projects. In FYs 2020 and 2021, \$86 million was received and approximately 1,300 projects were completed. In FYs 2022 and 2023, \$127 million was received with 1,700 projects completed, and in FYs 2024 and 2025, \$316 million was received with 1,075 projects completed and more to come. Mr. Hudson emphasized the importance of funding to achieve more projects. He stated there are two major types of projects. The first is construction-related projects and the second is core equipment-related projects. The construction-related projects include security and safety, roofing, facility repair, infrastructure, and kitchen and laundry. Since September 1st, the agency accomplished 133 projects in security and safety category. The x-ray body scanners and body-worn camera projects are

included in the category along with the MRI trailers, which reduce the number of transports. The roofing category has 37 projects completed. The facility repair category has 131 projects completed. There have been 33 infrastructure projects completed. For kitchen and laundry projects, there have been 52 projects completed. A total of 386 construction-related projects equates to \$77 million worth of work.

Mr. Hudson discussed core equipment-related projects, which refers to all the equipment that is essential to the daily operations of TDCJ facilities. Those projects include generators, boilers, ventilation, water and wastewater. The agency has accomplished 38 generator projects, 85 boiler projects, 236 ventilation projects, and 44 water and wastewater projects, for a total of 403 projects and \$31 million. He stated many of the older units were built in areas where the local municipality is not able to bring water or take wastewater, so the agency has 37 wells on eighteen units with fifteen water wastewater treatment plants on nineteen units. The agency has been able to invest \$6.5 million back into the infrastructure of the wastewater and water treatment plants. He mentioned the Ferguson Unit water treatment plant project, which was made possible through the amount of funding received. He stated another project will be brought before the board by the end of the year for a new wastewater treatment program at the Wainwright Unit. He stated the funding received has allowed the agency to design and build new plants.

Mr. Hudson reported during the Sunset hearings there was discussion regarding training inmates, and the agency has worked with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to provide inmates with a provisional license in water and wastewater treatment. Twenty-nine inmates were trained last year through Texas A&M University and tested by Texas Christian University. This provides the inmates with a beneficial job skill set upon release and allows the inmates to care for the agency's equipment while they are incarcerated. Mr. Hudson stated the Facilities Division has played a huge role in the repopulation efforts of the agency. He stated beds have been added to the Allred and Stiles units; the Bartlett and Garza East units have recently been reopened; Chase Field, the Gurney Unit, and the Michael Unit trusty camp will be opened in the near future; the 18 building at the Connally Unit was opened, as well as the J4 building at the Smith Unit and the J3 building at the Lynaugh Unit. This totals over 7,700 beds and takes a significant amount of work to bring those units back online.

Mr. Hudson discussed the initiative to make the fire alarm systems operational. Prior to FY 2023, approximately 20 units had operational or partially operational fire alarms. Currently, there are 35 units with operational fire alarms, 26 units with partially operational fire alarms, and 36 units with nonoperational fire alarms. The agency has 77 active projects to make all fire alarms operational, with an estimated cost to be between \$700,000 and \$900,000 to achieve. A large unit will have 665 devices that will need to be repaired and certified, including fire suppression systems, sprinklers, hose reels, standpipes, and backflow preventers. The agency has expensed approximately \$16 million in FY 2024 and, in FY 25, more than \$36 million to make the fire alarm systems operational. The goal is to have most if not all of the fire alarm systems across these units operational by the end of 2025. The agency hosted a vendor show last year, which increased the number of vendors partnering with the agency to work on fire alarm projects from 3 or 4 to 20 vendors.

Mr. Hudson discussed current agency projects, including the Ramsey Training Academy, Clements Unit chiller project, Jester III Unit roof project, Ramsey Unit roof project, Ferguson Unit water treatment plant, Terrell Unit water treatment plant, and the Montford Unit roof project. He continued with the HVAC initiative and stated all of the thousand-bed prototype units are design complete and have been sent to Contracts and Procurement for the next step in the process. He stated the Goodman Unit HVAC request was brought to the board yesterday, and the O'Daniel and Young units will be completed and fully air-conditioned by the end of the month. The Lopez Z building is complete, and the Byrd Unit will be completed next. The Sanchez Unit is in the procurement process. The Bartlett and Gurney units will also

be air-conditioned. He stated the agency has more than 46,000 air-conditioned beds, and after completion of 46 HVAC initiatives, it will have more than 62,000 air-conditioned beds, which will be a total of 45 air-conditioned units.

Mr. Hudson discussed the agency's security fencing initiative, which began with phase one in FY 2023. The Roach and Hightower units are complete with microwave fences, and the pulse fences for the Hughes and Stiles units are complete, as well as the Allred, McConnell, and Robertson units. By the end of 2025, the total number of microwave fences installed will be 14 with 10 pulse fences installed. The agency has been able to collapse 170 positions so far. By the end of 2025, the agency will have collapsed approximately 225 positions, which is an annual savings of approximately \$11.2 million. Those positions can be placed back into the building to help with staffing. The return on investment for the fences will be paid for within five years.

Mr. Hudson discussed the Montford Unit project to build more sheltered-bed housing. He stated the project was put into design after funding was received in FY 2024 and was finished in November. He presented pictures of the sheltered housing, which will have 112 beds and a medical area and will be air-conditioned. The other two dorms will also be air-conditioned along with the dining hall and vocation areas. This project will be brought to the board later this year and start construction shortly after approval. Mr. Hudson discussed the construction of the Holiday Training Facility, which will have a groundbreaking ceremony in January. He thanked the Facilities Division staff and stated the agency received an unprecedented amount of money for the biennium. He thanked other divisions and stated the work was a collaborative effort.

Executive Director Bryan Collier thanked the Facilities Division staff for their hard work and the state leadership for the funding received. Thomas Fordyce commended Mr. Hudson and his staff for an outstanding job.

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

#### **Request to Renovate Icehouse, Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas**

Facilities Division Director Ron Hudson presented a new project for consideration which includes the renovation of the icehouse at the Beto Unit as briefed during the Business and Financial Operations Committee Meeting. The total estimated program cost is \$3,042,000.

Chairman Nichols asked if there were any questions or comments. Pastor Nate Sprinkle asked if these renovations would be inside. Mr. Hudson stated the roof was previously replaced to protect the assets that would be renovated in this project request. Chairman Nichols asked if there were any additional 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 renovate the icehouse at the Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas, as presented.*

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

### **Request to Install HVAC—ISF, Goodman Unit, Jasper County, Jasper, Texas**

Mr. Hudson presented a new project for consideration which includes the installation of an air-conditioning system at the Goodman Unit as briefed during the Business and Financial Operations Committee Meeting. The total estimated program cost is \$2,000,000.

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 approve the request to install HVAC—ISF at the Goodman Unit, Jasper County, Jasper, Texas, as presented.*

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

### **Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Proposed Land Transactions**

#### **Request for a Drainage Easement, Segovia Unit, Hidalgo County, Edinburg, Texas**

Bill Lewis, Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Logistics Division Director, presented the request of Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1 for a drainage ditch easement on approximately 1.95 acres to improve drainage in Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1. The above-ground open drainage ditch is part of a project to improve drainage near the Segovia and Lopez units in South Texas. Mr. Lewis presented a map of the area. The district has agreed to pay \$19,500 for the easement. The term will be for 30 years. The easement includes language requiring indemnification as the grantee's responsibility and the most-favored-nation clause. The easement has been negotiated at the current geographical appraisal value in Willacy County.

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 the request for a drainage easement at the Segovia Unit, Hidalgo County, Edinburg, Texas, as presented.*

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

#### **Request for a New/Extension of Electric Power Station and Power Lines, Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas**

Mr. Lewis presented the request of Oncor Electric Delivery Company LLC for an easement to benefit the Beto Unit and other prison properties that share the land. The company requests approximately 0.3736 acres of land to install a new electric power station with new power lines. The project is to enhance the existing power station and upgrade it with a new station and lines for the security of electrical power resources necessary to keep the prison operational and without interruption. Mr. Lewis presented a map of the area. The easement includes language requiring indemnification as the grantee's responsibility. No

compensation was offered or requested for this upgrade because the extension benefits the Beto Unit and other prison properties that share the land.

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 request for a new/extension of electric power station and power lines at the Beto Unit, Anderson County, Tennessee Colony, Texas, as presented.*

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

### **Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding the Selection of the Inspector General**

Chairman Nichols stated the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reports directly to the board and investigates allegations of criminal activity and misconduct that impact TDCJ programs, personnel, and resources, including waste, fraud, and abuse as outlined in board policy. The TBCJ appoints an Inspector General to lead the OIG including more than 230 dedicated law enforcement professionals and staff. Those dedicated women and men work to combat criminal activity that adversely impacts TDCJ operations and its populations including through contraband activity. Those valued personnel also work in task force partnerships with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and the United States Marshals. Following current Inspector General Cris Love's announcement of his retirement, the Correctional Law Enforcement Committee, comprised of board members Thomas Fordyce as chairman, General Bill Welch, Sydney Zuiker, and Pastor Nate Sprinkle engaged in a nationwide search process for Mr. Love's successor.

Committee Chairman Fordyce thanked Ms. Zuiker, Pastor Sprinkle, and General Welch for their assistance on the Correctional Law Enforcement Committee. The committee was entrusted with the important responsibility of identifying the most qualified and capable individual to serve as Director VII, Inspector General. To attract a comprehensive and diverse pool of candidates, the committee conducted a nationwide search posting the critical role on multiple hiring platforms. The position posted and was open for applicants from September 18, 2024, through October 18, 2024. Following the close of the application period, Human Resources staff conducted a rigorous initial screening to ensure applicants met the minimum qualifications. The committee evaluated eligible candidates carefully, considering each applicant's background, experience, and expertise. Eight candidates were invited to interview. The committee engaged in thoughtful discussion about each individual's qualifications, strengths, and suitability for the role. After careful deliberation, the committee reached a unanimous decision and selected the candidate most qualified to lead this critical position. The recommendation reflects not only the qualification of the candidate but also the strong alignment with the committee. He expressed the committee's shared confidence in the candidate's ability to uphold the responsibility of this role and lead the agency with integrity and excellence. He stated the careful and deliberate selection process underscored the board's commitment to transparency and accountability in choosing the leadership for this role.

Chairman Nichols expressed appreciation for the hard work of the Correctional Law Enforcement Committee on the selection, stating there were countless hours spent evaluating applications, conducting interviews, evaluating backgrounds, and interviewing references and prior employers. Chairman Nichols asked if the committee believed the position was posted for enough time to result in a large and diverse applicant pool to evaluate the best possible candidate. Mr. Fordyce confirmed and stated there were candidates from across the nation and from various types of law enforcement backgrounds. Mr. Nichols asked for more information on those who came out of the pool to engage in interviews and their qualifications and character in general. Mr. Fordyce stated those top candidates were outstanding and brought a wealth of knowledge expressed in their interview, which will be shared with the incoming Inspector General. Judge Faith Johnson asked for confirmation that there were 57 applications thoroughly evaluated before eight candidates were selected for interviews. Mr. Fordyce confirmed.

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 approve the selection of Lance Coleman as Director VI, Inspector General, to be effective December 15, 2024.*

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

Newly appointed Inspector General Lance Coleman thanked the board for their consideration and support and stated it was an honor to have the opportunity to lead the OIG. He expressed appreciation for the Correctional Law Enforcement Committee. He stated he looks forward to working with Executive Director Bryan Collier and his staff, and he thanked former Inspector General Cris Love for his support and leadership.

### **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, February 21, 2025, in Austin, Texas, and adjourned the 238th meeting of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice at 12:35 p.m.

---

Chairman\*

---

Secretary\*

---

\* Signature on File