



Advisory Board Meeting

January 24, 2023

Discussions, Decision Points, and Outcomes

In Attendance:

Panda Adkins (NIC), Stephen Amos (NIC), Ken Andrews (NIC), John Baldwin (IL), Lorie Brisbin (NIC), Barbara Broderick (AZ), Holly Busby (NIC), Blanche Carney (PA), Sandora Cathcart (NIC), Annette Chambers-Smith (OH), Sharon Clausen (PAE), Cameron Coblenz (NIC), Greg Crawford (NIC), Allison Dohr (PAE), Harry Fenstermaker (NIC), Heather Fiorita (PAE), Katie Green (NIC), Jeff Hadnot (NIC), Kathy Hawk-Sawyer (BOP), Benjamin Hunter (PAE), Mike Jackson (NIC), Donna Ledbetter (NIC), Leslie LeMaster (DFO-NIC), Billy Mathews (PAE), Teresa May (TX), Alix M. McLearn, Ph.D. (NIC), Vincent Miller (NIC), Laurie Moeglein (PAE), Dena Owens (NIC), Claire Murray (USSC), Gabe Morgan (Vice Chair-VA), Colette S. Peters (BOP), Scott Richards (NIC), Tashima Ricks (NIC), Mark Sherman (FJC), Belinda Stewart (NIC), P. Elizabeth Taylor (NIC), Ronald Taylor (NIC), Pat Tuthill (FL), Mike Ward (NIC), Glenn Watson (NIC), Archie Weatherspoon IV (NIC), Scott Weygandt (NIC), Reginald Wilkinson (Chair-OH), and Vernon Woods (NIC).

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Alix M. McLearn, Ph.D, Director (A) of the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) called the session to order at 9:00 AM ET.

Leslie LeMaster, NIC Executive Assistant and the Designated Federal Officer (DFO), reviewed the paper balloting system to be used for the Advisory Board Chair and Vice Chair selections. Ms. LeMaster gave a brief overview of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA) and how it governs how advisory board meetings are conducted.

Opening Comments and Introductions

Board members and staff introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of the organization they represent and their backgrounds in the corrections field.

Selection of Advisory Board Chair

Ms. LeMaster led the Board through the selection process for Chair and Vice Chair of the Advisory Board. Chair and Vice Chair serve three-year terms. Ms. LeMaster asked for nominations for Advisory Board Chair and Mr. Baldwin nominated Mr. Wilkinson, with Ms. Hawk-Sawyer seconding. Mr. Wilkinson accepted the nomination. With there being no other nominees, Ms. Carney moved that the Board accept the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Nominations and seconds were made for both Ms. Broderick and Mr. Morgan for Vice Chair, and both nominees accepted the nominations. In a vote of 5-4, Mr. Morgan was selected as Vice Chair.

Review and Approval of Meeting Outcomes

Chairperson Wilkinson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. The motion was properly made and seconded. The Board approved the meeting minutes unanimously.

Remarks from Bureau of Prisons Director

Colette S. Peters, Director of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), described her background with BOP and NIC and thanked the Board for their work with NIC. Ms. Peters discussed the work that Ms. McLearen had been doing to raise the profile of NIC within BOP and to demonstrate what NIC can do. Ms. Peters thanked Holly Busby for her work as Acting Deputy Director and the NIC staff for performing well through recent changes at NIC and through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Peters shared her vision for BOP and what she had done since being sworn in five months earlier. One of Ms. Peter's priorities is wellness, both for BOP employees and incarcerated people. After COVID-19, BOP employees were feeling worn out and there was a clear need to provide them with more support resources. Ms. Peters also wants to improve BOP's transparency, which will be aided by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) now allowing BOP to conduct proactive discussions with Congress and the media. These efforts have been effective thus far. Conversations have been conducted to collect feedback from formerly incarcerated people and advocates who had experienced life under the Bureau's responsibility. Ms. Peters discussed past criticisms of misconduct within BOP and wanted to be clear that BOP was committed to eradicating any and all criminal behavior inside of its facilities.

The U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing on sexual abuse of prisoners, at which BOP was called to account for the management of its facilities and handling of sexual abuse cases. In response, BOP realigned some internal resources and added roughly 40 individuals to the Office of Internal Affairs, on both the employment and investigatory sides, to

increase BOP's responsiveness and clear the backlog of cases. Field investigators are now reporting to BOP's central office to provide greater oversight of the investigations.

Ms. Peters looked forward to having NIC's assistance in training BOP employees and discussed possible funding streams to ensure that all corrections officers across the country were well trained. Ms. Peters thanked the Board for their support and opened the floor for questions.

<https://www.bop.gov/>

Chairperson Wilkinson brought up the staffing assessments of BOP facilities being conducted by Deloitte to create individualized staffing needs lists for each facility. Ms. Peters noted that every prison was different and had different needs, so the assessments will allow for a more efficient use of funds and help each facility in the ways it needs assistance most. Chairperson Wilkinson also asked whether the recalculated sentences caused by the First Step Act were resulting in people leaving earlier due to the statutory requirements. Ms. Peters replied in the affirmative. There have been some issues with the automation of the Earned Time Credit program, but it was being finalized and they were able to sign the rule around the program. BOP also made some modifications based on the feedback they received from advocates and formerly and currently incarcerated people.

NIC Acting Director's Goals

Ms. McLearen began her report by discussing her professional background and giving an overview of her presentation. Ms. McLearen wants to reinvigorate NIC through increased visibility at the federal level, through staffing, and by improving NIC's funding situation. NIC's staffing complement was 32 position slots with only 68% being filled; all of the vacancies were being posted and were in varying phases of processing. There was also a Deputy Director vacancy that had been posted, as well as job postings for correctional program specialists, a registrar, a management and program analyst, a data analyst, a grants management specialist, and a financial programs specialist. Ms. McLearen had also submitted a request for 20 more position slots to the BOP, which was pending consideration.

Ms. McLearen announced that NIC had fully restored its programmatic budget, receiving an additional \$3 million, and was hoping to receive an additional \$1 million from another source. On the topic of visibility, Ms. McLearen discussed NIC's relationship to BOP and how it had been contentious in the past with some fearing that NIC might be absorbed by BOP. Ms. McLearen assured the Board that absorption was a non-issue, as evidenced by how they were planning future training. BOP staff is now required to attend some NIC training, especially in rural areas, and NIC was working on expanding its training capabilities for the future. NIC wants to be able

to provide training services to BOP so that NIC receives the money that the BOP would have otherwise spent on outside training sources. NIC might also gain credibility by providing training to its parent agency.

Ms. McLearen also recently reached out to DOJ and asked to deliver a presentation on NIC activities. They responded positively, saying that they didn't realize that NIC existed as a resource available to them. NIC is now starting to receive invites from DOJ to be part of events, which shows how these small things were already building NIC's visibility. Ms. McLearen also plans to deliver presentations to appropriations staff on Capitol Hill and is also working with BOP's Communications Director to increase NIC's visibility on the Hill. Ms. McLearen expressed a desire to work on external branding to bolster efforts at raising the visibility of NIC and improve how other agencies see NIC. Board members noted that NIC was the only segment within BOP that did not control its own social media, which they hoped to discuss later because they felt it was important for the agency to have its own accounts. *Please refer to the attached PowerPoint® Presentation for further detail.*

Question and Answer Period: Division Briefing Packets

Ms. Busby held a short question and answer session with the Board, focusing on getting Board members connected with NIC staff in a less formal way. A roundtable discussion with NIC staff will be arranged for the Board's next meeting. *Please refer to the NIC Briefing Packet attached for further detail.*

Public Comment Period

Ms. LeMaster informed the Board that there were no pre-registered public comments.

Adjournment of the Public Portion of the Advisory Board Meeting

Several Board members made closing statements, including Ms. Tuthill, Ms. Broderick, and Vice Chair Morgan. Chairperson Wilkinson then adjourned the public portion of the NIC Advisory Board Meeting at 12:01 PM.