

Correction Advisory Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 22, 2025
6:30 PM via Zoom and YouTube Live

The following committee members were present:

Tadhg Dooley (Chair)
Marisol Garcia (Chair)
Melvin Medina
Daryl McGraw
Benjamin Howell
Kyisha Velasquez

I. Convene Meeting

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:35 PM by Chair Tadhg Dooley. He welcomed committee members, Judiciary Committee staff, and members of the public attending via Zoom and watching on the CT-N livestream. Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Remarks by the Chairs

Chair Dooley noted that Kyisha was expected to join but would be delayed and introduced guest presenters. He emphasized the importance of the Committee's oversight role, transparency, and public engagement.

III. Review and Approval of January and February Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January and February 2025 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Presentation from the Pennsylvania Prison Society

Guest speaker Noah Barth, Prison Monitoring Director, provided an overview of Pennsylvania's independent prison monitoring model including their long history of prison oversight and statutory authority. He detailed the structure and methods of prison monitoring, including facility visits, inspection practices, data collection, and reporting processes. He emphasized lessons learned regarding access, transparency, and credibility of independent monitoring. He explained that it was important to maintain constructive relationships with correctional staff while remaining independent; he also emphasized the importance of public transparency in building trust.

Committee members engaged in a discussion regarding the applicability to Connecticut and asked questions regarding the scope of access for monitors, staffing and funding challenges,

strategies for ensuring accountability, and comparisons to Connecticut's current oversight structure.

V. Ombuds Quarterly Report

Correction Ombuds DeVaughn Ward presented the quarterly report. He summarized complaint volumes and major categories of concern, identifying systemic issues such as communication, medical access and housing conditions, and actions taken by the Department of Correction to address those matters.

Committee members raised questions about responsiveness, follow-up on recommendations, and prioritization of systemic reform initiatives.

VI. Changes to Committee Practice and Subcommittee Structure

Patricia O'Rourke of CT Appleseed discussed the benefits of streamlining committee operations, recommending the dissolution of standing subcommittees in favor of addressing matters as a full-committee or through short-term ad hoc groups. Committee members discussed workload management, maintaining broad participation, and efficiency to ensure issues are adequately vetted.

A motion was made by Ben Howell and seconded by Melvin Medina to dissolve the two standing subcommittees. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Executive Session

A motion was made by Melvin Medina and seconded by Ben Howell to enter executive session. The motion passed unanimously, and the committee entered executive session at 7:59 PM. No votes were taken. The committee returned to open session at 8:32 PM.

VIII. Public Comment

Public comments were received from Barbara Fair and Nancy Peters. Themes included conditions of confinement and treatment of incarcerated individuals, the need for transparency in oversight, and the importance of family and community engagement.

IX. Adjournment

The Chairs explained that the next meeting will be a public hearing at the State Capitol in June, where the Correction Ombuds will present the semiannual report and the public will have the opportunity to provide extended testimony.

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:32 PM. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.