



Meeting Minutes
Iowa Prison Industries Advisory Board
Friday, March 8, 2019
Fort Dodge Correctional Facility

Present: Dr. Doug Hillman, Sheila Wilson (via telephone), Bonnie Winther, Terry Goodman, Megan Ellsworth, Tim Diesburg, Dan Clark.

Absent: Jennifer Gardner

Staff: Dane Sulentic.

Guests: Warden Bob Johnson, Drew Wynes (Association of Business and Industry), Brad Hartkopf (ABI, via phone)

I. Call to Order.

Prior to the meeting, Warden Johnson gave an overview of the correctional institutions in Fort Dodge and Rockwell City, both of which he oversees. The warden described the importance of IPI jobs for incarcerated men, as they provide an incentive for good behavior, and income that is used to repay restitution and purchase commissary items. Both institutions have major capital projects scheduled for this calendar year, including reconstruction of the FDCF kitchen, new showers throughout NCCF, and replacement of roofs at FDCF. The Board then toured the IPI operations at Fort Dodge.

Dr. Doug Hillman called the meeting to order at 10:15am on March 8, 2019.

II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting.

Mr. Diesburg made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board's December 7, 2018 meeting in Mitchellville. Mr. Goodman seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

III. Motion to Support New House Building Program.

Mr. Clark outlined the structure of the nonprofit Homes For Iowa, Inc. which has been incorporated and is seeking 501(c)3 status as a charitable organization. The nine member board of HFI has been named and includes stakeholders from private and public entities, including contractors, homebuilding association, a banker, city administrator, trade union representative, and Habitat for Humanity. The board's initial meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2019.

Mr. Clark stated that the board would be responsible for most aspects of the program, including home design, the number of homes to be built, home pricing, determination of where the homes will be sold, and income qualification for buyers. IPI will primarily provide staffing and labor using incarcerated men at the Newton Correctional Facility and Newton Correctional Release Center.

The men in the program would be enrolled as apprentices, including electrical, plumbing and general construction laborer. Dane Sulentic, statewide apprenticeship coordinator for the Iowa DOC, has been working with both trade unions and nonunion contractor associations to harmonize the DOC apprentice curriculum with these outside organizations, in order that once released, the men would be able to continue on with their program,

Ms. Ellsworth asked whether the men in the house building program would be eligible to earn credits at DMACC. Mr. Clark thought that the cost of tuition could be a barrier, and mentioned the Second Chance Act provisions that allow men at FDCF and NCCF to receive Pell Grants through Iowa Central Community College. Mr. Clark and Mr. Sulentic will meet with Ms. Ellsworth at a later date to coordinate training efforts with DMACC for the house building program.

Mr. Goodman asked about the downstream liability for IPI once a home has been built and delivered, and recommended that Lien Releases be employed to reduce the potential for liability. Mr. Goodman explained that a lien release is a document from a subcontractor stating they have received payment and waive any future lien rights to the property for the amount paid. Mr. Clark agreed to research the idea and report back to the Board.

Mr. Goodman asked what types of investment would be required of IPI for the program. Mr. Clark stated that in 2019 it may be necessary for IPI to procure materials, provide staffing and complete the fence, as the Home For Iowa nonprofit has not yet met, nor does it yet have any financial resources.

Mr. Goodman made a motion to support IPI's involvement in the Newton house building program, which was seconded by Mr. Diesburg. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PIE and individuals serving a life sentence.

Mr. Clark distributed a report showing the percentage of men and women in the IPI program serving a life sentence, as compared to the population of eligible participants at each host institution. Mr. Clark stated that IPI attempts to mirror the population of the host institution, and the report showed that except for IPI Fort Madison, the percentages were well in line. Mr. Clark related to the Board that IPI had absorbed the former Restorative Justice Program at Fort Madison, which was comprised of men serving life sentences, and that the high numbers there reflected that history. Ms. Wilson recommended that IPI ensure that additional men serving a life sentence are not brought into the program at Fort Madison.

V. PIMMS 4.0

Mr. Clark gave an overview of the Prison Industries Manufacturing and Management System (PIMMS), a continuous improvement program based on the Toyota Production System. IPI is in its fourth year of the program. Mr. Clark provided a copy of the program handbook and also showed a copy of the certificate men and women receive after they complete eight computer-based training modules.

Mr. Clark relayed that numerous private employers have similar programs and that PIMMS helps prepare re-entering citizens for employment upon their release. The program was developed with the assistance of Pella Corp, and the board was able to observe aspects of the program during their tour.

VI. Legislative Update (barbering).

Mr. Sulentic reviewed his efforts to implement a barbering apprenticeship program at the DOC that would allow incarcerated men and women to test for their license upon release, without attending additional barbering school classes. The change would require a modification to the Iowa Code, which was supported by the Iowa Dept of Public Health, the Iowa Board of Barbering and the Iowa DOC. Mr. Sulentic said the apprentice program would closely mirror the school hours and curriculum currently required.

HSB 231 / SF 418 are related bills moving through the Iowa Legislature this session. Among other things, the bills would combine the boards of barbering and cosmetology. There is the possibility that these bills will be amended to include the apprentice program changes.

VII. Apprenticeship Update.

Mr. Sulentic provided the Board with an overview of DOC apprenticeships, which now include programs to prepare men and women for 24 different occupations. There are 327 active apprentices right now, and another 174 men and women have completed their work/study and have reached journey level.

Ms. Ellsworth stated that DMACC had recently developed a Technical Studies degree program, which accepts a large number of apprentice hours. A journeyman level student can receive credit for 42 out of the 64 hours needed to complete the AA degree.

Mr. Diesburg thanked and congratulated Mr. Sulentic specifically for the new Office Manager occupation, which required online access with a new Learning Management System. Mr. Diesburg also strongly supported the use of certifications such as OSHA 10, AWS (welding), ServeSafe and a new refrigeration certificate. He said that for incarcerated men and women that do not complete their entire apprenticeship, the certificates provide excellent credentials that are widely recognized by employers.

Mr. Sulentic also reviewed a new effort involving Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa DOC, using Skype / Hangouts or other online meeting programs to connect employers with men and women that will soon be released. One major Iowa employer had conducted online "job fairs" with dozens of men at the institutions in Rockwell City and Fort Madison, and another was planned for the women in Mitchellville.

VIII. New Business.

Mr. Diesburg asked whether IPI had concerns about supporting the private sector welding program at NCCF given recent and upcoming staff departures. Mr. Clark stated that IPI and the private employer are working closely together to prevent any interruptions.

Mr. Wynes from the Association of Business and Industry asked that Mr. Sulentic contact him with more information about the online job fairs, as he thought this would be of interest to ABI members.

Dr. Hillman reminded the Board that its next scheduled meeting was June 7 in Anamosa.

Ms. Wilson returned to the idea of DMACC credits for men in the Newton house building program, and asked whether the nonprofit Homes For Iowa might ask Iowa employers to contribute to a scholarship fund. Ms. Wilson also wondered whether DMACC would host a scholarship dinner as a fundraiser.

IX. Adjourn


Dr. Hillman asked for a motion to adjourn, which was offered by Ms. Winther and seconded by Mr. Diesburg. The meeting was adjourned at 12:02pm.

Minutes submitted by:



Dan Clark, Director

Minutes approved by:



Dr. Doug Hillman, Chair