



Meeting Minutes
Iowa Prison Industries Advisory Board
Friday, March 12, 2021
Meeting held online / conference call

Present: Dr. Doug Hillman, Megan Ellsworth, Bonnie Winther, Tim Diesburg, Jennifer Gardner (joined at 9:45am), Dan Clark.

Absent: Helen Miller

Staff: None.

Guests: Greg Steggerda (Diamond Vogel)

I. Call to Order.

Dr. Doug Hillman called the meeting to order at 9:03am on March 12, 2021.

II. Introduction of new Board Member

Greg Steggerda has volunteered to serve on the IPI Advisory Board as the manufacturing representative, and his application is being processed. Mr. Steggerda is Director of Journey to Excellence for Diamond Vogel, and said he had lived in NW Iowa his entire life. Diamond Vogel operates manufacturing in four states, stores in ten states, and is nationwide with industrial and traffic sales. Mr. Steggerda has worked 30 years for Diamond Vogel, and also served for 25 years with the Iowa National Guard. Welcome!

III. Review and Approval of Previous Minutes.

Mr. Diesburg made a motion to adopt the minutes from the meeting held September 18, 2020, and with a correction to a name, for the meeting held December 11, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ellsworth. In discussion, Mr. Clark said he would make the name correction. The motion passed unanimously and both sets of minutes were approved.

IV. IPI Updates.

Mr. Clark provided the Board with updates regarding the IPI program:

- New IPI Programs (Advanced Machining, Computer Programming)
- IWD Grant for AWS Qualification at Rockwell City
- Iowa DOT "Type B" Signs
- COVID-19 Status within the institutions
- Homes for Iowa and soft skills training

Ms. Ellsworth and Ms. Winther inquired about the PPE requirement within the institutions. Mr. Clark informed the Board that beginning in mid-February, the use of face shields became optional for institutions

not experiencing an active outbreak of COVID-19. Face shields and other PPE remain a requirement for staff in high risk areas/situations. Masks are required throughout.

Mr. Diesburg asked whether the new Advanced Machining program at Anamosa would involve IPI's eligible customers (agencies, schools, nonprofits) or private employers, and Mr. Clark stated that IPI would work with private companies to develop this program and provide work opportunities for the men involved. The hope is that these Iowa employers would help IPI design the most meaningful curriculum.

V. IPI "Alumni Association"

Mr. Clark asked for the Board's ideas regarding the plan to convene a small group of former program participants that would be asked to help IPI improve the program.

Mr. Diesburg discussed the DOC policy regulating the allowed contact between staff and formerly incarcerated individuals, and thought this policy should be reviewed, as it prevented staff from helping reentering citizens (for example, giving a person a ride on one's day off). Mr. Diesburg recommended that training or eLearning could be used to ensure security is maintained. He explained that interaction between staff and formerly incarcerated people helps to improve understanding of the needs and challenges faced. Now that he is retired, Mr. Diesburg said he maintains Facebook contact with perhaps 50 formerly incarcerated people, and that this gives him an opportunity to help them.

Ms. Winther wondered if some sort of mentoring or emergency services group / committee could be employed to help people during a crisis. Mr. Diesburg said that Missouri provides every released person with a mentor for six months, which may be a person from a church, nonprofit organization, etc.

In a similar vein, Mr. Diesburg would like to see the Department provide letters of reference (not letters of recommendation, which are problematic). He asked Mr. Clark to provide a copy of the relevant policy, and thought the Board may request it be reviewed by the DOC leadership.

The relevant policy is AD-PR-11 GENERAL RULES OF EMPLOYEE CONDUCT. Relevant sections are below:

- E.8 Employees shall not give nor receive cash or contraband articles from former or current offenders, family members, or person(s) acting on the behalf of a current or former offender; nor may employees trade in any way with offenders. The Warden or District Director (depending on your work location) must approve any exception in advance.*
- F.5 Not have any unauthorized association or unofficial communication with offenders or former offenders and their families or any other person acting on behalf of the offenders or former offenders. When such contacts or communication occurs, employees are required to submit a written report to their supervisor on the first workday following the contact. When regular contacts with a former offender or the family of a current or former offender are unavoidable, one report to the Warden/Superintendent detailing the contact shall be sufficient unless the situation changes.*
- F.6 Not carry on unofficial communication with an offender or with an outside party on behalf of an offender nor assist or be a medium of unofficial communication between offenders or other persons.*
- F.7 Not have any personal involvement in any offender's application for employment, parole, pardon, writ of habeas corpus, court action, or provide personal job references, except where specifically required by official job duties or approved by the Warden/Superintendent, Judicial District Director (depending on work location), or the Director of Corrections or designee.*

Ms. Gardner suggested that we could ask former IPI program participants “what are the three biggest threats to your freedom?” which may be addiction, mental health issues, family relationships, etc.

Dr. Hillman suggested that we could ask “what skills would you have liked to work on before getting out?” and “what could we do differently at IPI?” He stated that university alumni groups have this similar function – improving the experience while in college, and also networking people once they are out.

Ms. Gardner asked whether IPI gives its program participants anything before leaving, such as brochures for services. She said there are many programs available for many needs, and perhaps we could organize these resources and make them available to returning citizens. This would empower men and women and allow them the responsibility to address their own needs.

Mr. Clark thanked the Board for the discussion and said he would attempt to synthesize the many ideas into a workable approach, to be reviewed with the Board next meeting.

VI. Facilitating the involvement of volunteers at IPI.

Mr. Clark asked the Board for further ideas and discussion, this time regarding ways to allow well intentioned citizens to lend their talents to the IPI program. He said that from time to time he receives an offer to help from someone like a retired high school shop teacher or former business executive. Mr. Clark mentioned that some organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity, make it very easy for a person to volunteer, whether it’s building a house or working at a ReStore.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Diesburg to lead the discussion since he well understood the many challenges related to volunteers inside a correctional institution. Mr. Diesburg described the vetting process, the process of providing required training such as PREA, and the need to have staff accompany a volunteer at all times. From the staff and institutional point of view, volunteers can be very inconvenient.

Ms. Winther pointed out that the pandemic had forced all of us to hold virtual meetings via Zoom or Google Meet, and if we used volunteers in this same manner, it could avoid much of the need for vetting, PREA training and staff security. (For this idea, Ms. Winther was awarded the Gold Star!) As an example, she said a former math teacher or former shop teacher could provide training using an online meeting. And training could be recorded for delivery at a later date or to other groups.

Ms. Winther said that IPI could also enlist the efforts of volunteers to act as mentors for reentering citizens.

Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Winther and the Board for their ideas, and said he would develop these ideas further prior to the next Board meeting.

VII. New Business.

Ms. Winther informed the Board that she recently visited the Burlington Police Department headquarters, which had moved into an old bank, renovating the interior and furnishing it with IPI products. Ms. Winther was very complimentary about the quality and design of the furniture, and the large conference room table in particular. Mr. Clark thanked Ms. Winther for her warm comments and promised to let the IPI shops know. All of the IPI furniture shops manufactured products for the Burlington P.D., but the majority came from Fort Madison, and the Fort Madison team also managed the installation project.

Mr. Clark reminded the Board that the next scheduled meeting will be held June 4, 2021 at the home building program in Newton. The operation is out of doors and hence lower risk. There is hope that the men in the program may be vaccinated by then. Still, conditions at the time may require the meeting to be held online.

VIII. 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 10:51am.

Minutes submitted by:

Daniel J. Clark

13-Mar-2021

Dan Clark, Director

Minutes approved by:

Dr. Douglas Hillman

Dr. Doug Hillman, Chair