

Medford Correctional Facility
Bennington Campus

Final Mediation Report

January 2011

Including Documents from:
Civilian Staff Representative
Guard Representative
Inmate Representative
Warden
State-Appointed Mediator

Initial Mediation Documents

January 2011

Including Documents from:
Civilian Staff Representative
Guard Representative
Warden
State-Appointed Mediator

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01/23/11

Civilian Workers Stance on the Current Prison Protests

The recent prisoner protests against prison living conditions and rules at the Medford Correctional Facility have escalated to an unacceptable point. As a representative of the entire civilian work staff, we feel that the work environment is no longer safe for us and that action must be taken to correct this situation. We feel that best way to resolve this growing problem is to improve the living conditions for the prisoners.

One main justification for improving the living conditions within the prisons is to avoid possible legal trouble that could ensue if a civilian worker were to get injured or killed as a result of prisoner violence. Even though improving working conditions would cost the state money, if civilian workers were injured in violent protests, the resulting legal and medical fees could be much more expensive. Thus, being proactive and putting additional funding into the prison to improve conditions could be much cheaper than paying for the aftermath of several injured workers.

Not only would improving living conditions save money through preventing possible expensive legal fees but money could also be saved through reducing money spent on prisoner medical fees. The substandard living conditions promote unnecessary illness and other medical problems among inmates causing unwarranted medical fees. Through improving living

conditions, causing better diet and less disease, inmates would not need as much medical attention, actually saving the prison money.

Another reason the prison should improve living conditions is to avoid bad publicity which could hurt the governor's and warden's reputations. If these protests continue and turn violent, causing prison employees to be injured, the media will report the incident. This would put this issue in the public spotlight and reforms in the prison systems would have to be made due to public pressure. This would negatively impact the governor's reputation and could result in the warden losing his job.

Finally, we have come to a consensus that if the prison conditions are not improved we will stage a job action. We realize our obligation of work but safety is our main concern and with this escalating protest we feel that we can no longer work safely among the inmates. Thus, if these protests continue the entire civilian staff will stop coming to work for our own safety. This would cause the prison to shut down and create major administrative problems for the warden and could easily be avoided by improving prison conditions.

Overall, improving the living conditions in the prison would not only save money in legal and medical fees but could prevent the reputations of the governor and the warden from being tarnished. Also, improving conditions would avoid a job action by the civilian workers. Although inmates within this prison committed criminal offenses, every person is still a human being and the poor living conditions they are forced to endure are not just. The living conditions should be improved before the situation escalates out of control.

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24 January 2011

Prison Guard's Proposition

In the recent times, it has come to my attention that the safety of not only the prisoners is at risk. The ratio of inmates to guards in the past few years has been rapidly diminishing. This is neither good for the inmates or guards. With the more prisoners per guard, less attention can be spent on each prisoner which may have led to this hunger strike due the feeling of being neglected. If we want to end this strike, a good place to start would be to hire more guards. If there had been more guards earlier we may have been able to prevent this strike because the guards may have had more of an idea of the thoughts of the inmate and their feelings on the living conditions and rules. If this prisoners are this adamant on this topic that they are this united, the least that the facility could do is hear out their opinions. This would create a more humane environment and hopefully prevent any strikes of this kind in the future.

Times are changing quickly in the case of technology. To be performing at maximum capacity, proper equipment is necessary. I believe that the most up-to-date security equipment is necessary for the guards and Warden to have. This new equipment would ensure the safety to all of the facility staff because it would not only work as an intimidation tool to psychologically scare the inmates but also to provide the staff with the equipment they need to keep the inmates under control and to protect themselves to the best ability from any obstacle they may incur. Prisoners would be less likely to attack a guard if they knew that the guards were protected by this new state of the art technology. I believe that this theory would involve more safety to the civilian staff members as well. This would also allow the Warden and guards to have superior knowledge of what is going on within the facility. It would eliminate more of the prisoner's freedom to scheme up riots or strikes, or just provide information on what the prisoners are thinking. The guards would feel much safer with this new equipment which would create a safer working environment. I believe that it would be in the Warden's best interest to purchase this new equipment because it will only serve to better the facility.

Please take time to consider all the suggestions that I have made. I believe that the money put into this would make Medford Correctional Facility a safer environment for everyone who is there. It would alleviate much unnecessary stress from everyone's lives.

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January 24, 2011

Medford Correctional Facility Memorandum

Position: Warden

As the Warden of this prison, it is my job to make sure everything is running smoothly. We are gathered here today because everything has not been running smoothly. A compromise by all parties, including myself, could benefit everyone. However, it is also very important to remember that this is a prison, with the inmates here for a reason. As of now, they have several privileges that they can use as leverage. However, the ultimate purpose of this enterprise is to provide a safe environment for everyone involved. It is not my wish to have all prisoners under keeplock, but I will not hesitate to do so if the safety of my employees is threatened.

So I ask, what is the cause of all this hostility and unrest? I am here to listen to the requests of all the inhabitants here, both inmates and employees. What can be done so that my prison runs smoothly? The mediator is here to make sure everyone gets a fair deal, but I am ultimately the one that can appeal to the governor and make changes happen. All I want is to run a safe place here. But I will not compromise on much, because this is a prison and must have a strict code of conduct. I know that the security systems are slightly out of date, and that is something I am willing to talk about. However, if these strikes don't end, we will be forced to put all prisoners under keeplock, which no one likes at all.

List of Demands:

Peace

Little or no added expense

Safety for guards and other employees

**Medford Correctional Facility Dispute Resolution – Bennington Facility
Mediator Report #1**

January 24, 2011

After meeting with each of the concerned parties in the Medford Correctional Facility Dispute and reviewing their lists of demands, I have made some observations that will hopefully lead to a possible resolution.

The common theme among the concerns from the Warden, and the representatives from both the Prison Guard and Civilian Services staff, was safety. Everyone is concerned for the safety of the prisoners and all the staff that interact with them on a daily basis. It is evident from discussion and the documents I have received from each with written demands that security is a weakness and that something should be done to remedy the situation. The situation was even dire enough for the Civilian Services staff to threaten going on strike if a safe environment was not restored in a timely manner. All parties seem open and receptive to the idea of updating the security system, but a new system is expensive and money isn't necessarily available for it. Both the Civilian Services staff member and the Prison Guard really emphasized the importance of installing either a new security system or more guards to ensure the safety and peace of mind of all residents and employees of the correctional facility. The Warden was firm on the budget, and I think that he has a realistic stand, as a new system and more guards would require a larger budget that the state doesn't have.

In the mediation session today, we discussed many of the advantages and disadvantages of both options of increased security, and undoubtedly there are many benefits, like more "eyes" around the prison and just an all around peace of mind for the employees, while keeping the prisoners in line. Unfortunately, the expenditure required for it is too much and it is not likely that the legislature requiring an increased budget will be passed.

There was a suggestion by the Civilian Services representative that money spent now on security and other aspects of the living conditions, like health care and food, may translate to saving money in the future because of less sick inmates and possible lawsuits, etc. Although this is a very good point, I don't think the funds are available to even think about doing this. To resolve this problem, more discussion is needed and I think that the direction of thinking should target the basis of the problem of the prisoners' unrest: living conditions and rules.

After addressing the facts that there is a tight budget and that the prisoners are dissatisfied with the living conditions and rules, the focus of the discussion turned to re-visiting the current rules and regulations to see if they could be revised a little to suit the needs of the prisoners while ensuring prisoner and staff contentment. As it was nearing the conclusion of our session, we briefly looked at the rules and regulations for areas that could be manipulated to increase prisoner and staff safety and productivity. Areas to be looked into include education and job type diversity and accessibility, recreation, and overall prisoner "comfort." This would be a good starting spot for the next mediation session.

Overall, I think that we made some good progress for a first meeting and that everyone has the same ultimate goal: to create a safe and hospitable habitat for employees to work and for residents to learn on their journeys to becoming better people. I believe

that it is very possible to create a solution everyone will benefit from, and that will be the goal of the next session.

Final Mediation Documents

January 2011

Including Documents from:
Civilian Staff Representative
Guard Representative
Inmate Representative
Warden
State-Appointed Mediator

01/26/11


Civilian Workers Response to the Mediators Initial Report

After reviewing the mediator's response and attending the mediation session, there are three conflicts of interest. First, the guards believe that bettering the prison security system and increasing the number of guards will eliminate prisoner protests, something that will cost a lot of money. The prisoners and the civilian workers will be appeased only if prison conditions and rules are changed for the better, something that will also cost money. Finally, the warden wants this problem solved without spending any money. Thus, these three desires directly conflict with one another. However, we still believe that the best way to resolve this conflict is to first change prison rules to appease the prisoners. Secondly, if money is allowed to be spent, it should go towards improving prison conditions instead of security.

One main reason that prison rules should be changed and money should be spent on improving prison conditions and not on guards and security is because improving security will not appease the prisoners. The root cause of this entire dilemma is that the prisoners became enraged at the prison rules and living conditions. Improving security and increasing guard numbers will not satisfy the prisoners at all and in fact could infuriate them more. The guards want more security because they are scared of the increasing agitation and violence of the prisoners. Instead of increasing security to feel more comfortable, if the prisoner's demands were met, their violence would go away. This alternative solution would equally make the guards feel safe without having to overhaul security.

Thus, the first objective should be to change prison rules to appease the prisoners which would not cost anything. If this does not work, then some money should be allotted to improve conditions which would certainly satisfy the prisoners and defuse this situation.

Overall, this purposed plan is better than overhauling security because it has the possibly of not costing any money. If money is allowed, it should certainly go towards improving prison conditions. Improving security will not appease the prisoners and even with the best security system, enraged prisoners could still harm guards and workers alike. If ignored the prisoners will certainly attempt more bold protests to gain attention which could spiral out of control and would continue until the prisoners got one of their demands was met. Thus, we need to be proactive and appease the prisoners now before anything bad occurs.



26 January 2011

Prison Guard's Rebuttal

Although the prison guards agree with everyone else on shifting around some rules and regulations will be a good way to make the prisoner's happy, this mediator's report did not satisfy our needs. We should not be so concerned with the prisoner's happiness- they are in jail! They should not be happy or living comfortably. This is punishment for crimes they have committed. We could reward inmates who behave good with upgrades on their living situations such as more showers, more visits to the store or the privilege of watching other TVs but really this should be the least of the prison's concerns.

All of the prison guards are in agreement that if more changes are not made about our safety we are threatening our job actions. We find it ridiculous that the Warden cannot rearrange some money to buy a new security system. This is a long term investment that would really benefit the prison. A new system is going to have to go in eventually anyways so why not now? If the Warden absolutely refuses to hire more guards, he has to put in a new security system. The guards are not being melodramatic when we say that we are frightened by the inmates. Something needs to be done.

There are many proven psychological games that we can play with the inmates which will intimidate them from the new security system that is necessary while lowering costs. We could install a new system with security cameras, but not every camera will actually be functioning. They could be placed in various spots around the grounds but not be connected to any wires. This will save costs from installing actual cameras but the prisoners will not know that these are fake. If and when they do figure out that these cameras are duds, it will give the prison time to get more money to put towards installing all functioning cameras. Now, we are not saying that every camera should be fake but this is a great way to play mind games with the inmates. As the prison guards we are willing to sacrifice 1% of our salaries to go towards this new system. We know that the Warden must have some money saved away for improvements such as this one.

What it comes down to is that if you do not satisfy our needs, we will go on strike and then the prison will fall apart. We are there to keep the inmates in line and without us they will do even more than just go on a hunger strike because of poor living conditions. This whole resolution cannot be about the prisoner's happiness. If we are so weak that we give into any strike they may present they will continue to strike until they have everything they want. We have to display our power and dominance over these inmates to get it through their heads that they have no real say in the treatment they

are given unless if they continue to act this way. If they demonstrate good behavior, that should be rewarded but we should not give in to demands such as this one.

January 26, 2011

Medford Correctional Facility – Bennington Campus
Rebuttal To Mediation Response #1

After the first mediation session I have to say I'm still a bit hesitant to hold off on the hunger strike. Unfortunately I had not had the chance to present my ideas for prison reform. The other parties present, including a guard, a warden and a civilian employee representative, all went ahead and proposed their own ideas in which unrest in the prison can be stopped. The civilian employee representative suggested an increase in the living conditions for the resident. This could be a helpful way to adhere to some of our complaints. The other parties of the mediation meeting were very quick to shoot down this idea. Though a complete renovation of the facilities may be a bit over the top, there are a handful of changes that can be made in order to improve living conditions. One shower per week? That's a bit ridiculous. Also how long is a bar of soap supposed to last someone? I assure you that it's a bit less than a month. According to other residents that had attended prisons in other states, toiletries are supposed to be provided free of cost. They shouldn't be for sale from the prison store. Overall I would say there is some room for change in living conditions that would benefit us inmates and in turn help the whole prison.

The methods of reform in which the guard presented seemed to be rather counterproductive. The guard proposed that it would be beneficial to increase security equipment and/or increase the number of guards. The mediator was right in the fact that would be better to find the root of the problem in the correctional facilities. If there wasn't a problem to begin with than I believe there would be risk to the guards, inmates or civilians.

I can speak for most of my fellow inmates and say that we're not all bad people. We're just normal human beings like anyone else on the outside. We've just made a series of mistakes that put us in this situation and we want to get past it. The real problem at hand in the correctional facilities is that we have no opportunity to prepare for life back in society. So many of us end up being forced back into crime and coming back to Medford when shortly after our release because our schedule and resources as an inmate do not facilitate normal life. The start with, the education is not sufficient. There are five teachers available for 2,000 inmates. Many of my fellow residents have not even graduated high school due to what I think are insufficiently funded public schools. Regardless, I think that a larger number of teachers giving more attention to each individual will better educate them to be better people both in jail and out in society. Along the same lines, I'm not sure how much attention is given to guidance and counseling programs in jail. I know that a lot of my fellow inmates have serious issues with drug and alcohol addiction. I think that if more money could be distributed towards help in this category would go a long way. The current funding for education and guidance is only three percent of the \$8 million budget. A relevant drug and alcohol counselor or teacher would cost approximately \$25-40 thousand dollars each. This would be a great investment that could come either from an increase in the total budget or a decrease in spending on correction officers' salaries.

The warden and the mediator seem to be under a lot of pressure from the government to fix this problem cheaply. The mediator seems to have no problem with avoiding spending money on us inmates due to the fact that we're criminals. I think that is to rash of a judgment and it won't bode well for her in deciding the outcome of this problem. She is right in the points that she wants to start off with in the next meeting which include education and job diversity as well as accessibility, recreation and prisoner comfort. I'm happy that after quick judgment after the meeting she has realized that we're just on a journey to become better people in life.

**Medford Correctional Facility Dispute Resolution
Warden Report #2**

**Bennington Facility
January 26, 2011**

It is unfortunate that this mediation session was deemed necessary but I am glad that we are all debating this in a reasonable and civil way. Before I start discussing any possible compromises, I just want to state some observations from the previous session and about the overall situation.

We should all remember that at the source of these problems are the prisoners. My employees, both the guards and the civilian staff members, feel threatened both by the recent increase in the prisoner population and the unrest within them. These people did not choose to come here. This is not Girl Scout camp. They committed crimes and the state decided they needed to pay a price. Even though we offer them many services, they are always going to be unhappy with the simple fact that they are in jail. Nobody likes being told what to do, most notably convicts, as they have shown their regard for rules, ending them up in prison. If we show them that giving in to their demands, whatever they may be, shows results, what can we expect from them next? Clearly they will do whatever it takes to improve their situation. We need to be firm, as they are already getting better treatment than many other convicts around the world. I believe that this prison has very generous facilities. However, if this unrest continues, the state and I will be forced to start removing some of the generous privileges we afford them.

On the other hand, the safety of my guards and other employees is a very serious issue. If the current amount of liberty granted to the prisoners is creating unrest within the prison, we will be forced to cut back on these liberties. The issue I want to emphasize is that it is embarrassing for me, let alone the governor, for the prisoners to be pushing us around. In addition, it seems to me that the problems from employees here are stemming from the prisoners themselves. If we show them no mercy, not that they deserve any, they will realize that their current situation is excellent given what their crimes were that put them here.

For these reasons, I concede that an updated security system would be beneficial to all parties. This improvement will not be seen as a win for the prisoners, something that I think is very important. I emphasized this point in our first session, but I will reiterate here. We do not negotiate with terrorists. If we show them that their plotting and strikes get results, there will never be an end to the strikes unless they are free from jail. As Warden I must act firm and decisively. A new security system, although costly, is a better investment in the long term compared to more guards, one of the other options discussed. It will help solve the safety issues that are currently present within the employees. I have not heard of anything other feasible solutions to the current problems. Hopefully we can arrange with the governor the necessary funding for a more up to date security system.

Bennington Facility: Warden

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**Medford Correctional Facility Dispute Resolution – Bennington Facility
Mediator Report #2** **January 27, 2011**

After this second mediation meeting, I believe that we have come to a solution that will satisfy all parties involved. It was a little difficult to come to a suitable compromise, but with patience and much discussion our goal was achieved.

The resolution that was agreed upon includes hiring three new teachers and two new drug/alcohol counselors for the residents and 11 new prison guards, that would bring the guard staff number up to 371, in addition to the 15 lieutenants, sergeants and deputies serving the warden. More teachers, in addition to the five already in place, would lower the student: teacher ratio in the classes the inmates have the option to attend and provide on-hand counselors for those inmates dealing with drug and alcohol addictions. Hiring these new people will help to satisfy the prisoners' demands and end the hunger strike and unrest that has been the force behind this dispute. Once the prisoners settle down, there will no longer be threats of violence and the correctional facility will be made a safer place. Therefore, there will be no reason to take drastic actions like installing a new security surveillance system.

The prison guards were not happy with this result and still felt the need for increased security, so it was agreed upon that the prison guard would receive eleven new guards. It isn't the security system they were aiming for, but it's a start, and since the prisoners are content, there is not as great a need for new technology.

All members of the dispute resolution team were very flexible when it came to the discussion of how these new positions would be funded. Both the civilian workers and prison guards will be taking a pay cut. The civilian workers will be going from an annual salary of \$48,000 per year to \$40,000 per year. The prison guards will be taking a much smaller cut, as they already earn significantly less than the teachers and counselors. Their annual salaries will decrease from \$13,000 to \$12,600. These cuts result in a 1% decrease in the yearly expenditures from correction officers' salaries and a 2% increase in education and counseling expenditures. The additional 1% to the education and counseling expenditures is from a revised incentive program for the inmates. Instead of being paid \$0.25 a day for attending classes, the inmates will have the opportunity to take a second shower. The inmates wanted more showers, so at the same time as funding new teachers, the prisoners are getting what they wanted. This change results in the extra 1% needed for the new teachers' salaries and a 1% drop in the inmates' wages expenditures. By readjusting the yearly budget, funding for the new employees was found without resorting to a proposal for a larger budget. A chart describing the new yearly expenditure proposal is attached below.

This resolution has been discussed thoroughly with all the members of the dispute resolution team and is thought to be a fair compromise that gives everyone at least a little bit of what they wanted, and results in a peaceful correctional facility.

Yearly Expenditures

