

**Medford Correctional Facility
Brattleboro Campus**

Final Mediation Report

January 2011

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

Initial Mediation Documents

January 2011

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

January 23, 2011

Civilian Staff Member

As a civilian worker I sympathize with the prisoners needs, and agree that the conditions they are forced to live by are abysmal. The percentage of the prison's budget spent on educational supplies, counseling, and medical care does not provide enough resources for any of the programs designed to help these men turn their lives around, to be truly effective. Nor is any of the equipment in the prison's workshops or medical facilities up to date.

However while I sympathize with the prisoners' complaints I am also uneasy about entering a prison where in, not only do I feel unsafe, but those who are supposed to be protecting me should anything go wrong, also feel unsafe. Therefore in order to carry on my duties at the prison I feel that it is integral that changes be made in the living conditions of these prisoners in order to reduce the violence within the prison.

My main requests towards the prison would be:

- A re-evaluation of the prisons budget in order to provide a more suitable percentage towards areas of the prison that help to rehabilitate prisoners' for their lives beyond prison, as well as their medical care.
- To provide money for up to date equipment to be used in both the prison's work and medical facilities.
- To provide the appropriate amount of both secretarial supplies as well as educational materials.

The reasons for these requests would be to provide the prisoners with more reasonable living conditions, to diminish the violence in the prison that is affecting the guards' ability to do their jobs effectively. As well as my and my fellow civilian staff members' safety, peace of mind, and ability to provide the services we are paid to do.



Inmate's Perspective

- As an inmate I am allowed only one shower per week making for an unhealthy situation.
- Doctors and Dentists are only available during the week.
- Doctors and Dentists only give physical observations, not through a wire screen, when they deem it necessary.
- Only three percent of the 8,000,000 dollar budget goes towards our education and guidance. Making the likelihood of receiving an adequate education to get a job once released from prison unlikely. The majority of the budget seems to go towards punishment rather than rehabilitation.
- All visits are held in rooms with visitation screens and physical contact is forbidden.
- The guards are on edge making it more likely to be locked in your cell or a special segregation cell. Since the prison guard's decision is final there is no system of appeals.
- Our shirts and sweaters are provided by the state but must be tucked in at all times.
- In addition the quantity and quality of food is less than desirable, keeping in mind that this is a prison and not a hotel.

January 25, 2011

Response to Party Requests in Medford Correctional Facility Mediation

I will begin by stating my opinion that a prison is not a place for endless punishment, but rather a place for rehabilitation. A sojourn in a jail cell should instill in every prisoner a longing for the freedom they once possessed and a feeling of privilege and gratefulness for, in the future, being provided with another chance. To instill such values, I believe a correctional facility must allow its prisoners a limited amount of choice that mirrors the world outside of their heavy brick walls. After the first mediation session yesterday, I have a few ideas on how to implement such choice.

The first portion of the prison that needs revising is the period between 12:30 and 5:30, during which all inmates either work or go to school. This block of time should be used as preparatory work for reintegration into society. Clearly the prison has an idea of this, but not to a very great extent. Much can be improved:

- All prisoners without a high school diploma or equivalent must be in class until they have earned one
- For all others, jobs and classes should rotate on a four-month schedule
- Courses should teach basic life skills: personal finance, writing, and public speaking as well as the standard vocational training
- Inmates should no longer be paid for going to school on a daily basis, but be paid on a monthly basis with wages depending on performance
 - If an inmate fails a course, he can either take it over or pay his way out of it
- Wages for jobs should no longer be paid on a daily basis, but on a 5-15 cent per hour basis
 - Those with jobs should be given the opportunity to work extra hours between 6:00 and 8:00
 - Inmates should have the freedom to choose which courses to take or jobs to work
 - There is limited space in each, and those who will choose first will be those who worked the most hours or had the highest grades

- The wage for working the maximum number of hours should be the same as the wage for the top tier of academic performance

A system such as this works to incentivize the inmates into treating our meritocracy as it deserves to be treated. It will help them understand the idea that hard work leads to freedom and choice and power. It will teach them that cutting corners cannot bring them where they want to go in their lives.

We must also use the extra money the inmates are earning – and I use earning in a very specific sense – to help them further understand the benefits of their work and the choice it brings. We need to introduce more ways in which the inmates can spend their money. This must be done with care, as the last thing anyone wants is a rowdy group of prisoners. I propose a late night food option be offered. Prisoners can order something very light (an extra bowl of soup, a glass of milk) during dinner to be delivered to their cells at 10pm. This will merely be leftovers, but will improve the mood of the prisoners a great deal.

Prisoner health is another issue that must be tackled. Having two dentists work more hours than two doctors is senseless, especially when inmates cannot even choose when to have an appointment. This needs to change:

- One dentist must be let go and replaced with a third doctor
- If inmates want to see the doctor in a non-emergency situation, it will cost \$2.00
- Inmates will be allowed two showers a week, and an extra bar of soap will cost \$1.00

As the prisoners grow more and more comfortable in their mini-society, guards will be less and less necessary. This will allow the prison to let go of guards and spend more money on education, health and food. The fact that 6% goes to both education and health while 62% goes to correction officer salaries will never be able to foster an environment of rehabilitation. Exposing inmates to the joys and pleasures of living in a responsible world in which their actions have a direct influence on their lives will.

I hope this proposal satisfies the needs of parties, and I look forward to discussing specifics and further implementation methods tomorrow.

Final Mediation Documents

January 2011

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

January 23, 2011

Response to Mediators Report

While overall I agree with the mediator's proposal I still believe that there are some things missing from it as well as an undetermined source of money that seems to be funding some of these new ideas.

The ideas I like from the proposal are:

- All prisoners without a high school diploma or equivalent must be in class until they have earned one.
- For all others, jobs and classes should rotate on a four-month schedule.
- Inmates should no longer be paid for going to school on a daily basis, but be paid on a monthly basis depending on how they do.
- One dentist must be let go and replaced with a third doctor.
- Inmates will be allowed two showers a week, and an extra bar of soap will cost \$1.00
- Courses should teach basic life skills: personal finance, writing, and public speaking as well as the standard vocational training.

The things I dislike from the proposal are:

- Wages for jobs should no longer be paid on a daily basis, but on a 5-15 cent per hour basis.
 - Where is this extra money going to come from the facility is already on a tight budget there is no possible way we can pay the inmates more without having to cut out more important problems such as supplies for both the educators and medical officers.
 - I propose therefore that working wages remain the same.

- If an inmate fails a course, he can either take it over again or pay his way out of it.
 - I propose that if you fail you don't get paid for your time however you could take it again and re earn that money by passing. A kind of double or nothing situation.
- Paying for a late night food option.
 - Food if its left-overs should just be used as an incentive if you do well at your work or in school you are given extra food there is no need to put extra money into providing the option.
- If inmates want to see the doctor in a non-emergency situation, it will cost \$2.00
 - If it's not an emergency they don't need to see the doctor. This is a safety issue for the medical officers.

These are the items I still feel are missing from the proposal:

- There is no plan made to supply the prison with enough up to date equipment for either the medical or the educational facilities.
- There is no re-evaluation of the maintenance section of the budget.



Inmate's Perspective

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- Only three percent of the 8,000,000 dollar budget goes towards our education and guidance. Making the likelihood of receiving an adequate education to get a job once released from prison unlikely. The majority of the budget seems to go towards punishment rather than rehabilitation.
- All visits are held in rooms with visitation screens and physical contact is forbidden.
- The guards are on edge making it more likely to be locked in your cell or a special segregation cell. Since the prison guard's decision is final there is no system of appeals.
- Our shirts and sweaters are provided by the state but must be tucked in at all times.
- In addition the quantity and quality of food is less than desirable, keeping in mind that this is a prison and not a hotel.

January 28, 2011

Hello Mr. Governor,
First things first, congratulations on a smooth transition into office. Helping you set up shop in Montpelier was a delight.

Onto business though. After two days of mediation, here is my final proposal for the Medford Correctional Facility.

Response to Party Requests in Medford Correctional Facility Mediation

My initial proposal called for a system of choices and incentives in prison. A system created to function as a microcosm of the free world to give prisoners a taste of what it is like to legally earn their keep. I stated that administering such a system and cultivating this mentality among the prisoners will lead them to continue as law-abiding citizens upon release. My main form of implementation was to provide prisoners with additional opportunities to earn and spend money. After the second mediation on the 26th, I've decided to increase the scope and ambition of this system. This second proposal may look somewhat similar to the first in both in form and language, but I guarantee you, Mr. Governor, it is a far more effective plan.

An area in which the prison requires serious revision is the period between 12:30 and 5:30, during which all inmates either work or go to school. This block of time should be used as preparatory work for reintegration into society. The prison clearly had an idea of this by offering 25 cents per day for attending class and 25 cents to one dollar per day for working, but this setup does not bring the sense of working hard to earn money and choice that I believe it should have. Much can be improved:

- All prisoners without a high school diploma or equivalent must be in class until they have earned one
- For all others, jobs and classes will rotate on a four-month schedule
- Courses will teach basic life skills: personal finance, writing, and public speaking as well as the standard vocational training

- Inmates will no longer be paid for going to school on a daily basis, but be paid on a monthly basis with wages depending on performance¹
 - If an inmate fails a course, any course whatsoever, he will earn no money.
 - An inmate who fails a course will have the choice to take that course over, and if he passes the course on his second try, he will receive 150% of the money he earned on that attempt
 - An inmate who fails a course twice will have no option to make the money he has failed to earn
 - Prisoners may also take mail-in college courses, with the wages they earn from these being the same as regular classroom courses
- Wages for jobs should no longer be paid on a daily basis, but on a 5-10 cent per hour basis²
 - Those with jobs should be given the opportunity to work extra hours between 6:00 and 8:00
 - Inmates should have the freedom to choose which courses to take or jobs to work
 - There is limited space in each, and those who will choose first will be those who worked the most hours or had the highest grades

A system such as this works to incentivize the inmates into treating our meritocracy as it deserves to be treated. It will help them understand the idea that hard work leads to freedom and choice and power, and cutting corners cannot work. By raising the amount given for education, it will also raise inmate awareness of the importance of learning.

We must also use the extra money the inmates are earning – and I use earning in a very specific sense – to help them further understand the benefits of their work and the choice it brings. We need to introduce more ways in which the inmates can spend their

¹ Currently an inmate will make an average of \$20.00 for going to school on a daily basis for four months. This system will reward students with a grade of A \$31.00, B will earn \$30.00, C \$29.00 and D \$28.00. This is indeed a raise, but we need to promote the importance of education. You will also notice later that the amount of money a worker can earn has been greatly reduced.

² In the current system, prisoners can earn between \$20.00 and \$80.00. If they are paid hourly and work the standard number of hours (5) per day, they will earn between \$20.00 and 40.00.

money. This must be done with care, as the last thing anyone wants is a rowdy group of prisoners fighting over who has more funds. There are a few ways to introduce a solution to this:

- Get rid of the prison store, items grow old in there and rot, the prison pays for storage it does not need
- Introduce a new prison store in the form of a catalogue, from which inmates can use their money to select certain items from the catalogue for purchase
 - If prisoners would like to purchase items not in the catalogue, they will be charged an extra 10%
 - Inmates will have the option of paying for a new change of clothes, more blankets, extra showers or soap, and radio access after lights out
 - A late night food option, in which prisoners can order something light to be delivered to their cells at 10pm (this will most like be some form of leftovers, as prisoners are not paying for fresh or delicious food, but rather the chance to go to bed on a full stomach)

Prisoner health is another issue that must be tackled. Having two dentists work more hours than two doctors is senseless, especially when inmates cannot even choose when to have an appointment. This needs to change:

- One dentist must be let go and replaced with a third doctor
 - The three doctors will work on a daily basis from 8-11, 11-2, and 2-5, giving more inmates an opportunity to see them, and keeping each one working for the same amount of time as in the old system
 - Dentists may be met with by appointment
 - To assess the extent to which an inmate is ill, there will be one guard on duty at all times who is trained in assessing the severity of diseases and/or wounds
 - Doctors and dentists will continue to be free of charge

The final issue that must be tackled is a plan to manage the budget in general. It is ludicrous to believe that a prison can rehabilitate a criminal when 6% of its budget is devoted to health and education, and 62% is devoted to correction officer salaries. I would like to see a few cuts:

- Now that a fewer number of inmates will be working, I would like to cut 10% of all possible jobs prisoners can have, and the civilian workers who oversee these areas
- I also want to see 5% of the correction officers cut, when the inmates see that their good behavior can lead to increased trust, fewer guards will be necessary
- With the funds coming from these cuts, I'd like to double the teaching staff, and update all medical and educational supplies
 - If funds from these cuts are inadequate, the prison must begin a green initiative: replace all light bulbs with energy saving ones, add a job that requires inmates to bike to produce energy, and begin to install solar panels on the roof

Exposing the inmates to a meritocracy, to a world of choice in which they can earn and spend their money and see the value of hard work is what this proposal will bring. I know you have little interest in any extra spending, and this proposal suggests none of that; if anything, this proposal will lower the budget. The system I am advocating will lead the prisoners to appreciate the second chance this prison is giving them, and lead them to appreciate the free world they missed so dearly when they were locked up.

I hope this proposal satisfies the needs of parties.

Best,

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