

PVS is the only nationwide visitation program in the United States authorized by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Department of Defense to visit all federal and military prisons and prisoners. Our nationwide network of volunteer visitors provides face-to-face contact with prisoners to help them cope with prison life and prepare for successful reentry into society.

**Prisoner Visitation and Support
Board of Directors Meeting
April 13, 2021
5:00 pm EST
Session One of Four, Conducted via Zoom**

In attendance: Rachel Osborn (Chair); Michael Guerra; Elizabeth Leshner; Marc Levin; Brian Lewis; David Poundstone; Susannah Rose; Virginia Rinella; Tom Slick; Dan Struble. **Staff in attendance:** Emily Cashell-DeSilva (*Assistant to the Director*); Molly Clifford (*Executive Director*); Eileen Gilkenson (*Visitor Recruiter*).

1. Welcome Rachel Osborn

Rachel Osborn called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm and welcomed all, especially new Board member Brian Lewis. A quorum was present. Board members introduced themselves. Reviewing the agenda, Rachel noted the time on Session Four for new business and asked that anyone who had additions to email them to her.

2. Consent Agenda Rachel Osborn/All

Items 2a - PVS January 2021 Board Minutes draft; 2b - Personnel Committee Report; and 2c - Development Committee Report.

PVS has previously utilized a consent agenda to streamline Board meetings and make optimal use of our time. We will continue this practice going forward. Rachel asked if anyone had questions or comments on any of the items. Dan Struble inquired when the item regarding the updating of the employee handbook with new staff titles and job descriptions would be addressed. Rachel said it would be covered during the staff report.

Action taken: The consent agenda was approved.

3. Staff Report Molly Clifford

Item 3 - PVS Staff Report April 2021.

Administration

Eileen Gilkenson and Emily Cashell-DeSilva's titles and job descriptions have been updated to better reflect their duties and responsibilities at PVS. Eileen's title of Visitor Recruiter will become Visitor Coordinator and Emily's title of Assistant to the Director will become Administrative Coordinator. The Board needs to approve Eileen's title change since it is specifically mentioned in the employee handbook.

Action items: Both title changes were approved and will be used moving forward. The handbook will be updated to reflect the new titles and descriptions.

Visitors

Staff and the training team continue to plan more visitor meetings and training via Zoom. Staff is working on a plan to address the inevitable reopening of prisons for visits. This will likely include being in contact with all visitors and providing updated endorsement letters to the prisons.

Bureau of Prisons and Department of Defense

Molly continues to be in communication with our BOP and DOD points of contact. We recently received our updated authorization renewal memo from the DOD.

A suggestion that PVS visitors wear t-shirts to identify themselves as PVS visitors and spread awareness of PVS will be added to new business in Session Four.

Updated Training Manual

The final version of the newly updated Training Manual on the Board portal needs Board approval as official PVS policy. The document was designed to be accessed primarily online; we will provide hard copies to visitors who request them. Graphic designer Christina Drexel will be given a final list of edits and be asked to add hyperlinks to the table of contents for ease in navigation. The Board expressed appreciation for all the hard work that has been put into the new manual, especially by David Poundstone and Susannah Rose, the training committee, the graphic designer, and the staff.

Action item: The Board approved the new training manual as official PVS policy. Today's approval date will be added to the manual.

Development

Responding to how her calls to \$200+ donors have been going, Molly reported she is leaving a lot of voicemails but when she is able to connect with donors it has been well received. Her next focus will be contacting former sponsors and endorsers.

The Board thanked the staff for the 2020 annual report that was distributed last week.

4. Financial Report Molly Clifford

Item 4a - Finance Report as reviewed 4.12.2021.

The conversion from QuickBooks Desktop to QuickBooks Online has been problematic, especially when it comes to merging data from the desktop file to online. Our auditors, JM Miller and Associates, have been helpful in navigating our fiscal tracking challenges. Molly stated she felt these issues would be resolved to ensure confidence in the numbers presented at the June Board meeting. She reported that we are also engaging QuickBooks bookkeepers to assist us in ensuring our books are cleaned up and consistent going forward. David Poundstone was thanked for his assistance.

Molly presented a financial report in a succinct template staff is using to track financials monthly and for quarterly reports to the Board. It showed \$36,909 in income toward the 2021 budget of \$182,000, and \$37,867 in expenses against the \$180,651 budget. David noted the numbers reflect the first quarter of 2021 and do not include the PPP loan amount, which is shown in the Friends Fiduciary and PNC Bank account balances.

Noting that expenses appear to be on track to be lower than originally budgeted, Brian asked if this was in fact the case, and if so, if it resulted from changes in operations due to Covid. Molly reported budgeted expenses included some 'wiggle room,' but PVS is saving money during Covid due to the change of office space, conducting more training via Zoom, and doing less printing and direct mailing. Tom Slick requested that quarter-to-date actual versus budget numbers be presented in future P&Ls. Tom also stated he is willing to help with finances in any way he can; Molly will contact Tom once we have the QuickBooks issue resolved.

Reviewing balances in Friends Fiduciary and PNC Bank accounts, the PPP loan of \$15,520 is reflected in our checking account balance. We have also received donations of stocks to our PNC Investment account.

Marc Levin asked for clarification on how the PPP loan forgiveness operated. PNC Bank will remind us to apply for loan forgiveness 45 days after the loan has closed. We are required to show that at least 60% of the loan was spent towards personnel. Since personnel costs are the bulk of our budget, we do not anticipate encountering any issues. PNC Bank further suggested that we apply for the second draw of the PPP loan, which we will investigate when the time comes. The deadline for the second draw is June 30, 2021.

Dan asked if income earned during the 2021 Spring appeal would affect our eligibility to apply for the second draw of the PPP loan. Molly reported that since they are looking at numbers from 2019 and 2020, any donations received during the 2021 spring appeal will not affect our eligibility.

Marc also requested the Board consider how much revenue is really needed to accomplish our mission, looking at real numbers. Would a higher income expand our impact? This topic will be covered further during this year's strategic planning sessions.

Reviewing development, Rachel noted our 2021 Board giving goal is \$20,000 with 100% Board support. With thanks to all Board members who have given to date, we have reached \$11,783 in gifts and pledges. Board members who have not yet made a commitment are asked to contact Rachel so their pledges can be counted toward this goal.

Clarifying how PVS has handled appeals in the past, including how often they are sent, Rachel reported that PVS keeps a development calendar with appeals scheduled, generally three to four per year. In terms of how we appeal to visitors, Rachel reported that the development committee continues to review and apply best practices. Tom asked if PVS had a policy in place to immediately liquidate stocks once received. While it has been our practice, there is no formal policy. The development committee is in the process of crafting a gift acceptance policy and gifts of stock will be covered.

To complete the 2019 audit, the auditors need five sets of Board meeting minutes: two from 2019, two from 2020, and one from the first quarter of 2021. Rachel is in the process of finalizing outstanding minutes to be uploaded to the Board portal for review and approval by April 17, 2021 so the set can be sent to the auditors.

5. Preparing for Session Four, Advocacy

Rachel Osborn/All

Item 5a - PVS Relationship with the BOP for 4.2021 Board meeting and 5b - BOP Program Statement on Volunteer Services Nov 7, 2016.

The Board expressed appreciation to Eileen for developing the background information document and encouraged everyone to read it before Session Four. In preparing for that discussion, Rachel encouraged Board members to consider what "advocacy" means to them in terms of PVS. It was noted that PVS sees our primary goal as preserving our privilege to visit, working within the confines of the prison system. Virginia Rinella encouraged everyone to read the Bureau of Prison volunteer policy in preparation for the discussion. (PVS visitors are considered Level II visitors.) This is meant to be an open-ended conversation and opportunity for the Board to reflect on how PVS can continue to meet its mission; we will not be making policy decisions in this session.

6. Executive Session

The Board went into executive session at 6:22 pm to discuss plans for Session Four and personnel matters. The session concluded at 6:48 pm EST.

**Prisoner Visitation and Support
Board of Directors Meeting
April 16, 2021
12:00 pm EST
Session Two of Four, Conducted via Zoom**

In attendance: Rachel Osborn (Chair); Michael Guerra; Marc Levin; Brian Lewis; David Poundstone; Susannah Rose; Virginia Rinella; Tom Slick; Dan Struble. **Absent with Regrets:** Marc Levin. **Staff in attendance:** Emily Cashell-DeSilva (*Assistant to the Director*); Molly Clifford (*Executive Director*); Eileen Gilkenson (*Visitor Recruiter*).

7. **Welcome** Rachel Osborn

Rachel Osborn called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm and welcomed all. A quorum was present. She noted the addition of an executive session at the end of today's agenda. Brian noted he needed to leave at 1:00 pm. To complete staff introductions from Tuesday's session, Eileen Gilkenson and Emily Cashell-DeSilva each gave a brief introduction.

8. **Board Member Matrix** Susannah Rose/All

Item 8a - PVS Current Board Members' Expertise Matrix as at 4.3.2021.

Led by Susannah Rose, the Board examined the Board members expertise matrix. It is intended to help us assess current Board members and recruit new Board members.

Looking at "Areas of Expertise" section, our first objective is to see what the matrix tells us is important, and the second is to see if any changes should be made. In looking at the columns, Tom noted "not all numbers are created equal." He felt we should decide what is most important for us as an organization, such as finances, accounting, legal, etc., and recruit from there. David noted that as a Board we have self-identified as strong when it comes to training and that accounting and finances are weak points. Liz Leshner noted new members Mike Guerra and Tom Slick bring legal and financial knowledge to the Board.

In terms of suggestions for areas of expertise to be added, the Board made the following decisions:

- Not to add "volunteer experience."
- Not to add "investment management" as a separate category but to consider it part of "finance/accounting."
- Not to add "ability to donate" and "ability to travel," but revisit these during strategic planning.
- To add "criminal justice laws and policies," and not to add "prisoners' rights" at this time.
- The suggestions of adding "PVS history," "volunteer experience" and "research" were not addressed.

Reviewing the "Access/Connection within" section, Tom noted our overall score is weaker here than in the "Areas of Expertise" section and we will need to make it a priority when

recruiting new Board members. Virginia asked for clarification on what “visitors” meant. Susannah confirmed that it was familiarity with and connections to PVS volunteer visitors. Discussing possible additions, the Board decided not to add either “recruiting resources” or “professional trainers” to this section. Recommendations of adding “corporations,” and “institutional research experience” were made. In the interests of time, the discussion was closed. The strategic planning task force will continue to work on the matrix.

9. Revised Bylaws Tom Slick

Item 7 - PVS Revised Bylaws draft as at 3.29.2021

Tom thanked the task force for its hard work revising and updating the document, with a special thank you to Mike for his legal expertise. The organization’s bylaws are meant to reflect how we operate, relate to our articles of incorporation, and ensure we follow Pennsylvania statutes. Any articles in the statute that are not specifically mentioned in the bylaws will default to the state statute.

Changes of note are that the task force will be drafting committee charters for Board approval to detail how committees are to operate; the formation of a governance and nominating committee to propose new Board members and Board officers; and the creation of “classes” of Board members. Directors not otherwise assigned will be assigned to one of three classes to keep track of terms and term limits. In moving forward, Tom and Molly propose to contact each Board member for individual conversations about their status on the Board. The Board approved.

Action item: Molly and Tom will contact individual Board members on behalf of the bylaws task force.

Susannah asked what the consequences would be if PVS were out of compliance with the organizational bylaws. Mike explained that, in a practical sense, being out of compliance would not influence the day-to-day operations of the organization but the organization could face legal repercussions were a dispute to arise among the Board of Directors. The updated bylaws were written to protect the organization against possible legal action.

David requested clarification that committees can contain non-Board members, as long as there are Board members on them. This was confirmed. He also inquired if there were any items not in the bylaws that are covered by statute. For a specific example, Mike directed the Board to look at item 4.15 in the bylaws and explained that it would be helpful to have certain statues laid out in our bylaws even if they are covered by state statues. Tom noted that PVS’ mission was omitted from the updated bylaws so as not to limit the work of the organization. Tom asked all Board members to email any further questions to him or Mike by May 15, 2021 so the task force can complete the document.

Action item: Board members will review the updated bylaws and return any questions, comments, or revisions to Tom or Mike by May 15, 2021. The goal is to have the final document ready to adopt at an upcoming 2021 Board meeting.

The Board thanked the bylaws task force for its hard work and thoughtfulness in preparing this draft for review.

Brian Lewis then exited the meeting.

10. Strategic Planning Susannah Rose/All

Item 9 - PVS Strategic Plan draft as at 3.27.2021

Susannah gave an overview of the strategic planning process in preparation for Session Three, starting with the four broad goals identified by the strategic planning task force upon review of old strategic planning documents and current plans. In that session we will first review PVS strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), then break into small groups, each with facilitator and recorder, to look at strategies and specific tactics. Questions such as priority, cost, and distribution of labor are all important to answer, and will be reviewed in the next step of the process. The recorder of each breakout session will send its group's notes to Susannah and Molly for compilation. Small groups will need to meet again outside of the Board meetings to accomplish their goals.

Mike asked for clarity on the relationship between the strategic planning work we are starting today and Session Four, advocacy. Susannah asked that each group "hold the thought" and document it. Dan asked if the small groups should focus on the PVS mission as is it written now or consider an expanded mission. For the purpose of this planning process, we are using our current mission: who we are now, not who we might be. We will not be completing the Board work on strategic planning today; there will be more time for discussion in future sessions.

The group then reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) section of the draft document, and the following points were made:

- A change from "non-sectarian prison visitors" to "non-sectarian agenda" or "non-sectarian approach" to make it clear that PVS visitors do not have an agenda.
- Adding our unique, long-standing, cooperative relationship with the Bureau of Prisons and Department of Defense to our list of strengths.
- Adding our national conferences to the list, focusing on training, inclusivity, interconnectedness, inspiration, and bonding of visitors.

Discussing weaknesses and threats, the following was raised:

- "Aging" of our visitors is a longstanding weaknesses. Perhaps add the number of visitors.
- Stronger wording was suggested: "the organization has inadequate financial and staffing resources to accomplish its mission."
- We are operating on a "privilege" basis within the Bureau of Prisons; our relationship with the BOP can be seen as both a strength and a threat.

This discussion will continue as part of the strategic planning process. Board members were asked to email any additional input to Susannah and Molly. Before tomorrow's session, Susannah asked all Board members to carefully review the four goals.

11. Executive Session

The Board went into executive session at 1:38 pm to discuss personnel and budgeting matters. The session concluded at 1:55 pm EST.

**Prisoner Visitation and Support
Board of Directors Meeting
April 17, 2021
12:00 pm EST
Session Three of Four, Conducted via Zoom**

In attendance: Rachel Osborn (Chair); Michael Guerra; Marc Levin; Brian Lewis; David Poundstone; Susannah Rose; Virginia Rinella; Tom Slick; Dan Struble. **Staff in attendance:** Emily Cashell-DeSilva (*Administrative Coordinator*); Molly Clifford (*Executive Director*); Eileen Gilkenson (*Visitor Coordinator*).

12. Welcome Rachel Osborn

Rachel Osborn called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm and welcomed all. A quorum was present. Rachel reviewed the updated agenda and confirmed the focus of today's session is strategic planning.

13. Strategic Planning Susannah Rose/All

Susannah Rose shared a sample strategic plan to explain the distinction between strategies and tactics. Board and staff were then broken into three small groups, with each group focusing on its assigned goal first. Each group can come up with multiple strategies to achieve each of the four goals.

The following groups were assigned to the following goals to initiate their discussion:

Goal 1: Finances are sustainable and growing.

Group members: Molly Clifford (*recorder/reporter*), Brian Lewis, Marc Levin, Dave Poundstone, and Rachel Osborn (*facilitator*).

Goal 2: The PVS Board and PVS visitors are more diverse, and

Goal 4: The impact of PVS and awareness of its work are enhanced through strong internal and external communications.

Group members: Emily Cashell-DeSilva (*recorder/reporter*), Liz Leshner, Mike Guerra, and Susannah Rose (*facilitator*).

Goal 3: Visitors and staff are well prepared, organized, and supported to carry out the mission of PVS with excellence.

Group members: Eileen Gilkenson (*facilitator*), Tom Slick, Virginia Rinella, and Dan Struble (*recorder/reporter*).

The group went into breakout rooms at 12:12 pm and returned to the full meeting at 1:17 pm. The recorder from each group reported on the substance of its discussion.

Next steps: each small group should meet again at least once before the next Board meeting to finish reviewing all four goals. Recorders were asked to promptly compile notes from their session and email them to Susannah and Molly so the task force can compile the next draft for the small groups to use as they continue to work. The task force will meet by June 9 to compile the next draft of the strategic plan for review at the June Board meeting.

The session concluded at 1:34 pm EST.

**Prisoner Visitation and Support
Board of Directors Meeting
April 17, 2021
2:00 pm EST
Session Four of Four, Conducted via Zoom**

14. PVS Advocacy All

Item 1a - PVS April 16, 2021 revised Board Agenda.

Rachel Osborn called the session to order at 2:00 pm EST. Each person was given three uninterrupted minutes to respond to the questions that were raised on the issue of advocacy:

Molly: Being new to PVS, looking forward to hearing from everyone. Advocacy is a strong word. Many of our visitors and supporters are active in other advocacy-focused organizations; encourage them. Currently, PVS does not have the capacity to focus on advocacy for those we visit. Instead, we can focus on expanding the scope of services we currently offer, for example reentry, books, etc. Focus on the strategic plan, the ‘support’ part.

Eileen: It is important that we are having this discussion and sharing ideas to do better and differently. “How can we do what we already do, but better?” How can we strengthen our relationship with the BOP and how can we make the visiting experience better for our visitors? This is a way we can do advocacy. Having a broad discussion about advocacy is difficult because we deal with issues that arise on an individual basis. They are difficult decisions to make and are not made in isolation.

Liz: Compare “grassroots” visiting in reports to seriousness of what a visitors sees, in terms of visitors reporting back to staff and staff contacting the prison. Wants to see effective advocacy that BOP expects from PVS, such as someone not receiving required healthcare, mental health issues, etc. per the prisoner request for PVS to step in on their behalf. Make sure volunteers know that we have an effective way of moving forward once an issue is mentioned on a visitor’s report. Believes it will be helpful for us to build relationships with wardens at individual prisons. What does “supporting” a prisoner mean?

Emily: Acknowledge our limitations as an organization, even though often we wish we could do more. Our relationship with the BOP is fragile, even if it is longstanding and there is mutual respect. Our current advocacy is achieved by showing up and being there for people.

Tom: What a prisoner tells me is not always the whole story; does not feel confident in being able to evaluate their situation. We must be careful because there is such an established hierarchy within the prison system. Intervention at a higher level may impede our ability to freely visit. “Advocacy without jeopardizing our ability to visit.”

Dan: Thinking about what the “s” in support means: our presence and our listening ear is our support. Considering our SWOT list, our relationship with the BOP is a weakness as well as a strength. Changing our mission could jeopardize our existence. Tread carefully. Many rules are there to protect us from manipulation. The Training Manual that the Board approved covers this.

Susannah: Help visitors understand what is happening in prisons and to prisoners. It is important to educate visitors on criminal justice issues. This could help them be better visitors. Be realistic about how effective we can be without risking our ability to visit; but no individual visitors should be barred from advocacy. Concerned we will not accomplish much in pushing against BOP policies. Preserve our mission and ability to visit.

Brian: We should take every chance we have to humanize incarcerated people. We can help by informing prisoners of their rights, as there can be a distinction between advocacy and education. Issues of health and safety are human rights issues, and we should step in with those situations when possible. We can defer to other organizations who are already doing advocacy work. Re press inquiries, we should remain neutral. PVS should advocate for rights for the individual visitor [e.g., being banned for being at a demonstration]. How do we contribute to systems of incarceration? Strong feelings of justice.

David: Thought we would be discussing advocacy on a larger scale, the questions raised on the agenda are “small bore.” Refer to page 43 in the new manual that calls for no open criticism of the BOP. Believes many current policies are preexisting and out of the control of the BOP. Coach visitors to be cautious. Concerned over mission creep. Agrees about wardens wanting to solve problems on a facility level. Would like to continue the conversation on letter writing later.

Mike: Would like to discuss advocacy on a larger organizational scale. Mission can be both broad and narrow. Our mission says that our goal is visiting, but also mentions successful reentry. Are we revising our mission? Or reviewing our training – e.g., reaching out to like-minded groups as potential partner. What is the end goal? It is an important issue to have a consensus on.

Virginia: Focus on the genius of our founders, visitation and support. Realize the impact on prisoners who receive our visits. Focus on visiting and becoming the most adept listeners we can be. No need to think of advocacy any other way.

Marc: Having been incarcerated, difficult to be objective. We should be available to provide information to prisoners that they do not have, but that they have a right to know. Do not be quiet if we can safely do things. Drop the language of “manipulation” when it comes to prisoners, they do what they do to survive. This is why the safeguards we put in our training are important. Think of ways we can support people that do not threaten our ability to support them at all. We should feel free to talk to the BOP and test our influence with them.

Rachel: Broke her thoughts on advocacy down into three categories – 1) national presence, having PVS seen as a player on the national scene; 2) higher level influence with BOP administration regarding PVS concerns, what we can and cannot do inside prisons; 3) feels confident in staff guidance, trainers, training manual in resolving specific issues re visiting. Continue to review issues with (ideally new) BOP director. Maintaining letter writing after prisons open should be an ongoing conversation.

Rachel thanked Board and staff for their input and thoughtfulness during today's conversation. Many issues that arose today will also be addressed during strategic planning, and we will be as thoughtful as possible in our ongoing conversations on advocacy. Susannah suggested identifying a few common themes that were brought up during today's discussion to test for consensus at the next Board meeting.

Molly offered to compile a recap of the notes of what she heard today and circulate it to the Board, based on a) what the item means in terms of internal policy for BOP and PVS, and b) the external world of advocacy. She will divide these notes into topics on which there seems to be consensus, and those for which further discussion is necessary.

Action item: Molly will create a compilation of the notes from today's meeting and circulate it to board and staff.

15. Next Board Meeting

Per the bylaws discussion, we intend to have four Board meetings a year. Molly will send out a Doodle poll with a range of potential Board meeting dates for June, September, and November, 2021. Molly asked Board members to let her know if there were dates within those ranges that they could not make.

16. Executive Session Board

The Board went into executive session at 3:18 pm. At that time, the five sets of minutes required by the auditor to complete the 2019 audit were approved to submission to the auditors; and personnel matters were confirmed and finalized. The meeting adjourned at 4:07pm EST with thanks to all.

Rachel Osborn, Secretary pro tem
With thanks to Emily Cashell-DeSilva