

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
SUBCOMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

**Eighty-Second Session
March 8, 2023**

The joint meeting of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and Senate Committee on Finance Subcommittees on Public Safety, Natural Resources, and Transportation was called to order by Chair Howard Watts at 8:03 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [[Exhibit A](#)], the Attendance Roster [[Exhibit B](#)], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023.

ASSEMBLY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Howard Watts, Chair
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson, Vice Chair
Assemblywoman Jill Dickman
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Dallas Harris, Chair
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen, Vice Chair
Senator Pete Goicoechea

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sarah Coffman, Assembly Fiscal Analyst
Brody Leiser, Assembly Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Alex Haartz, Senate Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
James Malone, Senior Program Analyst
Janice Wright, Committee Secretary
Janet Osalvo, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

James Dzurenda, Director, Department of Corrections
Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections

Chair Watts:

[Roll was called, and the Subcommittees' rules and protocols were explained.] Today we have five budgets to review from the Department of Corrections. Whenever you are ready, state your name for the record, and we will get started.

James Dzurenda, Director, Department of Corrections:

At the table this morning, I have Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, and Harold Wickham, Deputy Director, Programs [[Exhibit C](#)]. We are pleased to be before you this morning to present the Governor's recommended budget for the 2023-2025 biennium including the Department overview.

The mission of the agency, the Department of Corrections (NDOC), is to improve public safety by ensuring a safe and humane environment that incorporates proven rehabilitation initiatives that prepare individuals for successful reentry into our communities [page 2, [Exhibit C](#)]. Our vision is to reduce victimization and recidivism by providing offenders with incentives for self-improvement and the tools to effect change. Our philosophy is we will pursue our mission with integrity, act in a professional and ethical manner, be responsible for our actions, and raise the Department to the highest standards. Our goal is to operate the Department according to best practices, ensure the best use of our Department resources, educate stakeholders and customers, and improve communication.

The NDOC operates across a diverse geographical area with most of our institutions and facilities located in the rural areas throughout the state. We have seven major institutions, two transitional housing centers, and nine conservation camps across the state. The locations and rural nature of our operations creates a unique challenge for our Department.

The Department has several important initiatives to achieve over the 2023-2025 biennium [page 4].

- Stabilize recruitment, retention, and staff well-being through the execution of human resources strategies.
- Create efficient and effective processes departmentwide.
- Collaborate with other agencies to work together towards Department goals.
- Initiate audits and provide upgrade recommendations to vital infrastructure.
- Collaborate with outside community partners for successful reentry.
- Implement technology for upgrade of systems.
- Perform a staffing study to review and update our shift relief factor.

Over the last 20 years, Nevada's prison population grew at a steady rate hitting its peak in fiscal year (FY) 2016 at 14,153 offenders. Since 2016, the Department has seen a decrease in its total population with a slight leveling of the dramatic decline in FY 2021. Since FY 2018, we have continued to see a decline in our population with a decrease in admissions and an increase in parole grant rates. Assembly Bill 236 of the 80th Session made various changes concerning parole, probation, specialty courts, and certain sentencing guidelines that reduce the penalty for various crimes from a category B to a category C felony. That appears to have had an impact on the length of stay for our felony C, D, and E offenders, which has impacted our minimum custody offender population and our rural fire camp operations.

The State of Nevada contracts with James F. Austin Associates, LLC/Institute (JFA) to provide the state with three inmate population forecasts, which project the next ten years. Our budget is based on those forecasts. The first two forecasts were received for the agency request budget and the Governor's recommended budget. The final report was received on March 3, 2023, and is being reviewed by our agency and the Office of Finance, Office of the Governor. We will share that report with your Fiscal staff this coming week so we can reconcile the caseload-driven aspects of our budget for the 2023-2025 biennium.

The JFA prison population projections are the foundation of our capacity analysis, biennium plan, and the long-term housing plan both for female and male populations. One key component of the Department's population is the type of admissions that we are experiencing each year. For calendar year 2022, 50 percent of our admissions were due to new admissions for an offender sentenced to prison by a judge or court. Roughly 23 percent of the offenders had violated parole, and were arrested on a warrant issued by the State Board of Parole Commissioners due to violations of terms and conditions of their parole and were subsequently returned to an NDOC facility. Twenty percent are offenders who violated probation or an offender who was initially sentenced to probation by the court, who has had his probation revoked by the court due to violations of the terms and conditions of his probation and subsequently readmitted to the Department of Corrections. The admissions, releases, and overall population for NDOC is a complex calculation involving many stakeholders and overall collaboration with many of the public safety organizations.

One important dashboard for reviewing the prison population is the admission and release rates in any given period. In 2022, releases slightly outpaced admissions. The JFA predicts that discretionary parole rates will remain close to the 2022 rates at 63.7 percent for male and 79.4 percent for female with mandatory rates held at 70.9 percent for male and 87 percent for female. The dramatic drop in admissions in 2020 was primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A rebound of new court admissions to NDOC has emerged in 2022 with a continued rebound throughout the end of 2024.

After this period, the JFA predicts that new commits will increase 2 percent a year on average for the forecasted horizon. At the end of February 2023, we had 9,229 male offenders in our institutions and facilities. According to the JFA, the male population is projected to increase to 9,633 in FY 2024 and 9,791 in FY 2025. The projected growth rate is predicted to grow at a rate of 2 percent per year for the next ten years.

We are seeing a change in the type of offender who enters NDOC institutions. The NDOC and the Nevada Sentencing Commission are preparing an analysis of the prison population by felony category. They found that approximately 85 percent of the prison population is either category A or category B, specifically 30 percent of the prison population is category A, and approximately 55 percent are category B felons.

We are experiencing an increase in violent crimes, and we are housing more serious and violent offenders in the Department of Corrections. At the end of February 2023, we had 794 female offenders in our institutions and facilities. According to the JFA, the female population is projected to increase to 864 in FY 2024 and 896 in FY 2025. The projected future growth is predicted to increase at a rate of 3.2 percent per year over the next ten years.

This next slide [page 11, [Exhibit C](#)] is an aerial photo of the High Desert State Prison located outside of Las Vegas [Indian Springs]. This facility is a great representation of the design of the institution including court facilities, the medical infirmary, culinary, and additional assorted designs of housing units that we have throughout the Department. The design of the institution and facility impacts the way the budgets are crafted for the Department. The NDOC legislatively approved staffing levels are based on charts identifying posts at various institutions. The Department also uses a shift relief factor to determine how many positions it takes to fill a single protective service post for a single shift, considering vacation, sick leave, training days, and other types of leave since we are a 24/7 operation. The 78th Session of the Legislature approved the current NDOC shift relief factor rates of 1.7 for seven-day per week posts and 1.21 for a five-day per week post. We welcome legislators to tour our facilities to learn more about our operations, facilities, designs, and mission.

The foundation of our budget starts with the completion of the JFA ten-year prison population projection. These projections, along with our capacity analysis report, influence our biennium housing plans and female and male long-term housing plans. When our leadership team came on board during the past few months, we realized that the NDOC failed

to submit an updated biennium housing plan with the Governors' recommended budget. We are working to update the biennium plans and long-term housing plans with the final JFA report. We will work with your Fiscal staff and the Governor's Finance Office to review the report in greater detail and the implications that this has on our overall operations over the 2023-2025 biennium.

We submitted the capacity report for the Governor's recommended budget, which shows our institutions and facilities ending bed balance taking into consideration the growth in our population based on the JFA forecasts. The preliminary bed balance shows that we would have sufficient beds at the end of both years of the 2023-2025 biennium for both male and female populations, which are indicated by the red circle on page 12 [[Exhibit C](#)]. However, we must go deeper to understand what kind of beds we will have available in our institutions and facilities, and if it matches the classification and custody of the types of offenders we will house in our institutions. In our Department, we have several custody levels that we project into the future based upon the JFA projections. These include minimum, medium, close, and maximum beds. Based on a preliminary review of our draft biennium housing plan, we are anticipating seeing our close custody beds dip into the negative over the 2023-2025 biennium.

Additionally, the Governor's recommended budget includes one of the largest capital improvement programs (CIP) to date, to which the NDOC has \$90 million allocated. Currently, we are incorporating the impact of all the CIP projects in our biennium housing plan. We will be updating our biennium plan with the updated JFA projections from the final report. We may propose the phased reopening of the Warm Springs Correctional Center to accommodate our close custody bed shortages and the CIP bed movement that is necessary, as well as other factors once we execute our human resource strategies with our vitally needed staff in each of our departments.

Page 14 [[Exhibit C](#)] is another representation of our male and female bed balances, taking into consideration our population. We are anticipating enough female beds over the 2023-2025 biennium. I will now pass this presentation over to Deputy Director Shea who will take us through the Department's budget that is recommended by the Governor for the 2023-2025 biennium.

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

First, I wanted to express my gratitude to your staff, particularly Mr. Malone and the staff of the Governor's Finance Office for their help during our transition. The Governor's recommended budget includes funding for the Department of Corrections totaling approximately \$399.3 million in FY 2024 and \$406 million in FY 2025 over our 30 budget accounts. As the pie chart depicts [page 17, [Exhibit C](#)], the Department is primarily funded through General Fund appropriations totaling 87 percent with 10 percent from other funds, which includes grant funds, prison industry revenue, inmate welfare funds, and internal transfers at 3 percent.

The Governor's recommended budget over the 2023-2025 biennium primarily funds our medium, close, maximum, and minimum security operations, which is 69 percent of the total [page 18]. Another 15 percent is allocated to health care services; an additional 9 percent is for inmate services including banking and commissary services; 2 percent is for human resources; another 2 percent is for fiscal services; 2 percent is for prison industries; and finally, 1 percent is for internal investigations.

At the NDOC, we are facing a staffing shortage which is depicted through this historical vacancy chart that tracks our vacancies at the end of each fiscal year for the past decade [page 19]. Historically, the Department has been able to maintain a stable level of vacancies over time. However, as you can see in 2022, the Department experienced a significant spike in vacancies, which has been steadily increasing and has hit an all-time high at roughly 900 vacancies departmentwide. Many factors have impacted the high vacancy rates including the COVID-19 pandemic, the retirement of employees statewide, and issues relating to recruitment and retention of our employees. This table [page 20] provides more detail into which budget accounts and institutions are experiencing the highest vacancy rates. Currently, Lovelock Correctional Center is experiencing a 45 percent vacancy rate. Northern Nevada Correctional Center has a 41 percent vacancy rate. Ely State Prison has a 41 percent vacancy rate. The prison medical budget is experiencing a 33 percent vacancy rate. Correctional programs are at 32 percent vacancies, and the Director's Office is at 23 percent vacancies. These vacancies are impacting our human resources, our operations, and vital areas of our Department.

Page 21 lists our current authorized full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions for sworn officers departmentwide. Our correctional lieutenants and correctional sergeants are experiencing stable rates of vacancies. However, our senior correctional officers are experiencing a 17 percent vacancy rate, and our correctional officers are experiencing a 39 percent vacancy rate departmentwide. One aspect of our human resource strategy is to address the large vacancy rates departmentwide through decision unit enhancement (E) 673, which was developed by the Governor's Office and is proposed to address an immediate and critical need for first line public safety officers and correctional officers who have been consistently facing vacancies in excess of 20 percent over the past biennia [page 22, [Exhibit C](#)]. The Governor's recommended budget over the 2023-2025 biennium includes State General Fund appropriations of \$13.8 million in FY 2024 and \$14.3 million in FY 2025 for a two-grade pay increase for correctional officers, senior correctional officers, and correctional sergeants.

Furthermore, as part of our human resource strategy, the Department has identified areas for process improvements because we are experiencing delays in our hiring process. First, we are going to review existing processes for bottlenecks within the agency and create efficient and effective systems that can streamline human resources departmentwide. Additionally, we want to explore marketing and advertising strategies, innovative ways that may be implemented by other states to address staffing shortages, and partner with state and local agencies and elected officials to produce creative solutions. We must execute our human

resource strategies to stabilize our current operations departmentwide, which is our primary goal as a leadership team.

The Governor's recommended budget includes our capital improvement program, which is the largest that we have seen over the past biennia [page 23]. As part of the CIP program, the Governor is recommending funding of \$90.3 million for the NDOC projects that are needed to maintain our aging infrastructure statewide. Historically, the Department of Corrections has received a good portion of the CIP projects based on deferred maintenance and the nature of our operations. The CIP projects are vital to the safe functioning of our operations. In addition, the projects have an impact on our capacity analysis, our operations, and our biennium housing plans as we close housing units, reopen housing units, and complete projects that are approved by the Legislature. We will be reviewing our biennium plan to be sure we take into consideration the impact that the 2021 current approved CIP projects and the 2023 proposed CIP projects would have on our available bed capacity.

Now, we will present details of each of the budget accounts as recommended by the Governor.

**PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NDOC - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (101-3710)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-10**

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

Budget account (BA) 3710 is for the Director's Office, which functions as the Department's administrative and management division, including offender management, transportation, Inspector General, information technology, human resources, and fiscal services [page 24, [Exhibit C](#)]. The Governor's recommended budget includes the following approximate funding related to the Director's Office budget over the 2023-2025 biennium:

- \$30.7 million for funding in fiscal year (FY) 2024.
- \$30.9 million for funding in FY 2025.
- 190.51 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions for each year of the 2023-2025 biennium.
- Decision unit enhancement (E) 673 funding for a two-grade salary increase, which costs approximately \$335,313 in FY 2024 and \$343,704 for FY 2025.
- One-shot appropriations of \$5.2 million for FY 2024, which would fund computer hardware and software upgrades.

I will now discuss BA 3716.

**PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NDOC - WARM SPRINGS CORRECTIONAL CENTER (101-3716)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-55**

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

Budget account (BA) 3716 is the Warm Springs Correctional Center [page 25, [Exhibit C](#)]. It is a male medium custody facility located in Carson City. The Governor's recommended budget includes the following approximate funding related to Warm Springs over the 2023-2025 biennium:

- \$13.5 million in funding for fiscal year (FY) 2024.
- \$14 million in funding for FY 2025.
- 119 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions for each year in the 2023-2025 biennium.
- Decision unit enhancement (E) 673 funding for a two-grade salary increase which costs \$738,062 in FY 2024 and \$772,037 in FY 2025.
- One-shot appropriations for \$267,281 to fund replacement equipment.

On December 16, 2022, the Department made the decision to temporarily close Warm Springs Correctional Center due to concerns with safety and security of our offenders and staff. The reason to temporarily shut down Warm Springs Correctional Center was primarily due to many vacancies. The employees from Warm Springs have been temporarily reassigned to the Northern Nevada Correctional Center. However, we still have some employees who are delayed in the position control number transfer process due to human resource vacancies within our Department. We are working on completing these transfers and will do so as soon as possible.

One of the primary factors that needs to be reviewed prior to advising if we can keep Warm Springs Correctional Center temporarily closed over the 2023-2025 biennium is the update to our biennium housing plan, which we are currently finalizing with the JFA projections. Once this report is complete, the NDOC can meet with the Office of Finance, Office of the Governor and the Legislative Counsel Bureau Fiscal Analysis Division staff to discuss a plan. The primary analysis may show that we need the available bed space at Warm Springs Correctional Center. However, we must first hire vital staff prior to a phase reopening process.

I will now discuss the Ely Conservation Camp budget account 3747.

PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NDOC - ELY CONSERVATION CAMP (101-3747)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-96

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

The Ely Conservation Camp is funded in budget account (BA) 3747 [page 26, [Exhibit C](#)]. The Ely Conservation Camp is a male minimum custody population dormitory-style facility in Ely. The Governor's recommended budget includes decision unit enhancement (E) 225, which would permanently close and reduce the budget by \$1.3 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024, and a further reduction of \$1.4 million in FY 2025. If this decision unit is approved by the Legislature, it would fund the Ely Conservation Camp in mothball status, which would cost \$179,036 in FY 2024 and \$182,712 in FY 2025. The Department temporarily closed the Ely Conservation Camp in 2022 due to staffing shortages at the Ely State Prison. During that time, staff was transferred from the Ely Conservation Camp to the Ely State Prison as well as the modified fire camp operations. We currently have one full-time-equivalent (FTE) position that we are still working on transferring and will do so prior to the end of this fiscal year.

Decision unit E-225, as recommended by the Governor, would permanently close the Ely Conservation Camp over the 2023-2025 biennium and fund the facility in mothball status, which would fund utility costs, maintenance contracts, and other necessary costs. The Department of Corrections had a meeting with the Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Office of Finance, and the Office of the Governor to discuss the long-term operations of the fire camp program given the decline in our minimum custody offenders due to Assembly Bill 236 of the 80th Session. Although the long-term planning is still being discussed and prepared jointly by the State Department of Corrections and the Division of Forestry, there is no plan or need to reopen the Ely Conservation Camp in the future. Therefore, the recommendation is to fund Ely Conservation Camp in mothball status currently.

The Division of State Lands, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have a lease related to the Ely Conservation Camp. The lease requires the removal of all infrastructure and equipment upon termination of the lease and restoration of the landscape to a natural state. The patent requires reversion of the property if not used for correctional purposes for five consecutive years or upon termination. The Department of Corrections stopped using the facility in July 2022. Therefore, we are anticipating a possible fiscal impact in FY 2026 for the return of this land to the BLM. We are working with the Governor's Finance Office and Fiscal staff to come up with solutions for the 2023-2025 biennium related to the reversion of this property to BLM.

I will now discuss budget account 3751.

**PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NDOC - ELY STATE PRISON (101-3751)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-25**

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

Budget account 3751 is for the Ely State Prison, which is a male minimum, maximum, and close custody institution located in Ely [page 27, [Exhibit C](#)]. The Governor's recommended budget includes funding of \$29 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024, and \$30 million in FY 2025. The Ely State Prison has 284 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions for each year in the 2023-2025 biennium. Decision unit enhancement (E) 673 is funding for the two-grade salary increase, which costs \$1.8 million in FY 2024 and \$1.8 million in FY 2025. Additionally, one-shot funds total \$422,778 to fund increased security equipment and officer safety equipment.

In March of 2022, the State Department of Corrections and the Division of Forestry (NDF), State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources implemented a plan which brought the NDF qualified minimum security inmate workers back to Ely. The Department of Corrections is housing the inmate workers in building 12 at Ely State Prison. Currently, building 12 is limited to a maximum of 30 inmate workers due to space limitations. Since March 2022, the Department of Corrections has provided an average of 16 inmate workers, staffing one full NDF fire crew or two project squads. The Department of Corrections is working with the NDF and the Office of Finance, Office of the Governor to assess the sustainability of these modified fire crew operations at the Ely State Prison. Currently, we are working on a long-term plan with NDF and the Governor's Finance Office.

I will now discuss budget account 3754 for the Tonopah Conservation Camp.

**PUBLIC SAFETY
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
NDOC - TONOPAH CONSERVATION CAMP (101-3754)
BUDGET PAGE CORRECTIONS-110**

Kristina Shea, Deputy Director, Support Services, Department of Corrections:

The Tonopah Conservation Camp (TCC) is a male minimum custody facility located in Tonopah [page 28, [Exhibit C](#)]. The Governor's recommended budget includes funding of \$1.8 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024 and \$1.9 million in FY 2025. Funding is for 13 full-time-equivalent (FTE) positions for each year in the biennium. Decision unit enhancement (E) 673 funds the two-grade salary increase of \$90,174 in FY 2024 and \$93,765 in FY 2025.

In November 2022, the Department of Corrections (NDOC) temporarily closed TCC due to safety and security concerns. All the offenders were transferred to the Pioche Conservation

Camp. However, the Department has retained the positions at TCC to make sure the facility is secure and to protect state property until the facility can be mothballed. After the meeting with the Department of Corrections and Division of Forestry (NDF), State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Office of Finance, Office of the Governor on March 1, 2023, the TCC is recommended to remain closed during the 2023-2025 biennium. We will work with Fiscal staff to determine the appropriate funding needed to mothball the facility and provide funding for a time for the current employees to transfer into other NDOC positions or find other employment opportunities.

On behalf of the staff and the leadership team, the Department of Corrections thanks you for your consideration and thanks you for your service.

Chair Watts:

We are going to address this in several different pieces. I think there will be some questions that are departmentwide. I will try to guide the members, and we will ask questions specific to some of the institutions and budgets that you presented. We will start with the larger departmentwide issues. You described some of the factors and legislation as well as the pandemic that have impacted the offender population and some of the projections moving forward. How will the Department manage its staffing levels and facility operations if actual offender populations are greater, or less, than the populations projected by the James F. Austin Associates/Institute (JFA) projections?

James Dzurenda, Director, Department of Corrections:

If projections are too high and populations are less, it will be easy for me to handle. Technically, what we do when our population goes down is we try to safely close certain housing areas and institutions to lower the number of offenders in any institutions, which allows me to reduce the number of staff needed to operate the facility. So that is easy.

The problem occurs when the population is higher and we go above the projections, and the population increases more than 2 percent a year. Then we are going to be in trouble, and we need to get more creative in what we do. What we do is we start looking at our posting plan. Is there anything that we can do with that to reduce our current posting? This could include assigning law enforcement officers to do our outside hospital trips, or deciding whether we can do our hospital stays, which requires two officers to one offender assigned to hospital stays. We could assign that to noncorrectional staff, which could be retired police officers or retired correction officers to reduce the number of correction officers that we need. That could free up officers to run the operations, and we could move the officers inside where the actual population is.

There are other things that we are doing as alternatives to segregation, which does have an impact on the violence levels and our capacity beds. When offenders misbehave, they go to a higher-level bed space like our close custody, and they go from minimum to close custody where we do not have bed space. The higher the level of security of offender means more

staffing needed to run the operations. Having alternatives to segregation like wireless devices, more programming, and things that can change behaviors can reduce those who are receiving misbehavior disciplinary action, and that will prevent those from going to higher-level institutions or higher-level classifications. That is a tactic to utilize to reduce the number of staff needed in the facility. That is something we do that probably no one even realizes we do. We try to control where the offenders are being placed in the population and classification levels because the lower classification level means less staff needed to operate. That is another tactic.

The other thing we do is look at each facility and determine the vacancy rates at each facility to decide the appropriate staffing level that could move from one facility to another. If our population goes up, we watch what happens with our human resources and our staffing. If the staffing does not change, then the facility with the highest vacancy rate will have staff moved, and we move those offenders and close those units at that facility to move offenders to other facilities. That will increase the staffing at the other facilities, but without as dramatic an increase in safety and security. There are still tactics that we have. It would all depend on how high of a rate that we go beyond the 2 percent JFA projection. Hopefully, they are either right or wrong in the wrong direction and our population does decrease. I think we are going to see a decrease in our population based upon how we are doing our program reentry and what we do to the offenders to make sure we change behaviors and send them back with the right tools in the community. That is what reduces victimization in our community and reduces recidivism, which will help with our population numbers.

Chair Watts:

I am glad to hear the commitment of the Department of Corrections to focus on corrections.

Senator Goicoechea:

I have a couple of questions about the JFA inmate projections. We are anticipating a 2 percent increase, and you will be able to manage that. I am really focused on the honor camps and where we are headed with them. Do those inmates still get two days for every day served if you are in a conservation camp?

James Dzurenda:

Yes. The problem with the conservation camps goes back to Assembly Bill 236 of the 80th Session. Our numbers of minimum security population are continuously decreasing. When you talk about Assembly Bill 236 of the 80th Session, there are fewer offenders in those classifications of minimum security coming into the institutions now because there are alternatives to incarceration. There are changes from class B to class C felonies. All these things influence our minimum security because if we are not getting in the lower-level sentences, which are our minimum securities, then those populations start going away eventually. That is the issue that is going to be affecting our campuses and the number of minimum security that we have.

Senator Goicoechea:

As we are looking at this, you need the personnel to supervise them. I understand that. But is there any ability to raise the threshold? I know if I were serving time, I would be looking for two days for every day I served because I want out. It seems like it would make sense, and we would be able to shift even more offenders. I realize you have guidelines on how and what level of inmate can be in a camp. Can you shift that up a bit? I am trying to figure out how we can maintain our Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and supply the good those conservation camps do for the community. I see you are looking at approximately 300 inmates a year. Clearly five camps will handle that. We have nine camps. I am concerned about the total impact to the state by closing those camps.

James Dzurenda:

I completely understand 100 percent, and I agree with you. There is a balance between safety, security, and classification levels. Yes, we could potentially lower our thresholds for those going into minimums. We could give some mediums the opportunity to go into minimums, but there is a level that we must look at for safety and security before putting the wrong offenders out there. Even having the classification of minimums that we put in the camps now, we still have problems. We have fights, we have assaults, we have drugs, we have weapons, and we have cellphone contrabands. When you start increasing the level of offenders who go into these camps, that also increases the violence. It is a balance, and the last thing I would ever want to see is those camps completely going away because I know the impact it will have on forestry and fire conservation.

I am trying to find ways of doing this. I do not know if there is an out with it. When I left here in 2019, we had 1,100 offenders who were either in the conservation camps or on the waiting list to get in. Today, we barely hit 300, and that is not going to end; that is going to keep decreasing. We get offenders coming in our door the same day from the jail systems who are eligible for parole on the day they get there, which has never happened before. What I have to weigh is medical and mental health in the camps, because even if you are minimum security in our facilities, there are certain medical issues such as if you have an allergy to bees, or if you have an allergy to something that you are working with such as smoke, then you cannot go into these camps. Medical and mental health affects our minimums that can be eligible for the camp. It is a balance, and I am hoping that we find a way to keep the camps open, but I am not too confident we can.

Senator Harris:

Can you briefly discuss how some of the staffing vacancies have impacted program opportunities for offenders throughout the state's facilities?

James Dzurenda:

Vacancies dramatically affect programs. When you look at a balance, most of our facilities that are in the rural areas like Ely and Lovelock are at minimum staffing levels every day.

What happens when you are at minimum or go below minimum, you must shut down areas. Now you must weigh what you shut down. We obviously cannot shut down the housing units unless we lock them down. Without locking down, what gets shut down next or right before that is programs. Any time you reduce the number of programs and reduce the time that programs meet, that directly affects our reentry, our population, violence, and it affects everything. Programs are necessary. However, you cannot have an effective program without having effective security. It all plays a part of each other. Yes, our vacancy rates are affecting our programs and our reentry, which eventually comes back and could hurt recidivism.

Senator Harris:

My next question is about the projections in population increase. I know you did not do the projections yourself. We have a third party do that. Is there any information about why we are estimating that population is going to continue to grow? Are we going to get better at catching criminals? Are they anticipating creating new crimes? Do you know what the driver is?

Kristina Shea:

They use a complex wizard methodology. There is a report right here. It is approximately 100 pages long and takes into consideration the population increases, the crime rates, what they are seeing for any period, and projects it over the course of a ten-year average. In general, the reports have a calculation that they do to see how close their projection was, and they disclose that information to the Governor's Finance Office. It is a complex calculation, and JFA has been doing it for a long time.

Senator Harris:

I will have to read the 100 pages to figure out what it is that they think. It is not just one, but usually there is something that is going to be a main driver or two or three factors out of the hundreds that they may consider. If it were population, I would feel better than if it was some other less desirable indication.

Assemblyman Hafen:

I appreciate you bringing up the Division of Forestry (NDF) and trying to meet the statutory requirements. Could you give us an update when you get one? I would like to stay in the loop of how those conversations are going. I echo Senator Goicoechea's concerns with closing the conservation camps and trying to meet the statutory requirements that we have. Could you also touch on the strategies at the top of the Department's priorities to improve retention, recruitment, and the additional resources needed to implement those strategies?

Kristina Shea:

Yes, I will work with your staff and make sure that you are included on anything with NDF meetings. I am committed to making sure you are aware and in the loop. In response to the question regarding the human resource strategies, I think at this point we are in the

discovery process going into our agency to determine what the bottlenecks are. Right now, we are seeing processes taking upwards of two to three months versus two to three weeks for a new candidate coming into the Department. We are trying to find bottlenecks within our own internal processes as well as trying to produce creative solutions around marketing and advertising and whether there is a way for us to do some campaigns there. We are looking at strategies where we can determine how people hear about our work. We also want to work with the Division of Human Resource Management (DHRM), Department of Administration to make sure that the inexperienced staff in our human resources department are trained because they have not been with the Department for a long time. We are working with DHRM to get the training that the staff need and making sure we understand implications and work with Smart 21. Our primary focus is on our internal efficiencies so that when we do have people who want to join, they can join as quickly as possible and help with our staffing shortage.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

I want to expand a bit more on those staff shortages. We see them in all departments. If we are going to be talking to constituents or school-age children, what kind of requirements are you looking for? What do you need for someone who wants to fill some of these positions? Are they four-year degrees? Is it a special academy or a certificate program?

James Dzurenda:

To be a corrections officer, we only require a General Educational Development or high school equivalency, and the candidate must be 21 years old in accordance with the Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission (POST) requirements. However, we do hire trainees who are younger than 21 years of age. Right now, part of our human resource strategy is to produce some alternatives to hiring contingencies such as we will hire you if you pass the one-day background. Then we will hire you, and eventually, if you do not pass the physical fitness or the weapons certification, you cannot be a corrections officer. We are looking at ways of hiring individuals as contingencies so that we can lock-in people. What happens when these candidates start looking for jobs, they are not just applying for positions at the Department of Corrections. They shotgun all over the state, the counties, the cities, and they take what first comes to them. I do not want to lose those opportunities and miss those candidates. I am looking for ways that I could hire them as contingencies or lower levels until they reach the POST certification criteria of age and physicals. I am going to figure a way to do that, and I am certain I can lock-in those individuals. Deputy Director Shea talked about the process taking too long, and that is the same reason you have a shotgun approach to these jobs. They find jobs that either pay more or we could have hired them, but it took too long. We cannot do that. It must be quick; it must be easy, and we are going to figure it out to get more creative.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

I want to get more details about the background checks. Obviously, we want people who do not have their own records trying to police people. What if you have a teenager who is in

high school, and they have done some stupid stuff such as they were caught making graffiti or got caught smoking marijuana. Could you explain a bit about your background checks?

James Dzurenda:

When I was talking about the quick background check, what we do is called a National Crime Information Center (NCIC) check, and it just checks to determine if you have any warrants out there or if you have an arrest history. The whole background check takes into consideration issues that you might have had in the past including how long ago and your age. If they are in high school, at that age, those charges are not going to be disclosed in our background checks. But when you have someone who does have a history, it goes under consideration. Also, POST is a big part of determining whether the background check clears because they have certain criteria about the background. I do have an override potential on my end where if the incident happened 10 or 20 years ago, which hits an objective rejection, I can override it to say that time has passed, the person has been a good individual in the community, and I will be able to override it. But we rely on the backgrounds when POST comes into play because they determine the overall classification and criteria for employment for peace officers. That is where I struggle with this process.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

Given the staffing shortages and potential safety concerns of both staff and offenders, is the Department considering the temporary closure of any facilities, or the permanent closure of those that have been temporarily closed? If so, what facilities are being considered, and what is the timeline?

James Dzurenda:

I mentioned earlier about other camps. Camps are the only locations that we are looking to potentially close. We are meeting with the Governors Finance Office, the Legislative Counsel Bureau staff, and the NDF staff to try to determine what is the best approach to help the staffing needs and the vacancies, but also the NDF and conservation needs. There are still discussions going on right now. I do not believe there is any closure that is in the immediate future, but it could change quickly depending on our staffing. The numbers of vacancies continue to go up each day, and it does hurt.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

I have a question about the commissary. Does it have a consistent pricing across all the areas? What is the markup on those items? I know that there are some families who also deposit money into those accounts. Into what account is that deposited? How much of the budget would you say comes from family deposits for the commissaries?

Kristina Shea:

I have just returned to the Department in the last month. I need to familiarize myself more about this account. Just to give you the overall background, it goes into a trust account, a 6900 account. Then our inmate banking services oversees it. As far as the markup, I have

a report that I have been reviewing over time, and I can provide that to your staff that shows the markup.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

How much do the family donations or the family putting money into those trust accounts make up the total amount in that account?

Kristina Shea:

I will provide that also in the follow up with your staff.

Senator Goicoechea:

In the past, we had a program for prison industries, and it had an advisory board committee that was comprised of the private sector and some legislators. I sat on that board for a while. There are other people with relationships on that board. What happened to that program? I thought it was beneficial for the inmates, the programs, the Legislature, and the private sector. I do not know whether it was COVID-19 related, but we moved away from it. We have not been meeting, so I was curious where that was. I thought it was a good interaction.

James Dzurenda:

I remember it too. It was an important process that we had in place, but a legislative change moved it. I am not sure of the reasons behind that, and I found that out about three weeks ago as well. That was a good thing having it in place.

Senator Goicoechea:

I think we went to Judiciary, which is kind of providing the oversight on it. But it was a better unit when it was the private sector and selected legislators. The process worked well, and it brought in the Legislature. It is something we need to look at reinstating.

Chair Watts:

Once the housing plan gets finalized, we look forward to seeing that, along with a summary of the conversations with the Division of Forestry, the overarching plan for conservation camps, the collaboration on firefighting, and the commissary information. I have a couple of questions. You mentioned during the presentation that there are more serious offenders, and you talked about the ratios. I understand that we have seen a decline in the minimum security population. I want to get some clarification. Are you seeing that on a percentage basis, or on a nominal basis with a higher overall number of more serious offenders, or is it both?

James Dzurenda:

It is both, and that is why the Nevada Sentencing Commission is the best entity to address this because of the data that they have. The data will even show what type of populations are coming in. It was presented in one of the other committees that the sex crimes and more

violent crimes are the ones that are coming in the doors. It is the overall, and the ratio is going up in violent crimes.

Chair Watts:

One of the questions I have is at a high level in terms of vacancies and housing units. You have talked about some of the shifts that are made, including sometimes closing housing units and consolidating. Does that ever result in bunking up and other things that are less than ideal housing conditions for the population to make it work?

James Dzurenda:

No, not in this Department currently. But that is a strategy they do statewide in other states if they run out of actual beds. I do not see our problem is running out of beds. It is our staffing that is the issue. I do not foresee any of that ever happening with what you are talking about with housing and gymnasiums and overflow areas. I do not foresee it, and, hopefully, I am right.

Chair Watts:

I just wanted to make sure that being below capacity because of our staffing capacity, we are not creating situations where the housing is inappropriate for the population. The last question I had goes to staffing capacity. We are familiar with the major recommendations in the Governor's recommended budget. We have talked to some other departments as well and heard that hopefully it will stop the bleeding. But sometimes we are still looking at significant differences between where we will end up at the end of these cost-of-living adjustments for officers with those two-step increases, and competing positions in the private sector, in other state agencies, and with local governments in some cases. What strategies are at the top of the Department's priorities to improve retention and recruitment, and what additional resources are needed to implement those strategies?

James Dzurenda:

The two-step increase is going to make a substantial impact. Anytime I hear from corrections officers on their exit interviews about why they went to the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department or why they go to a corrections facility in a different county, the majority of that is over what they are taking home for pay, whether it is having more money coming in or less money going to the Public Employees' Retirement System. It has always been the benefit as the number one factor.

However, a factor that we never look at that I think is going to be key is staff wellness. Even if staff is underpaid or not taking a lot home, the wellness part of that employment is important. We can produce ways, which we are trying to do through our new human resource strategies, to improve wellness and make it better for our staff to make sure that they remain. We are proud of the staff that we have, it is a team effort—they survive, I survive, they fail, I fail. It must be something that the staff really understand that we are there for them in the wellness part. That is going to keep staff from leaving on the attrition

side. We are putting all this together, and we are trying to produce recruiting strategies and asking companies out there to help. It is going to be important. This is going to be our worst time coming up this summer. Usually, during summertime we lose a lot more staff traditionally. I think right after that we are going to start. If we initiate our human resource initiatives, we are going to see a dramatic improvement by the end of the year.

Chair Watts:

Please keep us posted. As we get to fill some of these positions, there will be less required overtime. Going back to the concept of wellness and taking some of the pressure off the existing officers and staff, the Department of Public Safety has provided us with some information. I think your Department has in the past as well. I think it would be helpful for us to understand, at least anecdotally, where some of the departing individuals are going. You mentioned, for example, the local police departments. After we make these increases, what is that difference going to be so that we can understand this? What is that landscape going to look like as employees consider making those decisions?

With that, we will move to a discussion about the Ely State Prison. The first question that we have is from Assemblywoman Anderson.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

Has the Department been able to manage the offender population safely and effectively with the continued closure of those three housing units at the Ely State Prison? Under what circumstances would the Department reopen one or more of the closed housing units?

James Dzurenda:

We monitor our violence rates and disciplinary action rates at facilities. Any time you close a unit down, like Ely State Prison, and move offenders to High Desert State Prison, does it increase the violence rates at High Desert State Prison. We have been monitoring that, and I would think it would, but it did not. When we moved them, our institutional disciplinary boards were steady, and we have not seen a dramatic increase when we were moving beds over, especially when I looked at when we moved Ely State Prison inmates to High Desert State Prison and Northern Nevada Correctional Center. Lower numbers do not technically mean that we are going to have less violence. Moving the numbers any higher does not necessarily mean that you do higher numbers. We closed three housing units at the Ely State Prison, and we moved those inmates who we thought were the best behaved out of there, and it did not have an impact on the receiving facility. That is why the violence, or the incident rates, stayed consistent at Ely State Prison because those who were causing the issues were still there. Those who were not causing the issues are the offenders who we moved out, and we did not see the increase in that. We look at that and we monitor it. We are not ashamed to say we made a mistake if violence goes up in another facility from what we saw or what we moved; we would reverse what we did because our violence rates and our incident rates are the number one concern for us.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

I understand it has more to do with the behaviors and the interaction of how some people work with each other as opposed to staffing.

James Dzurenda:

That is correct.

Senator Goicoechea:

Now you have three housing units closed there, but you are using one as a minimum security to supply at least a couple of crews. You have ability to open one of those other housing units that is closed presently. We have 30 inmates in that one. But could you use a couple of those and expand the camp program which would fill the need in northeastern Nevada? I know what the staffing issues are in Ely State Prison, and it is tough. I am curious, is that a thought?

James Dzurenda:

You do not want to do that because if I were able to open a housing unit with the number of staff inside who operate that unit, there would be fewer staff to reopen Ely Conservation Camp. The housing unit that you are talking about is where we move the NDF offenders. It is not inside the perimeter of the facility. It is one housing unit that has minimum security in our outside grounds. It has less staff than needed. It has only one staff. It does not provide perimeters and escorts that you would have if you were on the inside. It would cost more money for us to open a maximum security housing unit for low security minimum offenders.

Senator Goicoechea:

I knew you had some closed units. I knew you had a crew there, but I did not realize it was outside the fence.

Chair Watts:

I think we will talk about the Ely Conservation Camp again and get into some of that. But first Chair Harris has a question.

Senator Harris:

I have some questions about operations at the state prison. Is death row still under lockdown there?

James Dzurenda:

As of yesterday, it is not, but I must get back to you about that. They had a serious incident when they were redoing all their procedures. They are remaining on partial-lockdown status, not full lockdown, until those procedures are changed. The best I could do is provide an update on that.

Senator Harris:

In addition to that information, would you follow up with any information about the last time that inmates had any yard time, and the last time that they were able to shower? I want that information to be on the record. Traditionally, it is every 72 hours, but I have been hearing that it is more like a week at this point. I want to get some information about the last time these inmates were able to shower, have yard time, and whether they are still on lockdown. And if they are, what is the plan to make sure that they have the basic human needs that we all have.

James Dzurenda:

Yes, we will follow up with you on that.

Chair Watts:

Members, are there any additional questions on the Ely State Prison? Hearing none, I know on our agenda we have the Warm Springs Correctional Center next. But because of some of the interrelated issues with the housing of the conservation program at the prison and the long-term plans for the conservation camps, we are going to go next to the Ely Conservation Camp. First, I will see if Senator Goicoechea has anything that he wants to ask about this budget account.

Senator Goicoechea:

Are you going to continue to operate the Ely Conservation Camp? The bottom line is, are you forecasting that you are going to close it? The camp is in mothball status and has deteriorated. Regarding the five-year provision in the patent—that must be a Recreation and Public Purposes Act facility. It sounds like we are headed there with the camp.

James Dzurenda:

That is correct. But the issue of why it is partially mothballed now is twofold. We do have one staff member who is still assigned there. The reason is not only for vandalism but communications. We do not have fiber optics going into the Ely State Prison yet. All our communications come out of the Ely Conservation Camp. When we have radio communications, there is a base that comes out of the Ely Conservation Camp that controls that. We are in the process of moving all that over to the Ely State Prison. You cannot tear it down or close it right now because we still have communications out of the Ely Conservation Camp, and we do not want it to get vandalized. When they first left the facility prior to my arrival, they were vandalized. I believe NDF was robbed of about \$80,000 worth of equipment out of there. It is something that we must monitor, and that is the reason we still have a staff member assigned there.

Senator Goicoechea:

I thought you had a fiber optics line at the Ely State Prison.

James Dzurenda:

My belief is that they cannot connect the communication system through that at this time, which is why it is still at the Ely Conservation Camp.

Senator Goicoechea:

I know the state fiber does get to the Ely State Prison, at least I thought it did. I am curious about that. I thought you had a fiber line into the prison. I can understand the communication side that would be radio and microwave. At some point, it sounds like we are going to close the Ely State Prison. I hope we can take a long hard look at either expanding what is available at the Ely State Prison or we will continue to get a bigger void as we talk about the honor camps. You need to understand we have it functioning right now. If Tonopah is going away, technically, all we really have is Carlin. Wells is uncertain, and Humboldt is uncertain. There is a lot of Nevada that is not going to have any protection out there. I should not say protection but assistance, especially with fires.

Chair Watts:

I would like to follow up on this. I think some of this will also be provided in the follow up on the ongoing conversations with the Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. It looks like we are mothballing it for now, but based on the projections, we are looking at downsizing the number of camps. Ely Conservation Camp is going to be shut down. We are going to restore it to its natural state in compliance with the lease with the BLM. At least for this biennium, the plan is to continue that maximum 30-member crew within that available unit at Ely State Prison to do some conservation work. What is the thought moving forward? Are we are going to keep just 30? Are we going to look at moving them to Pioche? What is the plan in that area for that conservation program since we are looking at shutting down the Ely Conservation Camp long term?

James Dzurenda:

The last meeting we had with NDF determined that there is really no training facility for those currently at Ely to be able to train, so it is just housing. They staged their housing there for those who are already trained. They do not do the training there. They will do their training somewhere else. If we keep that open, they will have to do the same thing—train them at a different camp and then move them into there because there is no training ability for NDF to train them at Ely.

Chair Watts:

We are looking at consolidation and operations modification, and we look forward to getting some additional information on this. We have a decent grasp on it for this biennium. But we are also trying to understand where we are going longer term based on some of these changes in population. What is the geographic distribution as well, to try and make sure that we can respond as best as possible with the resources that we have. Members, are there any other questions about the Ely Conservation Camp?

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management lease for the property states that there cannot be a lapse in usage for correctional purposes of more than five years for the operation. What is that date?

James Dzurenda:

July 2025 is the actual five-year date.

Senator Goicoechea:

Because you do have staff there, you can agree that the date is uncertain. I am trying to clarify that. I do not know how that would work, but you have staff there today. Somebody is living at the camp, so it is in operation. I do not think the BLM would be in any hurry to bounce us. But I am saying if it is a long-term plan, the quicker we move, the better.

Chair Watts:

Let us talk a bit about Warm Springs Correctional Center. We have a question from Assemblywoman Dickman.

Assemblywoman Dickman:

We know the work you do is challenging. Could you talk more about what operational and safety benefits have been experienced from your decision to close Warm Springs Correctional Center?

James Dzurenda:

It was not my decision to close it. When Warm Springs Correctional Center was temporarily shut down, the staff from Northern Nevada Correctional Center was able to get some relief from overtime. They were still short of correction officers, even moving all the staff from Warm Springs Correctional Center to Northern Nevada Correctional Center. That is how bad the vacancy rate was at Northern Nevada Correctional Center—all that allowed them to do was to reduce the amount of overtime that was being created because of the vacancies. That is what happens when you have too much overtime. When you have too many vacancies, it creates a safety and security issue because you are going to have staff who are either too exhausted or would be calling in sick. Workers' compensation cases increase because staff are exhausted. Their decision making may be faulty because they may not be in their right mind, and that is dangerous. That is why it was more of a relief for the staff at Northern Nevada Correctional Center to move the inmate population out of the Warm Springs Correctional Center.

Chair Watts:

As you finish the housing plan, I think that will be helpful and will help us understand what the plan is for the potential reopening and what budget adjustments may need to be made in relation to that. And to the point about vacancies, we are going to budget for these positions. We want to fill the positions, and that has been a historical struggle. Keep us informed as

that moves along, and what that looks like. We know at the end of the day, the actual staff that we have on the ground really influences a lot of these operational decisions. Are there any other questions about the Warm Springs Correctional Center? All right, hearing none, we will move to the Tonopah Conservation Camp.

I think this has been well covered in your presentation. You gave us an update on some of the plans there in terms of trying to move it into mothball status and transition the staff. As you complete all those plans for the facilities, provide us an update as soon as possible. Members, are there any additional questions on the Tonopah Conservation Camp or anything else related to the Department's presentation today?

Senator Goicoechea:

I have more of a comment than a question. We really need to look and focus on the fact that Tonopah is the geographic center of the state. It is a long way from Pioche to Tonopah or Monitor Valley if we have a fire at Green Monster Mine—Carlin Conservation Camp is 200 miles away. As we look at this, I know it is a real hardship on you, but the Tonopah Conservation Camp is vital to central Nevada. Given its location, you can put a little harder criminal in there because it is a long walk out.

Chair Watts:

As we get some information about that, with the timeline, we are not looking necessarily at permanent closure. I think to your point, the difference between Pioche and Ely and Pioche and Tonopah is significant. We look forward to continuing to evaluate and have conversations about that.

Senator Harris:

I have more of a comment than a question. It is clear from the discussion that we are going to need more from you about the plan and not a facility-by-facility specific plan, but a bigger overall plan about what we are opening, what we are closing, where people are going to be, and geographic considerations. That will allow us to make the decisions that we have to make about how much money we are going to give you to do that. Right now, we have disparate pieces, disparate plans, and a couple of maybes. Whenever you are ready, and hopefully before budget closings, we would love to see something comprehensive about reforming the state system, not on a large scale, but I mean openings, closings, and where we are housing individuals. The sooner you can get that, the sooner we can do our job.

Chair Watts:

The other problem is staff. That is something that all of us have heard about across many agencies, but particularly for the operations of the Department, for the safety and wellbeing of the staff, and for the safety and wellbeing of those who are housed in these facilities. We want to make sure that we are doing this right. We have run into issues in the interim where there are significant vacancies, and there are significant savings, but there is only so much that we can do as the Interim Finance Committee to try and help address some of those

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things. We want to make sure that by the time we get the budget approved this session, the Department is on a trajectory that it will have the staffing that is needed. There being no other questions, we will move to the last item on our agenda today. I will open public comment

[Public comment was heard.]

Chair Watts:

There being no further business before the Subcommittees, this meeting is adjourned [at 9:23 a.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Janice Wright
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Howard Watts, Chair

DATE: _____

Senator Dallas Harris, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Nevada Department of Corrections Department Overview Budget Hearing," dated March 8, 2023, presented by James Dzurenda, Director, Department of Corrections.