

MINUTES

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

DATE: February 15, 2017

The subcommittee meeting was called to order by Representative Pagel at 10:30 a.m.

Roll was taken: Present – Representatives Pagel, Yaroch, Afendoulis, VanSingel, Santana, and Durhal III
Absent – None

I. Overview of the Department of Corrections

Heidi Washington, Director of the Department of Corrections appeared before the subcommittee to give an overview of the department and an overview of the contents of the FY 2017-18 Executive budget recommendation. She discussed that a primary goal of the department is to ensure the success of inmates when they transition back to their communities, in an effort to keep them from returning to prison. She discussed the increasing need to focus on programming needs of probationers, on the front end of the system, to keep them from going to prison. She discussed challenges facing the department, including the aging prison population and associated medical costs, the increase in the number of female prisoners, the number of and appropriately caring for mentally ill prisoners, and the need for correction officer recruitment due to the high number of vacant positions. Finally, she discussed FY 2017-18 budget recommendations, highlighting, in particular, two requests for new funding: \$1.5 million for the Westside Residential Alternative to Prison Program, and \$4.4 million for training new custody staff. Discussion ensued (questions and answers).

II. Overview of the Office of Legislative Corrections Ombudsman

Keith Barber, Ombudsman, appeared before the subcommittee to give an overview of the Office of Legislative Corrections Ombudsman. Mr. Barber discussed establishment of the office and cited statutory authority for the office, as well as statutory authority for responsibilities of the office. He discussed the role of the staff in his office and their caseloads. Discussion ensued (questions and answers).

III. Adjourn

Representative Pagel adjourned the subcommittee meeting at 11:45 a.m.