

Department of Homeland Security



Southern Regional Jail Investigation



Prepared for General Counsel Berkley Bentley
"This Report Contains Attorney Client Information"

Forward

By order of Jim Justice, Governor for the state of West Virginia, an investigation was conducted at Southern Regional Jail to determine if the allegations being placed by former and current employees, current and former inmates, and family members of inmates have merit.

Assignment

1. To determine if employees of the state of West Virginia denied water for days to any inmate incarcerated at the Southern Regional Jail (SRJ).
2. To determine if inmates had to resort to drinking out of toilets due to the SRJ failing to adequately provide water.
3. To determine if toilet paper is denied to inmates.
4. To determine if inmates are not provided mattresses and made to sleep on bare floors.
5. To determine if inmate's basic needs are not being provided.

Plan of Action

1. To conduct an Operational Review of the SRJ.
2. To conduct a review of the utilities of the facility.
3. To conduct a review of the purchases made by SRJ, including but not limited to food, water, toilet paper, and other hygiene products.
4. To conduct interviews of inmates that had been sentenced and were awaiting transfer to a state prison.
5. To conduct interviews of Corrections Officers with various years of experience.
6. Attempt to interview past employees of SRJ.

Operational Review

- The parking lot and exterior of facility was maintained.
- The lobby walls were fresh, and floors were buffed and clean.
- Furniture in lobby was clean and stain free.
- Executive offices were clean, neat, and professional looking.
- Entry was made into the secure area of SRJ.
 - Walls were clean and floors were buffed.
 - No signs of litter
- Main Control room was organized and clean.
- Due to COVID, the Gym area was being used for the storage of water, normal and special COVID cleaning supplies, other products, and mattresses.
 - While conducting the review of the Gym, four new inmates were in the Gym area and had been assigned a new mattress, personal hygiene products, and a tumbler for water consumption.

- The inmate common housing areas were clean.
- The body scanner was clean and in working order.
- Painting of some areas of SRJ was resuming and vandalism was also visible.
 - Inmates had vandalized newly painted concrete walls. Corrections Officers had observed that inmates had been scraping latex paint off the walls which allowed at least one inmate to make a “Head Knocker”. Their quick action allowed the confiscation of the below “Head Knocker” in March 2022. A Head Knocker is a heavy object placed into a sock or other material that can be swung by an inmate causing harm to another inmate or Corrections Officer. Picture below:



Utilities

- During the period July 1, 2021, to present there was no time that the Public Water Source was turned off or water volume reduced.
- SRJ's Maintenance Supervisor states that in March 2022 a hot water tank was replaced. However, during the replacement, hot water was circulated through a separate tank during the repair.
- During the period July 1, 2021, the septic system has been in 100% operation.
 - There are periods that when inmates vandalize sinks, toilets, sprinkler heads, water fountains, and shower controls that require water being shutoff in order to conduct the repairs.
 - SRJ's Maintenance Supervisor states that on the limited occasions, water is also turned off to repair a leak, but never more than a couple of hours and never overnight.

In summary, the public water source is not an issue for inmates not having water. The water is only turned off when it is necessary to make repairs in response to inmate vandalism and to conduct normal repairs, and at no time have inmates been without water because of these repairs for any longer than a few hours.

Water

SRJ, as with all West Virginia Regional Jails and a vast majority of all jails across the World, are designed using a series of large rooms with smaller sleeping areas. The large rooms are commonly referred to as a POD. The sleeping areas are called cells.

- At SRJ, inmates can obtain water 24/7 within their cell using the sink.
- During time periods that inmates are not required to be in their cells, they have access to an industrial water fountain in each POD.
- SRJ purchases Flex Tumblers for each inmate. Since 7/1/21, SRJ has purchased 4,800 Flex Tumblers to be used for inmate's individual water consumption. A reviewed invoice showed SRJ paid \$6,240.00 for the Flex Tumblers.
- Both staff and inmates who were interviewed stated that on occasion, inmates will attempt to or accomplish vandalizing their POD's water fountains and their cell sinks.
 - When inmates vandalize their cell sinks, it results in the water being turned off only in their cell while it is repaired.
 - One inmate, who was interviewed, stated that when his cellmate tore the cell sink off the wall, he still was able to obtain water by handing his water tumbler to an inmate in the next cell to fill it up with water.
- One inmate stated that during his incarceration at SRJ the sink and the POD's water fountain have never been broken at the same time.
- When inmates vandalize their cells, or POD's, sources of drinking water; maintenance workers attempt to repair the damage promptly.
- Inmates will also attempt to, or accomplish, vandalizing the sprinkler heads of the fire suppression safety system in the cells and/or PODs by "popping them" in an effort to flood the POD.
- Finally, in the rare event that their cell sinks, and water fountains are vandalized, the inmates interviewed stated they could go the POD showers to fill up their water tumbler.
- If the facility public water source would be turned off, or if sinks, water fountains, and showers at the same time are not working the facility maintains a minimum of a 3-day supply of bottled water for these emergencies. They also have water for cooking.
 - During the period of 7/1/21 to present, SRJ has purchased \$13,300.03 of bottled water.
 - Records show purchases of 16.9 oz bottles and 5-gallon jugs of water.
 - An inventory was taken on March 30, 2022, and 8,232 bottles of water were in stock in the gym area.
- During the delivery of breakfast, the inmate receives a container of milk.
- During lunch a bottle of juice.
- For dinner the inmate receives a flavored drink, water and a flavor packet, or water.
- SRJ also has a commissary program contracted with a private vendor.
 - The inmate can order snacks and liquid beverages.
 - The payment of the commissary orders is made from an electronic bank account at SRJ.
- Inmates (number not provided for security concerns) were interviewed on March 30, 2022, and on April 5, 2022. The inmates stated that water was available all the time with a rare exception.
 - The exception was in the Segregation and Quarantine units. A number of the interviewed inmates had spent time in either the Segregation or Quarantine units.
 - A Segregation Unit is the housing of inmates in a special POD, separate from

- the general population, due to disciplinary issues and/or safety concerns stemming from the inmates violent or assaultive conduct.
 - A Quarantine Unit is a special unit separate from the general population, due to COVID or other medical issues.
- One of the inmates interviewed, who had been placed in the segregation unit for a fight with another inmate, stated he never went more than a couple hours without water.
- When asked if an inmate would go 72 hours without food or water, the inmates interviewed stated, “inmates will say just about anything in an attempt to get out of jail.”
- All inmates interviewed, with one exception, stated they never witnessed water deprivation while in the Segregation or Quarantine unit.
 - The one inmate stated that he/she went 5 days without water in the Segregation Unit.
 - When asked if he/she was provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner the inmate stated “yes”.
 - When asked if it included milk, juice, and water the inmate stated “yes”.
 - When asked if he/she was provided at least one hour outside the cell, the inmate responded “yes”
 - When asked if the POD had a water fountain the inmate stated “yes”.
 - Correctional Officers interviewed confirmed that the Segregation and Quarantine units’ procedures with water are different than the general population due to inmate movement restrictions that are in place for violent behavior and/or to reduce the transmission of diseases.
 - Inmates in both units receive their normal meals with the same beverages and water throughout each day as the general population.
 - Inmates in both units have access to their sinks and are assigned an 8 oz Flex Tumbler.
 - In addition to COs providing water, inmates in the Quarantine Unit have 24-hour access to nurses, contracted by a medical contract with the state of West Virginia.
 - The nurses can and do provide water to inmates.
 - Inmates in these units also have the opportunity, at various times of the day, to walk to a water fountain, take a shower, receive pharmaceutical drugs and water to take their doctor prescribed drugs.
 - Inmates also have access to water during medical testing.
- A review was conducted of grievances submitted by inmates and there were no grievances filed by inmates for the period 7/1/21 to present that pertain to water, toilet paper, and mattresses.

In summary, based on the interview of inmates and CO’s, review of records, no history of inmates filing grievances, and no medical cases of dehydration, this allegation is unfounded.

Toilets

- Inmates were interviewed on March 30, 2022, and April 5, 2022. The inmates interviewed were inmates who had been sentenced and were awaiting transfer to a West Virginia prison. The average time served by the inmates interviewed as of March 30, 2022, was 11 months.
- These inmates reported they had never seen or heard of any inmate drinking from a toilet.
 - All inmates interviewed stated that they had knowledge of the reports in the media about inmates drinking from toilets and they made the following comments:
 - Why would anyone do that?

- I have never been denied water
 - That story is from an inmate trying every angle to get out of jail
 - That is just stupid
 - Who would believe that?
- The inmates and COs interviewed also provided information that inmates are using the news media for their personal benefit.
 - One inmate stated that he/she has a contact at “News Channel 6”, and states that the information being provided to Channel 6 will make him “untouchable”.
 - During a recorded telephone conversation, it appears the inmate was discussing a drug purchase, in addition to having his girlfriend provide information to news media.
 - *Female: I gotta talk to you*
 - *INMATE: Ok Talk*
 - *F: I need money from George*
 - *INMATE: for what?*
 - *F: for tampons*
 - *(A narcotics expert with the West Virginia Narcotics Intelligence Unit has read this statement and states the terms “tampon” and “package” used in this conversation is used as a code word for illegal drugs)*
 - *INMATE: well, ok he can give you, how much you need?*
 - *F: I don't know whatever you want me to get, you still have a package coming on the 1st if you wanted one*
 - *INMATE: I'm not worried about none of that shit no more*
 - *F: why are you treating me like this?*
 - *INMATE: I'm tellin you right now I'm not worried about this fuckin phone no more*
 - *F: because you don't give a fuck about me*
 - *INMATE: no, I really don't no more*
 - *F: **after I just exploded and got ahold of the fuckin news and everything just for you to fuckin be able to get out.***
 - The second inmate’s female friend also stated that it was all over Facebook that inmates were drinking from toilets, and the inmate responded by saying “That don’t mean nothing, that don’t mean a thing.” When asked if inmate #2 drank out of a toilet, he/she states, “Who told you that?”
- Fifteen COs were interviewed. Their length of service ranged from 2 months to 23 years. Except for one CO with 15 years of experience, none of them had seen or heard of inmates drinking from the toilets until they saw or heard about the media report.
 - The 15-year veteran stated that over a decade ago, an inmate with an undiagnosed mental illness had been arrested and was booked at SRJ.
 - An inmate sharing a cell with the new inmate called for a CO and told the CO that the new inmate was observed drinking from a toilet.
 - The on-duty nurse was called, and she arranged for the inmate to obtain mental treatment. Other than this one-time event, the 15-year veteran had never seen or heard of this happening.

In summary, based on the interview of inmates and COs, review of records, no history of inmates filing grievances for being deprived of water, no medical cases of dehydration, and what appears to be a movement by some inmates and their family and friends to use the news media to spread false and misleading information as a means of getting released, this allegation is also unfounded.

Toilet Paper

- None of the inmates interviewed had seen or heard of a shortage of toilet paper.
- One of the inmates stated he has been in cells that have accumulated over a dozen rolls of toilet paper.
- An informal walkthrough was conducted and no inmates on March 30, 2022, needed toilet paper. In fact, most cells had multiple rolls. Attached is a picture of a corner of a cell taken on March 29, 2022.
- The financial review showed purchases of toilet paper that occurred on November 18, 2021, for 200 boxes of toilet paper at a cost of \$7,750 and on September 8, 2021, for 200 boxes at a cost of \$7,750 or 38,400 rolls of paper.
- Based on the population of 750 inmates at SRJ and the frequency of purchases it equates to 25.6 rolls of toilet paper per month, per inmate.
- The interviewed inmates found it humorous when they read the toilet paper media report.
- In addition, the financial review showed thousands of dollars for feminine products, toothbrushes, shampoo, toothpaste, bra's, female and male underwear, socks, shoes, pants, shirts, mattresses, and other hygiene products.
- Correction Officers who were interviewed stated they had never heard a complaint about an inmate not having toilet paper and that they are provided toilet paper daily.



In summary, based on the interview of inmates and CO's, review of records, no history of inmates filing grievances for being deprived of toilet paper, this allegation is unfounded.

Mattresses

- The review showed that the facility purchases mattresses on a regular basis. On November 4, 2021, 200 mattresses were purchased for \$22,600.00 and on February 28, 2022, 200 mattresses were purchased for \$22,600.00.
- The mattresses are made from a high-density foam with a vinyl cover. They are made for correctional use.

- Pictures of the mattresses are below:



- There is information from inmates and COs that inmates will frequently rip the plastic off their assigned mattress and tear up the foam to stop up the toilet in their cell.
- When an inmate destroys their bed; the inmate can sleep on the bunk bed or a plastic bed frame that holds the mattress off the floor. A picture of the plastic bed frame is below:



In summary there is no evidence, based on the interview of inmates and CO's, review of records, and no history of inmates filing grievances for being deprived of mattresses. Therefore, this allegation is unfounded.

Additional Information

- In 2019, SRJ started a pilot program called the "Wellness Check". SRJ assigns a CO to walk through each POD and talk to each inmate who wants to engage in conversation and the CO will also talk to an inmate that appears to be disengaged. A sergeant at the facility was interviewed and was filled with pride about his assigned duty. The sergeant was a member of the West Virginia National Guard and has served overseas multiple times. He uses his military training to assist inmates. To date, the program has

prevented at least 3 inmates from attempting suicide. While going from cell to cell the sergeant states he has the opportunity to discuss, with the inmates, their needs and that includes water.

- Another CO, who has been on the job 11 months, and was a former college football player, also took pride in his career as a CO and being assigned as a Wellness Officer.
- One of his additional duties is to check the condition of each POD and cell and the working condition of the cell utilities and door.
- The records of the Wellness program were reviewed for 30 days. Below is an example of the documentation taken for March 11, 2022:

Time	Activity
2340	wellness B5
2342	wellness B4
2345	wellness B6
2348	wellness B7
2350	wellness B2
2354	wellness B3
2358	wellness B1
0002	wellness B8

- The records of the maintenance check over a week's time frame were reviewed. An example is shown below:

SOUTHERN REGIONAL JAIL & CORRECTIONAL FACILITY					
CELL DOOR CHECKS					
CELL	WORKING	BROKEN	CELL	WORKING	BROKEN
B-1-1	Screw Missing	X	B-5-1	HINGE	screws missing
B-1-2	X		B-5-2	X	
B-1-3	X		B-5-3	Lock	
B-1-4	Screw Missing	X	B-5-4	LOCK	Will not secure
B-1-5	X		B-5-5	X	
B-1-6	X		B-5-6	X	
B-1-7	X		B-5-7	X	
B-1-8	X		B-5-8	Screw Missing	Hinge
B-1-9	Screw Missing	X	B-5-9	X	
B-1-10	Lock Sticks	X	B-5-10	X	
B-1-11	Broken Window		B-5-11	HINGE	Broken window
B-1-12	Screw Missing	X	B-5-12	X	
B-1-13	X		B-5-13	X	
B-1-14	Screw Missing	X	B-5-14	X	
B-1-15	Broken Window	Closed	B-5-15	X	
B-1-16	X	Door Hinge	B-5-16	X	
B-2-1	X		B-6-1	Lock	
B-2-2	X		B-6-2	X	

- The importance of this program is that all inmates interact with a CO.

Individuals Who Requested to be Interviewed

The Governor's Office received multiple requests from individuals that wished to be interviewed as part of the Governor's Ordered investigation. An overview of those interviews are as follows:

Two former Corrections Officers (COs) who were employed by SRJ requested to be interviewed. Both former officers had previously been interviewed by a West Virginia television station. Both former officers heard that the Governor requested an investigation into the allegations at SRJ and requested an interview.

- The first former officer (FFO) was employed at SRJ for less than a year and due to COVID restrictions and protocols, he/she was not able to attend the Training Academy.
 - The FFO was very cordial and polite during the conversation.
 - The FFO was thanked for his/her tenure during the first 11 months of the pandemic. He/she stated he/she was grateful for the acknowledgement.
 - The FFO stated that the news reporter cut substantial parts of his/her interview out of the story.
 - The FFO stated that he/she took pride in his/her badge and uniform, and would consider coming back to work as a CO.
 - The FFO stated that he/she is going through some personal issues, and he/she was working over 100 hours per week at his/her current position when he called the media.
 - He/she was asked on a scale of 1 to 10, how he/she would grade his/her performance as a CO. He/she stated a 6.5 since he/she had not been to training.
 - The FFO stated that he/she believes that 95% of the time inmates received water whenever they desired. He/she “believes” the issue with inmates not getting water was in the Segregation and Quarantine Unit.
 - He/she was then asked if he/she knew that another state employee did purposely refuse to obtain water for an inmate. He/she stated he/she did not know personally if this happened but only heard it happened.
 - The FFO was asked if he/she was aware that it was a “dereliction of duty” for a CO not to attend to basic life needs of an inmate. The FFO stated “yes” he/she did.
 - The former CO expressed his/her concern about how slow it was for SRJ maintenance staff to repair sinks and water fountains that had been vandalized by inmates.
 - When asked if he/she considered the pandemic may have delayed repairs, his/her response was “I guess so”.
 - When asked if he/she felt the maintenance crew was slow in performing the repairs in punishment to the inmates, he/she responded “No”.
 - When asked if he/she knew of any inmate who suffered from dehydration, and he/she stated “No”.
 - When asked if he/she knew of any grievances by anyone for lack of water, he/she stated he/she “did not know of any”.
 - The FFO stated during his/her employment he/she never saw or heard of any inmate drinking water from a toilet.
 - The FFO stated that SRJ took very good care of the inmates “personal hygiene” products.
 - When asked how he/she would grade SRJ on a scale of 1 to 10 on their devotion to protecting inmates, the FFO stated he/she would grade the jail at a 9.
- A second former Corrections Officer (FFO#2) who was employed by SRJ was interviewed on April 1, 2022.
 - FFO#2 stated he/she was interviewed by a West Virginia television station.
 - FFO#2 resigned in 2021 and therefore was not employed or present at the jail during the time periods covered by any of the recent allegations.
- The FFO#2 stated the following:
 - FFO#2 stated he/she called the TV Station because he/she had heard an unsubstantiated report that “those people at the jail murdered that black man 2 weeks ago”
 - When asked how he/she knew the inmate was murdered, he/she stated “that’s what they do down there”

- When asked if he/she called any city, county, state, or federal agency about the alleged murder he/she stated “No”.
 - For a majority of the interview FFO#2 repeatedly accused SRJ of years of human rights violations.
 - FFO#2 was asked if he/she ever reported any human rights violations to city, state, county, or federal authorities, the response was “No”.
 - FFO#2 was asked if he/she ever documented human rights violations at the time of the events in written reports and he/she stated “No”.
 - FFO#2 advised that he/she was selected to be the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Officer for SRJ.
 - FFO#2 was asked if he/she could give details of inmates not receiving water and other basic items, and he/she stated that “they don’t get the water they need”.
 - When asked if he/she ever assisted an inmate by getting them water, there was no response.
 - FFO#2 was asked if he/she would agree that a majority of the time, or 95% of the time inmates received what they needed such as water and he/she stated he/she would never say that.
 - FFO#2 was very bitter towards corrections leadership.
- Note: An internal investigation was conducted by a members of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitations. The investigation concluded that FFO#2 allegations, were not only unsubstantiated, but were simply untrue.

**FINDING
OF FACT &
CONCLUSION:**

After reviewing all information obtained throughout the course of this investigation there is insufficient evidence to prove that Correctional Staff violated agency policy by using excessive force therefore the allegations are Unsubstantiated at this time.

Furthermore, at the time two (2) of these incidents occurred the complainant [redacted] was not even on duty or at the facility.

In the incidents in which Moore was present at the facility he never completed any documentation in writing or verbally reported that staff used excessive force against any inmate.

At the time of the writing of this report, the status of this investigation is considered to be complete.

A former inmate was interviewed on April 4, 2022. The inmate provided the following information:

- The former inmate (age 30) states he/she has been in West Virginia jails and prisons over 20 times since he/she was 18. He/she has spent most of his/her adult life incarcerated. The charges were burglary, Breaking and Entering, and other law violations.
- The former inmate states that he/she was placed in a cell for 3 days without water.
 - Upon further questioning the former inmate admitted that he/she received milk, juice,

- and water with his 3 meals.
- Upon further questioning it was determined the former inmate was placed in a cell referred to as a “dry cell” that has no running water because SRJ had information that he/she had placed illegal drugs into his/her body. The dry cell allows confiscation of the drugs before they can be flushed down a toilet.
 - This occurred prior to the Governor purchasing body scanners.
- It is common practice that inmates in the dry cell receive all the water they request because it aids in the body moving the concealed drugs out of the inmate’s body cavity.

Another former inmate who was incarcerated for child neglect and abuse, breaking, and entering, and other law violations in 2018 provided the following information:

- When he/she was incarcerated in 2018 at SRJ.
 - In 2018, he/she went 5 days without water to drink and no shower.
 - When asked if he/she was provided 3 meals a day, he/she stated “yes”.
 - The former inmate was asked while the water was turned off for 5 days was, he/she provided with the meal milk, juice, and water, the answer was “yes”. Note: Maintenance records shows no period that water was turned off for more than a few hours during 2018 to present.
 - The former inmate states that in 2018 women at SRJ resorted to taking sanitary napkins and cutting them up to make tampons.
 - In 2018, tampons were not purchased by the Division of Corrections and Rehabilitations, but sanitary napkins were.
 - Starting in 2020, both tampons and sanitary napkins were purchased.
 - Records confirm that SRJ purchases both tampons and sanitary napkins for female inmates.
 - The former inmate states that his/her ex-spouse is currently incarcerated at SRJ and is facing a minimum of 8 years to a maximum of 80 for grand larceny, Breaking and Entering, and other law violations.
 - The ex-spouse has been incarcerated more than 10 times in West Virginia facilities.
 - The ex-spouse has told the former inmate the following:
 - Does not receive water.
 - Has to drink from the toilet.
 - Does not get toilet paper.
 - During a telephone conversation between he/she and the ex-spouse, the following was stated:
 - "Talk to him by yourself, I'll stop making any noise if you let my ole man out of prison"

Another ex-spouse was interviewed concerning his/her former spouse who is currently incarcerated at SRJ. At the beginning of the interview, the ex-spouse called from SRJ. The investigator was handed the cellphone. The investigator told the inmate that since he/she had not been sentenced that the investigator could not interview him/her without consent from the inmate’s lawyer. The ex-spouse stated the following:

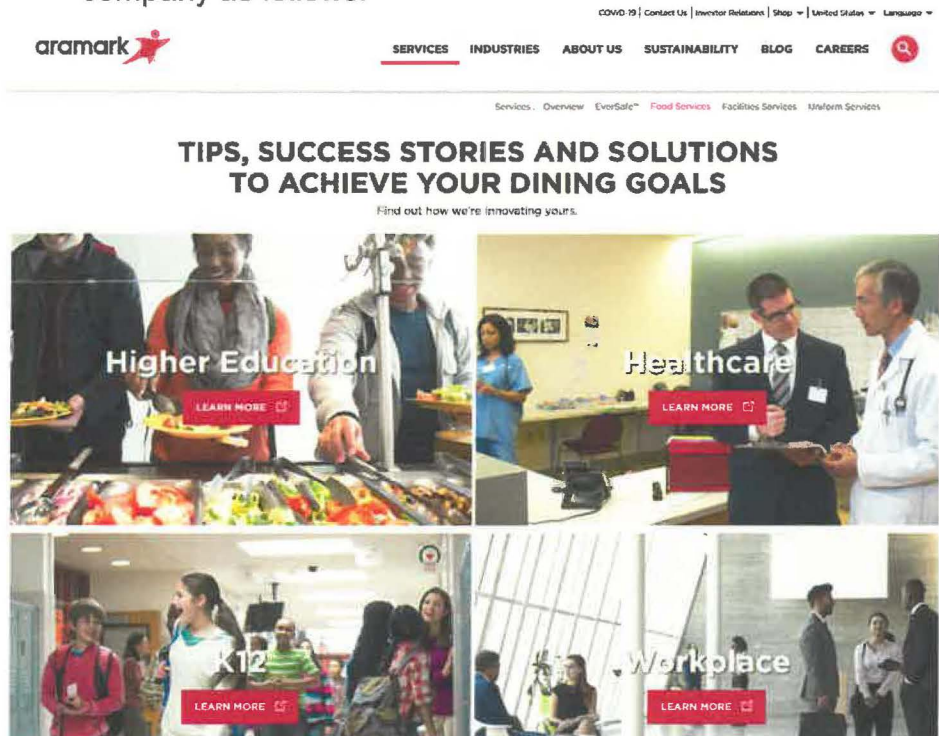
- The inmate has been incarcerated since January 3, 2022.
- The inmate was arrested for grand larceny, Breaking and Entering, and other law violations.
- The inmate has an extensive arrest history over a period of 24 years.
- The inmates’ concerns were that the SRJ Kiosk was broke, went 3 weeks without hot water, and no toilet paper.

The ex-spouse was advised that toilet paper was available and was shown a picture of a cell with a

dozen rolls. A telephone call was made to SRJ, concerning the lack of hot water. The ex-spouse was advised that the unit that was installed by a vendor was undersized and for the time period in question the inmates had to stagger their showers throughout the day to have hot water. On March 22, 2022, a larger unit was installed and the POD in question had hot water 24/7. The ex-spouse was advised that parts have been ordered for the Kiosk.

The mother of an inmate called the Governor's Office and requested to be interviewed.

- The mother stated she listened to the TV station story of SRJ and heard the Governor was conducting an investigation of SRJ and she wanted to talk to us.
- The mother started by asking if it was true that inmates had to drink from toilets.
 - The mother was advised that multiple inmates had been interviewed and no one, to date, had provided information that drinking from toilets ever happened, except for an inmate diagnosed with a mental condition over a decade ago.
- The mother stated her son had asked her for money on multiple occasions for food. She said that the food was terrible and was cold according to her son.
 - The mother was advised that the state contracted with a nationally known food provider by the name of Aramark. She was provided the information on the company as follows:



- She was asked if she would like to see a picture of the meal that was served for dinner on Wednesday, March 30, 2022. She stated she would. The below picture was texted to her:



- The entree was rice with pieces of chicken, corn bread, salad, and cake. It came with water with a flavor packet. Upon receiving the picture, the mother asked if SRJ knew I was coming and I said no. I told her the meal plan was made weeks in advance.
- The mother also said that her son told her that an inmate had stolen his shoes and she sent money to her son to buy new shoes. I told the mother that the state of West Virginia purchases all clothing and shoes that were needed.

Summary

The investigation consisted of interviewing over 50 individuals, reviewing telephone calls from inmates, and financial records of Southern Regional Jail. The review found the allegations of water deprivation, failure to provide toilet paper, and inmates having to sleep on hard floors without a mattress to be false.

The investigation established that at least one of the known former employees who talked to the media left under well documented employment issues. In fact, one of the former employees was filled with so much bitterness, that he/she during their interview would not even admit that inmates got beverages with their breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

The investigative team recommends to the media that they should consider asking the inmate or employee to obtain their inmate files and employee files from the state of West Virginia to disclose to the media.

There was an interesting moment with one of the former employees who called the media. The former employee at the end of his/her interview was asked the following:

“We have discussed your complaints that you have provided the media, but we must ask, after looking back at the day-to-day operations at Southern Regional Jail while you were employed, on a scale of one to ten, how would you rate the job being performed by the employees at Southern Regional Jail to provide inmates a safe and secure environment? The former employee stated a 9 out of 10. The former employee stated that because of COVID he/she did not have the opportunity to attend the training academy. After he/she left Southern Regional Jail, he/she has worked at two other jobs that were not as fulfilling as his/her position at Southern Regional Jail. He/she stated now he/she realized how much he/she enjoyed working at Southern Regional Jail and helping inmates.

The investigation also revealed the pain it causes families and loved ones who have incarcerated individuals that they care about. The sad part of this investigation is that family members were repeatedly lied to by inmates about clothing, food, water, mattresses, medical attention, living conditions, even shoes. Inmates yelled at family and friends for not telling the story the way the inmate wanted the media to hear it. One inmate said after hearing what a family member told the media, "Now I will never get out of here".

After the first media story was published, deposits of funds into inmate accounts increased by family and loved ones so the inmate would allegedly have food, water, and other items. One wonderful elderly mother that was interviewed was lied to by her family member, when he/she stated that he/she did not even have shoes to wear at Southern Regional Jail. The mother deposited money into the account for shoes that were never purchased. The mother did not know inmates are provided shoes.

Finally, Governor, the investigative team thanks the dozens of family members, current and former employees, and inmates at Southern Regional Jail for their cooperation during this investigation.