

TO: Professor Andrea Armstrong, Professor Nishi Kumar

FROM: Alaycia Warr

RE: “Better Know a Jail” Memo

DATE: 29 November 2022

West Feliciana Parish Detention Center and Work Release Facility

Introduction

West Feliciana Parish is located in (central) Louisiana. West Feliciana Parish includes the town of St. Francisville and four unincorporated areas: Bains, Tunica, Wakefield, and Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola). As of July 2021, West Feliciana Parish has a population of over 15,400 people. West Feliciana Parish is 51.9% White (Non-Hispanic/Latino); 44.7% Black or African American; 1.7% Hispanic or Latino; less than one percent Asian; and less than .2% Indigenous American. The median household income is about \$59,688. Of those aged 25 or older, 80% of them have a high school education or higher. The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center was built in 1996. The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center is operated under the West Feliciana Parish Sheriff’s Office (WFPSO) and Sheriff Brian L. Spillman. The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center is completely separate and is under the supervision of Warden David Daniel.

Jail Characteristics

The West Feliciana Detention Center is located at 4834 Feliciana Street in St. Francisville, LA 70775. The West Feliciana Detention Center is designed to detain pre-trial and post-trial offenders. Such as individuals who have just been booked into the facility, offenders who are currently awaiting trial and offenders who have already been sentenced by West Feliciana Parish or the Department of Corrections. This facility primarily houses male offenders and has a capacity of 39 beds. Youth and female offenders are transferred and held at other facilities. West Feliciana Parish Detention Center also provides various educational and enrichment programs to rehabilitate those incarcerated there. The Detention Center has programs such as: General Educational Development (GED); Living in Balance; parenting; counseling for father and son relationships; religious programs; and library services and access to legal books. The facility is also drug and tobacco free.

The official website is located at WFPSO.org/Detention. The Detention Center does not have its own website, but rather it has a linked page from the Sheriff’s Office Site. The page gives some brief information about the facility, but more relevant information such as information concerning bond can be found by clicking ‘Information’ under the “Detention” tab.

The West Feliciana Parish Work Release Facility is located at 9943 W Feliciana Pkwy, in St. Francisville, LA 70775. The Work Release Facility is completely separate from the West Feliciana Parish Detention Center. The West Feliciana Parish Work Release Facility is under the supervision of Warden David Daniel. The West Feliciana Parish Work Release Facility does not have an official website, but information can be found on the Louisiana Department of Corrections site. There is little public information available regarding the capacity of the Work Release Facility. However, some research suggests that this facility primarily houses offenders sentenced to up to two years. However, the Work Facility does not have an official website. It is classified as a “direct supervision correctional facility.”

West Feliciana Parish Detention Center permits visitation on Weekdays (Monday-Friday) only. The visitation hours are from 8AM to 4PM. In order to visit an incarcerated person, the visitor must be part of the approved visitor’s list. The incarcerated person must submit a form in

order to add the person to their visiting list in order for the visitor to be approved. West Feliciana Parish Detention Center prohibits visitors who are victims of the offender or visitors with felony convictions from participating in visitation. Visitation for incarcerated individuals with trustee status are permitted visitation on Saturdays between 9AM-11AM or 1PM-4PM for 2 hours. Incarcerated individuals without trustee status are permitted visitation on Wednesdays between 9AM-11AM or 1PM-4PM for 1 hour. West Feliciana Parish Detention Center also prohibits visitors from bringing anything except their identification card with them into the Detention Center. All visitors are search upon arrivals and visitors must be appropriately dressed. Currently, in-person visitation is suspended due to the pandemic.

Visitors are also prohibited from bringing or delivering items and packages. Packages and items must be sent through commissary. Individuals outside of the facility can order commissary items or add money to the incarcerated individual's commissary account online with a credit card. However, orders must be placed by Wednesdays at 8AM. Incarcerated people are only permitted receive letters by mail and cannot be mailed packages. In an effort to reduce potential contraband, letters are subject to inspection by employees. Letters with perfumes, stickers, water stains, stamps or sexually explicit content is returned back to the sender.

The current Sherriff is Sherriff Brian L. Spillman. Sheriff Spillman is a graduate of Louisiana State University Law Enforcement Institute. He is also a graduate of the LSU Agricultural Leadership Program. He was elected in 2019 and stepped into his position the following year (2020). Sherriff Spillman's career in law enforcement spans decades. He has worked within this field for over 35 years. His career began in 1981 with a position in the LA Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. He has also worked in other positions, such as being appointed as the director of Homeland Security in 2014. Previously, he has held positions as the Executive Director of the West Feliciana Drug and Alcohol Awareness Council and the Counterterrorism Operations Committee.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, West Feliciana Parish spent \$125000 housing inmates. They also spent \$12000 to transport inmates and \$10000 to maintain inmates. They also spent \$36000 for feeding/maintenance of prisoners.

Public Records Request and Deaths in Custody

The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center website does not contain a section where you can submit a Public Records Request. The site also does not have any information on how to submit a request. However, the website does conveniently list the contact information for all of its employees at the Sheriff's Office under the "About Us" Section. So, it is relatively easy and uncomplicated to find the custodian of records and submit a Public Records Request to them. I submitted my request to Erin Foster, the Public Information Officer. Based on the information provided from the facility there have been four deaths within the last few years. In 2020, West Feliciana Parish Detention Center reported Zero Deaths with a certified Zero Deaths Letter. The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center had two in custody deaths in the year 2021. The West Feliciana Parish Work Release Facility had one death in 2021 and another in 2019.

1. September 26, 2021, Pernell Young was found unresponsive in his dorm at the West Feliciana Work Release Facility. Synthetic marijuana and a folded piece of paper containing heroin/fentanyl was also found with his property. Mr. Young was a Black male and aged 40 at the time of his death.
2. June 2, 2019, Patrick Bonner died from a drug overdose at West Feliciana Parish Work Release Facility. The toxicology report showed both alcohol and methamphetamine in his

system. Mr. Bonner was a Black male, aged 32 at death. According to the CJ-9 report, he died in a medical center outside of the facility.

3. May 13, 2021, Marcus Castille was found dead in the visitation room at West Feliciana Parish Detention Center from suicide. Although Mr. Castille was a work release offender he was being housed at the Detention Center. Mr. Castille was a Black male, aged 48 years old. Mr. Castille was discovered by a deputy with a gray string tied around his neck and a door handle. The deputy on duty stated he saw Mr. Castille sitting, but once he could not see him sitting anymore he unlocked the door, looked inside, saw Mr. Castille, retrieved scissors and cut the string. Earlier that morning, Mr. Castille stated he had used drugs and would kill himself at his work release assignment. According to the report, he was restrained and taken to the hospital. At the hospital, Mr. Castille denied being suicidal, but did confess to ingesting drugs (fentanyl). A CT scan did not show anything foreign, but the Doctor advised the warden to keep Mr. Castille in isolation and let it pass. Mr. Castille later complained of chest pains and was deemed uncooperative and refused treatment.
4. September 27, 2021, Jason Lott was found dead in his cell at West Feliciana Parish Detention Center from suicide. Jason Lott was a White male and aged 45 at the time of his death. Mr. Lott was found in his cell with a phone cord wrapped around his neck.

Of the three reported deaths, two of them were classified as suicide. However, Mr. Castille's autopsy is pending. The most interesting take away from these deaths is the lack of supervision. In two of these cases, the suicidal acts were done with a phone cord and a string. These are both things that should be considered contraband or difficult for an offender to come into contact with. Additionally, this also applies to the death of Mr. Young, as his death appears to be related to ingesting contraband. The fact that these deaths occurred, shows that there is some lack of supervision occurring in the facilities. In all of these cases, had the deceased been properly supervised or monitored the death would have likely not occurred or at least not in the manner it has occurred in. Mr. Castille's death is the most striking, as Mr. Castille's report stated he denied suicidal ideation but was insistent on treatment for ingesting drugs. However, the report also states he was uncooperative. Yet, his death was the result of a suicide. In the report, the deputy on duty also discusses observing Mr. Young but from an entirely different room. The staff must be more involved in order to prevent deaths like this. I also think it is interesting that this facility seems to lack violence or violent acts. This facility does have many programs designed to rehabilitate offenders. However, the number of suicides makes it seem as though the programs are not truly beneficial to the quality of life for those incarcerated there. The presence of drugs also shows that the facility needs to be much more intentional about cracking down on contraband. This seems to be an issue especially for offenders with work release.

Oversight and Transparency

Currently, the Detention Center is in good standing and is not operating under a consent decree. There have also not been any judicial orders issued within the last years. West Feliciana Parish Detention Center does enforce PREA; and their compliance with the law is on the website.

The West Feliciana Parish Detention Center is incredibly transparent, but the Work Release Facility is not. Although the two facilities are listed as separate, there is relatively no official information listed anywhere regarding the Work Release Facility. The WFPSO site, is incredibly transparent and even gives information to potential loved ones about bond, incarceration, visitation, and commissary. However, I could not find hardly any information

about the Work Release Facility. There is no official website, however there is a site that allows you to search their incarceration roster. This lack of transparency extends to all of their operations, as there is no information available about the Warden either.

West Feliciana Parish Detention Center and the Work Release Facility have not had any notable cases regarding conditions or complaints within the last five years or within the years of Sherriff Spillman's leadership. West Feliciana Parish Detention Center does have a separate website with their incarceration roster.

References

<https://www.wfpso.org/>

<https://www.wfpso.org/Detention/Information>

<https://www.wfpso.org/Detention>

<https://www.wfparish.org/>

<http://www.westfeliciana.lavns.org/>

<https://www.lsa.org/west-feliciana-parish>

https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/?page_id=229

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/westfelicianaparishlouisiana,LA>

<https://www.louisiana.gov/local-louisiana/west-feliciana-parish>

<https://doc.louisiana.gov/location/west-feliciana-parish-transitional-work-program-lawf/>

<https://doc.louisiana.gov/location/west-feliciana-parish/>

<https://dockets.justia.com/browse/state-louisiana/noscat-6/nos-555?page=29>