



PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

REENTRY TASK FORCE MEETING

Palm Beach County Governmental Center
301 N. Olive Avenue, 12th Floor
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
Wednesday, April 22, 2015; 12:00 P.M.

SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES

PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

Angela Bess, School District, Palm Beach County
Carey Haughwout, Public Defender's Office
Brenda Oakes, Youth Services Dept.
Bert Walker, Private Practice/The Lord's Place
Chad Stoffel, Miracle Village Ministries
Claudia Tuck, Palm Beach County Human and Veteran Services
Clay Walker, Department of Children and Families
Daniel Gibson, The Lord's Place
Eve Lyon, The Lord's Place.
Gary Hawkins, The Lord's Place
Gregory Starling, Department of Juvenile Justice
Jeff Dougherty, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Jenise Link, Palm Beach County Justice Services
Jerry Youmans, Matthew 25 Ministries
Jessica Hidalgo, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Kaitlin Schibli, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Katryne Henry, Justice Service Center
Kenturah Wamdho, Back to a Future
Laura Waterman, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Laurel Considine, Gulfstream Goodwill
L. Porter, Gulfstream Goodwill
Liz Downey, NAMI PBC
Maggie Witherow, Matthew 25 Ministries
Marcia Bahia, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
Marsha Martino, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Meagan Rappatta, Magellan Complete Care
Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veteran's Administration
Michelle Dryer, CareerSource PBC
Minka Veasy, Justice Service Center
Nicole Bishop, PBC Justice Services & Victim Services
Orie Bullard, Justice Service Center
Pat Powers, Miracle Village Ministries
Patti Aupperlee, First United Methodist Church
Precious Osci, Barry University
Sherri Collins, State Attorney's Office
Shirlon McCarty, Department of Juvenile Justice
Sylvia Moffett, City of West Palm Beach
Tamara Starks, Palm Beach County Sherriff's Office
Wilneeda Emmanuel

CJC STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Rodriguez, Executive Director
Craig Spatara, Criminal Justice Programs Manager
Arlene Griffiths, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst
Shahzia Jackson, Senior Criminal Justice Analyst
Damir Kukec, Research & Planning Manager
Allison Orr, Administrative Assistant

I. Welcome and opening comments

Chair Carey Haughwout called the meeting to order and extended welcome to all participants.

II. Introduction of members and guests

Participants introduced themselves in lieu of a roll call.

III. Approval and/or additions to the Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved after motion by Daniel Gibson and second by Sherri Collins.

IV. Approval and/or corrections to the 01/28/2015 minutes of the Reentry Task Force

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

V. Old Business

Reentry Task Force Bylaws

Chair Haughwout commented on the Task force by-laws changes, saying that it delineates membership, and emphasize the need to formalize the membership for consistency and distinction between providers, funders and other stakeholders. She remarked that the new membership composition would remove her from the spot. Among the member comments were the inclusion of the Public Defender, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and the League of Cities. Chair Haughwout also recommended that the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) appoints a designee to the membership. Ms. Nicole Bishop inquired about the Palm Beach County representative to which Chair Haughwout responded should be decided by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). Commissioner Sylvia Moffett also inquired about cities representation and it was determined that the appointment should be made by the League of Cities, and that the past Chair would serve as a member. Discussions also surrounded representation as member versus representation as advisory member. Chair Haughwout clarified that the membership would be more policy oriented while the advisory members provide more expertise.

It was noted that the by-laws would evolve overtime, and that a suggested time frame of one year be considered for its review. It was further noted that the advisory membership is made up of agencies that are consistently participating at the meetings is therefore not limited.

Chair Haughwout stated that the mission statement will be revised to make it more in line with the Reentry Task Force purpose and strategic plan. She also commented

about having the dates in line with the County's fiscal year from October to September. The final draft, she said will be voted on at the July meeting for effect in October. After further discussions attendees were invited to send feedback/comments to Arlene Griffiths and a final draft distributed for further input prior to approval at the July meeting.

VI. New Business

a) Reentry Transition to Public Safety

Chair Haughwout commented on the ongoing conversation at the Reentry Sustainability Subcommittee regarding the County's involvement in reentry as a public safety issue, and the need for reentry to have a permanent role in public safety and public safety planning for Palm Beach County (PBC). To this end, Chair Haughwout advised of her meeting with County Administrator, Robert Weisman and said he was very open to the idea of the transition.

Mr. Michael Rodriguez, CJC's Executive Director added that a decision was reached for the reentry transition to Public Safety to take effect on October 1, but noted that the changes would not be very visible as staff (Craig, Shahzia and Arlene) will continue to operate out of the CJC office until a permanent home is found. He further noted that the Reentry Task Force will continue to be a CJC subcommittee, and that the CJC will still have a roll in writing future grants because of the advantages of the CJC in this regard.

Ms. Nicole Bishop, Director of Justice Services expressed the Division's enthusiasm in having reentry under the Division of Justice Services within the Department of Public Safety. She noted that Justice Services houses most of the court related county funded programs such as drug court and pre-trial, and said that reentry would be a natural fit. She further noted that Ms. Jenise Link, Pre-Trial Manager will work closely with the CJC in making the transition a smooth one.

Mr. Rodriguez further commented on the mission of the CJC in regards to running programs, saying that if drug court goes as planned this year, the CJC would be out of running programs. Chair Haughwout remarked about the CJC's role in incubating programs to help communities that she said should ultimately be the responsibility of the county or city where it will be permanently housed. She expressed her satisfaction with the County's recognition of reentry as a permanent part of public safety in the community.

b) Priorities for 2016

Chair Haughwout spoke about the continuous updating of the Reentry Strategic Plan, and recommended that the Subcommittees determine priorities for 2016 for discussion at the July meeting.

VII. Reentry Statistics

Mr. Spatara presented statistics for the last quarter reporting that 387 persons have successfully completed the pre-release portion of the program since the start of RESTORE. Of this amount 71% followed up with non-profit providers in the

community. He highlighted the recidivism rate that was cut in half, which he said was the goal at the start of the program. He also mentioned the evaluation that is underway that will show the results of the program.

Chair Haughwout commented on the program's success, but pointed out that it is not perfect and the continued search for improvement. One area highlighted was the need for vocational training which she expects it to get better. She drew attention to the 71.8% active participants that she said was impressive considering that participation is purely voluntary, and compared it with a program at the jail 12 years ago that had a follow up rate of less than 20%.

Meeting participants were notified of a survey underway from the Urban Institute and encouraged to complete same as it is important for the evaluation to have everyone's valuable input.

VIII. Special Presentation – Family Reunification

Chair Haughwout introduced Ms. Precious Skinner, a Social Worker and PhD student looking at the Family Reunification program at Sago Palm Reentry Center. Ms. Skinner said that the purpose of her research is to reduce recidivism and intergenerational incarceration that is currently on the rise. She is working with Miami Children's Initiative that is looking at national, state, and local family reunification programs. She referenced research showing that children of incarcerated parents are five to six times more likely to be incarcerated themselves, and that family reunification programs typically focus more on the parents with the assumption that when parents are rehabilitated, the family are likely to be rehabilitated. In her presentation, Ms. Skinner presented statistics showing a total of 2.7 million children have a parent in jail or prison, 1.2 million parents are incarcerated, and 1.1million fathers are incarcerated.

Ms. Skinner further reported that her research focusing on father reunification has so far shown that 60% of fathers said that they want to be reunited with their families, specifically their children. She also said that research has also shown that there is a notable gap in attention to the needs of these children when the parents are released, since most of the programs target the parents and does not include the children. It was also noted that children of incarcerated parents experience severe mental health issues, school failure, and substance abuse among other issues.

She reported on findings indicating that while family reunification is a great concept there are many challenges such as the lack of resources for inmates, pointed out that when fathers participate in reunification program while incarcerated, they are more successful in reuniting and less likely to recidivate. She said that reunification is also more successful when combined with other intervention programs such as parenting courses, anger management and job readiness. She highlighted the need for more collaboration with the children, the criminal justice system, social service agencies, and the schools.

Participants commented on the presentation, asked questions and sought clarification on aspects of the presentation, and discussed other programs targeted at children.

IX. Task Force Initiatives/Updates

a) Grant Opportunities

Mr. Sparata reported on a total of six grant opportunities relating to reentry, where applications were either submitted or in the process of submitting. These include the Quantum Foundation for Motivational Interviewing Training that was received, the MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge grant opportunity, the Department of Justice (DOJ) Second Chance Act Reentry Program for Adults with Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Disorders, DOJ's, Second Chance Act Two-Phase Adult Reentry Demonstration Program, the Department of Labor Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release grant, and the Department of Health and Human Services Adults with Co-Occurring Substance Abuse and Mental Disorders grant.

Ms. Marsha Martino of Gulfstream Goodwill added that a total of \$120,000 was received for the Motivational Interviewing Training grant to fund 1.5 Psychologist to provide a nine-month motivational interviewing training to staff from various agencies in Palm Beach County. Additionally, team leaders will complete an additional three-month training to prepare them as future trainers of motivational interviewing.

Ms. Michelle Dryer also provided a synopsis of the Linking to Employment Activities grant that is seeking to turn the jail into a specialized American job center.

b) Employment Pilot Project

Arlene Griffiths provided an update on the employment pilot project, noting that Palm Beach County was initially selected as a mini pilot site but later moved up to a full pilot site to receive three years of technical assistance. She reported that during the presentation at the Employment Subcommittee meeting, the Council of State Governments (CSG) provided an overview of the project where the tasks were outlined along with timeline for the three years.

X. Subcommittee Reports

1. Data and Evaluation

Chair of the Data and Evaluation Subcommittee, Ms. Jennifer Loyless reported on continued changes to RENEW to better serve partner agencies. She said that the biggest change will be to better tie the risk needs assessment (LSI-r) into the data collection and the outcome measures. She noted that while the changes are currently taking place, it could take up to a year to see data, but highlighted the importance of knowing what is working and be able to allocate funding accordingly.

Chair Haughwout added that RENEW is a success of the Reentry Strategic Plan and said that it provides an edge in seeking grants because of the importance of data collection to funders.

2. Employment, Training & Education

Chair of the Employment Subcommittee, Michelle Dryer remarked briefly about the employment pilot project and the CSG's presentation at the Subcommittee meeting, the subsequent discussions, and follow up conference call with some key players. She expressed enthusiasm in the County receiving the technical

assistance that will also look at engaging employers more effectively and strategies in ex-offender not only obtaining, but maintaining jobs. Mr. Spatara and Ms. Loyless further commented on the steering committees and the target population of over 25 years of age, and said that the outcome will benefit all population even though the foundation of their research was based on the adult population.

3. Housing Subcommittee

Chair of the Housing Subcommittee, Daniel Gibson reported on local advocacy around housing issues. He thanked Ms. Haughwout for writing a letter to the BCC with regards to the inclusion of ex-offenders in the consolidated plan as a priority population that will be discussed at the BCC's upcoming workshop. He said that the Subcommittee is looking to be more targeted with the different housing options. He remarked about the Subcommittee's participation in the Sex-Offender Subcommittee meeting and the success stories shared that was very educational. He also thanked Pat Powers and Chad Stoffel of Miracle Village for providing him with a tutorial to help better serve the population. He said that the Subcommittee continues to talk about ensuring that the right population is matched with the right housing.

Ms. Maggie Witherow of Miracle Village reported that since the residency restriction change in County Ordinance, nine residents were able to move to Loxahatchee.

Chair Haughwout suggested that the Subcommittee compile stories to share with the County showing the impact on that policy decision.

4. Juvenile Reentry Subcommittee

Ms. Shahzia Jackson, CJC staff to the Juvenile Reentry Subcommittee advised of the Urban Institute's interest in looking at the juvenile reentry program. She reported that members of the Subcommittee (Mr. White and Ms. Starks) along with herself, presented on juvenile reentry at the Florida Sheriffs Association conference in Orlando, and talked about their astonished reaction at the collaboration of criminal justice partners in Palm Beach County. She also reported on a program that the Subcommittee, the School District and the Sheriff's Office are finalizing plans for Choice To Change to provide service (life skills) to juveniles in the County Jail. She also noted that the Subcommittee will break into three work groups representing the department of Juvenile, Department of Corrections, and PBSO to define juveniles. This she said will include a name change for the Subcommittee from juvenile to youth to include youthful offenders age 18 to 25, and sought the Task Force approval for the change.

Chair Haughwout commented about possible overlaps and the continuity of services.

After further discussions, participants unanimous approved the name change to "Youth Reentry Subcommittee".

Ms. Jackson also mentioned the need for mentors for the youth.

5. Sex Offender Subcommittee

There was no subcommittee report, however, Mr. Michael Rodriguez advised of his discussion with a news reporter about the alleged loop holes that allow sex offenders to live where they chose. He said that the reporter will be doing a story on transient sex-offenders and is also interested in the issue of “ban the box”.

6. Sustainability, Marketing and Advocacy Subcommittee

No report was provided for the Sustainability, Marketing and Advocacy Subcommittee.

7. Mental Wellness Subcommittee

There was no report, and Mr. Spatara noted that the Mental and Wellness Subcommittee will be merged with the Behavioral Health Task Force.

XI. Additional member and guest comments

Commissioner Sylvia Moffett commented on her participation in the recent Judge Mounts’ Prison Tour which took place from March 25 to 26, 2015. She reported on discussions with Assistant Wardens at the Florida prisons visited and one on one with prisoners. She said that the tour was very educational, thanked Craig Spatara for the invitation, and encouraged others to participate.

XII. Adjourn

With no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned.