

PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION  
**PROBATION ADVISORY BOARD**

Governmental Center, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
301 N. Olive Avenue  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

January 13, 2010, 12:15 p.m.

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**MINUTES FINAL**

Members Present

August Bonavita	Chairman, County Criminal Court Administrative Judge
Rosalyn Baker	Florida Department of Corrections
Virginia Cataldo	US Probation
Steven Cohen	Criminal Defense Lawyer
Kay Oglesby	Public Defender's Office
Elizabeth Parker	State Attorney's Office
John Rivera	Public Defender's Office
Louis Tomeo	Office of Clerk & Comptroller

Members Absent

None

Guests Present

Maureen Brickous	Pride Integrated Services, Inc.
Wanda Joiner	Pride Integrated Services, Inc.

CJC Staff Present

Michael Rodriguez	Executive Director
Candee Villapando	Criminal Justice Analyst

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- I. Welcome/Opening Comments.** The meeting started at 12:17 pm. Judge Bonavita welcomed and greeted everyone happy new year.
  - II. Roll Call and/or Introduction of Members & Guests.** In lieu of roll call, Chair Bonavita asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.
  - III. Approval and/or Amendments to the December 15, 2009 minutes.** The draft minutes for the December 15, 2009 meeting were approved without amendments.
  - IV. Approval and/or Amendments to the Agenda.** The agenda was approved with no amendments.

**V. Old Business**

Cost of Supervision Increase Request

Maureen Brickous handed out a Cost of Supervision Request Overview sheet and presented to the board Pride's request for increase in cost of supervision from \$50 to \$55 for reconsideration. She discussed about the history of their request, including other options explored by the board to help Pride financially. Chair Bonavita asked about the issue of the county not being able to provide space to Pride as a vendor, and Michael Rodriguez clarified that it is simply the county's policy not to provide space to agencies it contracts with.

Chair Bonavita then invited ideas about other alternatives to assist Pride in terms of reducing their costs. John Rivera asked about a fee system with different rates for clients, like the Department of Corrections', and Rosalyn Baker explained DOC's fee system which depends on the offender's ability to pay.

Ms. Brickous added further that Pride has made adjustments to their payroll and expenses to balance their budget, and reiterated that their request for a cost of supervision increase is to enable them to operate at the optimal level. Steven Cohen asked about the average rates in other counties in Florida, and Ms. Brickous said that it varies depending on the size of the county, but that the for counties about the size of Palm Beach County the average rate is \$55. Michael Rodriguez asked Ms. Brickous what will happen if Pride does not get the increase, and Ms. Brickous responded that Pride will continue to operate but at a less than optimal level.

Virginia Cataldo asked how much revenue the increase will generate for Pride, considering Pride's declining case load which is partially responsible for their declining budget as well. Ms. Brickous agreed that their issue is case-load driven, and that she did not have the numbers at that time, but she said that their issue was that their staff has not had an increase in three years, and that they need additional support staff, etc. Ms. Cataldo followed up her question by saying that if Pride's problem seems to come from a declining client base, as Pride's revenue is client-driven, she asked about what other long-term solutions can be made where Pride can be balancing their budget with the needs of the community at the same time. Ms. Brickous responded that they have seen their caseload stabilize in the past three years at around 2800-3000 clients which is where they are basing their budget.

Chair Bonavita asked for any additional thoughts on the issue. Mr. Rivera repeated that his office is opposed to the issue, but reiterated that their position is not directed at Pride, but from their perspective of representing indigent people. Ms. Baker brought up the idea of a different fee for clients with private attorneys, and Ms. Brickous said that they have discussed it internally and have decided that they would not want to get into a two-tiered fee system. She added that their fee is inclusive of all their services, except for drug testing, compared to other agencies that may charge intake fees or other surcharges.

Chair Bonavita asked about the feasibility of community service organizations as potential source of revenue in exchange for community service. Wanda Joiner said that they cannot require a fee for community service because clients are statutorily required to do community service. Chair Bonavita clarified whether the agencies just receive the services without having to pay the organization, and Ms. Joiner confirmed. Ms. Cataldo shared that they have found it more difficult to place community service now because agencies would rather take high school kids than convicted felons. Mr. Rodriguez asked if offenders are allowed to buy out community service hours. Ms. Joiner said if

court approved, it is \$10 per hour; the money is processed by the Clerk's Office, and can be converted to a fine. Mr. Rivera expressed that such a system is perceived as having different justice for people that have money and those that don't.

Mr. Rodriguez asked Ms. Brickous if the request was approved, whether there is a way that they would be able to quantify what they would accomplish with the increase. Ms. Brickous replied absolutely, and reminded the members that Pride does an independent financial audit every year which is submitted to the county, the Chief Judge, and the CJC.

Chair Bonavita at this point asks if there was a quorum to vote on the issue, and Ms. Villapando confirmed that all the members are present. A motion to approve the cost of supervision increase was then moved and seconded. Three members approved, three members opposed, and two abstained. Louis Tomeo did not vote and asked for quantifiable information from Pride as to how they would look with the \$5 increase and how will it affect their current level of services without the increase. Chair Bonavita said that it might be helpful to have a breakdown of how the increase will impact Pride. He said that he did not feel comfortable giving a vote with the information he has and thinks the most prudent thing for him to do at that time is to abstain. Chair Bonavita suggested tabling the issue until the next meeting with more information. Mr. Tomeo asked if Pride can prepare the information before the next meeting. Ms. Brickous said that they will send the information to Ms. Villapando who will circulate it to the members. Ms. Cataldo said to include information on how much money the increase would generate, and Ms. Baker asked to include information on how much staff Pride had lost because of the reduced budget. Mr. Tomeo asked if they can email Ms. Brickous directly if they have any questions, and Mr. Rodriguez said yes. Ms. Brickous said that they can have the information ready by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, and the members agreed to vote again on the issue at the next meeting.

## **VII. Next Meeting**

Chair Bonavita asked if the members agree to take one of the items, i.e., the date of the next meeting, out of order since they were talking about the next meeting. Chair Bonavita asked the members if they still prefer to meet quarterly, and Ms. Brickous added that they like to meet quarterly because they generally have issues to discuss with the board. Chair Bonavita suggested the next meeting date would be in April, but because of the voting issue, Ms. Baker suggested to have a special meeting in the next month, which was decided to be February 10.

## **VI. Additional / Member and Guest Comments**

Chair Bonavita asked for any additional comments. Ms. Joiner brought up the issue of the recommended vs. required treatment for DUI schools, and requested to set up a meeting with Judge Bonavita to discuss the issue.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 pm.