



**PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
REENTRY TASK FORCE MEETING**

Palm Beach County Governmental Center
301 N. Olive Avenue, 12th Floor
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
Wednesday, January 23, 2019

SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome and opening comments

Chair Angela Bess called the meeting to order and extended welcome to attendees. She thanked her family for their support during her time of bereavement and extended welcome to those in attendance.

II. Special welcome to Judge Laura Johnson

Special welcome extended to Judge Johnson who is now representing the Courts on the Task Force due to rotation of Judge Feuer to Family/Probate Division

III. Introduction of members and guests

Participants introduced themselves in lieu of a roll call. A total of 47 members and guests were in attendance.

IV. Approval and/or additions to the Agenda

The agenda unanimously approved as presented.

V. Approval and/or corrections to the 10/24/2018 minutes of the Reentry Task Force

The summary meeting minutes of the 10/24/2018 meeting were unanimously approved.

VI. Under Director's Comments, Ms. Nicole Bishop

- a) Nicole Bishop bid farewell to Danielle Ouellette, Reentry Program Coordinator, and thanked her for her contribution to reentry and wish her the best in her new position at the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office. for
- b) Provided an update on the search for a Program Manager noting that a total of 34 applicants were selected and further narrowed down to 10 for interview. She thanked members of the Task Force for volunteering to participate on the interviewing panel. She also announced that the position for a Reentry Program Coordinator will be advertised upon Ms. Ouellette's departure.

VII. Special Presentations:

a) Clerk and Comptroller's Payment Plans and Criminal Judgement Sentence

Mr. Louis Tomeo presented on the Courts Compliance program, noting the Court's responsibility of collecting fines and fees for all types of criminal cases. He outlined the compliance program with an affordable payment plan established based on ability to pay, in order to assist client compliance. This will allow individuals to keep their licenses and work while they pay an agreed upon amount including an administrative fee of \$25.00 that is required by statute, and is rolled into the payment plan if the individual is unable to pay at the time of sentencing. Mr. Tomeo highlighted the success of the payment plan since its establishment noting that the compliance rate has significantly increase, in that over 43,000 connections have been made, received almost 60,000 payments and close to \$5M over the last four years. He remarked about the importance of follow-up, which has contributed to the success of the plan.

Ms. Liana Figueroa spoke about Criminal Judgements and the tool that allows them to settle criminal cases. She noted that the amount of cases reduced to judgement statewide significantly increases each year. Mr. Tomeo commented on future enhancements where they are looking at establishing online payment plans, E- pay, interactive voice response, also text notification for individuals who have missed a payment.

b) Restoration of Voters Rights to Felons, League of Women Voters

Ms. Nancy Cohen of the League of Women Voters presented on the passage of Amendment 4 regarding the restoration of voter's rights to felons. Ms. Cohen noted that they are the 3rd largest league in the United States, and has built a strong voter operation. She remarked about the uncertainties of the new law as Florida Legislators are trying to finalize what it means to complete one's sentence and the process for felons to have their rights restores.

After member discussion on the issue, the need for educating the individuals affected was highlighted. It was also noted that there are on-going discussions with the State Attorney regarding the matter.

c) Amendment 4 event in Riviera Beach,

Mr. *Orie Bullard* announced the Amendment 4 event scheduled for Saturday, Feb 16th at the Marina Center, and extended an invitation to meeting participants.

Old Business

a) Juvenile Transition Stepdown Program

Judge Kathleen Kroll discussed that the children in Palm Beach County who reenter from commitment programs do not do them in the county. They do not work with them while they are incarcerated, which makes it very difficult, hence the need for a step down program to assist juveniles returning to the community. She strongly feels that the kids are the future and will be discussing the program with the new DJJ Secretary and provided update at the next meeting.

PBC HIV Care Council – membership,

Ms. Arlene Griffiths provided an update on the status for filling the reentry seat on the HIV Care Council, saying that Diana Stanley of The Lord's Place is in the application process. The HIV Care Council is responsible for providing education and treatment for HIV individuals including those returning from incarceration.

Urban Institute – Public Safety Risk Assessment Clearinghouse project, *Nicole Bishop*, Have the opportunity to validate our LSIR assessment tool. Compare with recidivism data to see how well it is working and to see what could be improved. Getting clearances that they need. Within the next six month we should have some answers.

VIII. New Business

a) Data and Evaluation Subcommittee data collection

Ms. Jennifer Loyless sought guidance in obtaining access to data from the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office in order to obtain more accurate reentry data to determine homelessness among those returning from incarceration. Ms. Loyless mentioned even a short-term plan to capture more accurate data of those in the jail It was agreed that the Subcommittee should move forward with reaching out to the Sheriff's Office in this regard.

b) Tenant-Based housing assistance,

Mr. Armando Fana, Chair of the Housing Subcommittee provided an update on the housing pilot program where the City of West Palm Beach will fund somewhere between 7 to 10 individuals who are reentering from prisons and are in need of housing assistance along with supportive services per a period up to 12 months. West Palm Beach Housing authority will process the payments to the Landlords and work closely with The Lords place, Gulfstream Goodwill, and The Reentry Center to identify qualify individuals in the reentry program that are provided with support services. The pilot program is expected to start on March 1st, and the hope is that, if proven successful, other cities as well as the county will provide funding in this area.

c) First Step Act of 2018- Legislative Roundtable

Ms. Nicole Bishop spoke about the First Step Act to reform criminal justice system that allows employees to store fire arms securely at federal prisons, restricts of restraints on pregnant women places prisoners closer to families in some cases, and improves feminine hygiene in prison, among other provisions. She mentioned the idea of having a legislative roundtable to discuss how this might trickle down to State prisons. Ms. Bishop will have further conversation with the County's Legislative Delegation in this regard.

- Ms. Diana Stanley inquired if there would be reentry representation at Palm Beach County Day in Tallahassee, to which Director Stephanie Sejnoha said no
- d) Request for Proposal-
Ms. Bishop announced the upcoming request for proposals to provide reentry services and invite the creation of work group, to look at reentry issues, services and what this should look like and to ensure that funds are put into the right areas. The work group; would include Task Force members with input from advisory members.

To this end, motion to create the work group consisting of voting member with input from advisory members was moved by Rev. Kevin Jones and second by M. Tamara Starks. The motion was unanimously approved. This effort to make sure that the proposals are crafted to meet the needs of those individuals reentering to society and the dollars that are being distributed.

e) Task Force Initiatives/Updates

- a) Sago Palm Reentry Center
Assistant Warden Javier Jones provided an update on the activities at Sago Palm including the efforts to beautify the institution and introducing more vocational programs to better prepare individual for return to the community. He thanked The Oullette's for facilitating the donation of paints by Sherwin Williams. Ms. Selenas further commented on the vocational programs and training within the Department of Corrections. Mr. Jones spoke about the need for volunteers to assist with teaching, and also mentioned assistance with paying for certification for the residents.
- b) RTI International & Legislative Budget Rrequest
Ms. Bishop reported that a letter of support was provided to the Laura and John Arnold Foundation for randomized control trial of an Automated Notification System to increase community- based service engagement among correctional populations. She also reported that a budget request for \$250,000, From the State of Florida to continue funding of reentry program at the same level was submitted.
- c) Smart Grant update
Ms Cassandra Atkin-Plunk reported that 22 people have been randomized into the program, 13 randomized into the control group.
- d) Reentry Simulation
Rev. Kevin Jones extended invitation to the reentry simulation scheduled for March 8th . An opportunity for different leaders in our society to get a taste on what it feels like for returning citizens on reentering society.
- e) Assistance Provided, *Arlene Griffiths*
Ms. Griffiths reported on assistance provided to agencies/jurisdictions wanting to start reentry program including demo of the County's database RENEW, and a student from Scotland that is comparing reentry in Scotland with reentry in the US. Also mentioned a scheduled conference call with the State of Minnesota who recently received a Federal

Second Chance Act grant for Integrated Employment Solutions (IRES) model. She also mentioned Reentry Week.

IX. Subcommittee Reports

a) Sex Offender Subcommittee

Chairman Ted Rodarm commented on the report from OPAGA that was published in December, which highlighted that the residency restrictions are ineffective of being counter-productive, and contributes to homelessness. He also reported on the collaboration with Broward Reentry coalition, and actively trying to influence a positive legislative response, and positive change.

Adjourn

With no further items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.