



**PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
REENTRY TASK FORCE MEETING**

Palm Beach County Governmental Center
301 N. Olive Avenue, 12th Floor
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401
Wednesday, July 25, 2018

SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES

I. Welcome and opening comments

Interim Chair Angela Bess called the meeting to order and welcome attendees. Chair Dr. Bess:

- a) Recognized Assistant County Administrator Faye Johnson who now oversees Public Safety Department.
- b) Extended special welcome to Jessica Hidalgo who has joined the Palm Beach County reentry team as Program Coordinator for the SMART reentry grant (IRI) working with returning citizens for placement in transitional employment while providing Cognitive Based Intervention. Ms. Hidalgo will work closely with Dr. Atkin-Plunk of Florida Atlantic University who will be conducting the evaluation of the program.
- c) Recognized members of the Brevard Reentry Task Force. Mr. Craig Spatara noted that PBC reentry team visited Brevard close to two years ago to share our reentry experience.

II. Introduction of members and guests

Participants introduced themselves in lieu of a roll call. Fifty persons were in attendance.

III. Approval and/or additions to the Agenda

The agenda unanimously approved after motioned moved by Tamara Starks and second by Meredith Powers-Lupo.

IV. Approval and/or corrections to the 4/25/2018 minutes of the Reentry Task Force

Motion for approval of the April 25th meeting minutes was made by Ms. Starks and second by M. Oswald Newbold. The minutes were unanimously approved after correction to the spelling of Dr. Atkin-Plunk's name from "Plunket" to "Plunk".

V. Old Business

a) Reentry Summit

Dr. Atkin-Plunk provided an update on the reentry summit, noting that the speakers head shots and bios are being uploaded on the website, however a speaker is still being sought for the juvenile education panel, and asked members to names of possible speakers. Marketing of the summit is of great importance as efforts to fill the 250 spots increase. The question of CEUs was raised and a decision made to take it back to the planning committee for further discussion.

Dr. Bess thanked Dr. Atkin-Plunk for her efforts in the planning of the summit.

b) Nominations for Reentry Task Force Chair

Mr. Spatara opened the floor for nominations for the Task Force Chair. A list of eligible members were presented from which Dr. Bess was nominated. Voting will take place at the October meeting

c) Juvenile Transition Program

Ms. Danielle Ouellette provided an update on the juvenile transition step down program. She reported on a meeting with the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Secretary regarding a partnership for the program, and DJJ asked that county staff proceed with the plans for a pilot. On July 10th county staff made a presentation to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to obtain permission for moving forward with DJJ to create a Legislative Budget Request for the cost. While the BCC support showed interest, concerns were expressed about the potential change in political leadership with DJJ as well as the possible loss of revenue for to the county if the Homestead amendment on the ballot passes. They also sought clarification of a successful youth reentry. To this end, it was recommended that further research be conducted and other areas of funding explored.

Public Defender Haughwout commented on the recidivism rate for juveniles and the opportunity to do something meaningful for this population, however the significant investment to the county was also noted. Mr. Greg Starling of DJJ remarked that the cost for this investment is not a lot of money, as the youth are ending up in the adult system. Assistant County Administrator commented on various options that the Task Force may use to keep the subject alive, including a workshop before the BCC. Mr. Armando Fana remarked about other potential partners such as local municipalities. Dr. Bess noted that the School District is supportive of the project. After further discussion, a decision was made to move forward with the Task Force presenting at a BCC workshop in September or October.

d) New App – Reentry Research Project

Mr. Spatara

e) Leadership Palm Beach County Event

Ms. Meredith Powers-Lupo

f) Assistance to Public Housing Authorities

Ms. Arlene Griffiths

VI. New Business

a) Reentry Strategic Plan

b) – Mr. John Cohen was appointed by the League of City to serve as their representative on the Reentry Task Force.

- c) Appointment of Chair – Employment, Training & Education Subcommittee – Chair Dr. Bess appointed Ms. Dina Hill as Chair of the Employment Subcommittee and Mr. Dhiny Mercedes as Vice Chair.

- d) Grant Applications, Reentry Statistics/Emerging Issues

Mr. Craig Spatara advised of a community-based grant for \$1M over three years to increase the number of peer mentors to work with the reentry population. This will also include the development of a National Certification around peer mentoring that currently does not exist. The application is due April 26 (tomorrow), and must be submitted by a non-profit agency. The Lord's Place has agreed to be the fiscal agent, but this is a collaboration between the three reentry providers.

Mr. Spatara highlighted the recidivism numbers that he noted were not good, and asked for assistance/directions in addressing. Funding source and lack of housing and employment were noted as factors that are negatively impacting recidivism rates. The shift in service provision was also noted as causing trust issues among the clients.

The following recommendations were made:

- that focus groups/surveys of clients be conducted to get a better feel of the issues they face,
- Re-engage the Data Subcommittee to gather data on what does re-arrest mean and data on the un-met needs at time of arrest – possibly solicit the assistance of a college intern to help
- Defining the definition of successful reentry
- Categorize nature of arrests.

- e) New App – Reentry Research Project

RTI International is proposing to create a reentry app to be used by case managers to communicate with clients. PBC was selected as one of three sites to pilot this project..

The Smart reentry grant is in the planning and implementation stage and seeks to provide transitional jobs for clients. This is expected to commence mid July.

- f) Technical Assistance for Public Housing Authorities

Ms. Arlene Griffiths reported on a solicitation from The Vera Institute of Justice with funding from U.S. Department of Justice to provide public housing authorities with technical assistance to plan and implement reentry programs and/or change their admissions policies regarding people with conviction histories. She is working with the local housing authorities for submission of application on May 2, 2018.

- g) Special Presentation – Educating Inmates

Mr. Nicholas Gonzales, a 14 years old student and CEO of Project Take Two provided information on his non-profit agency that is seeking to partner with Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) and other prisons to provide educational opportunities to incarcerated individuals. He will volunteer his expertise in this regard. He remarked about the tablets launched by FDC in the prisons that presents an opportunity for partnership. Project Take Two will create an interactive education App that will offer

videos, seminars, articles, quizzes and tests to inmates. Mr. Gonzales encouraged all to look at incarceration not as a form of punishment but as a form of rehabilitation. It was advised to break down his goals and bring back to the Task Force to see how the Task Force can partner with him. This includes linking him with FDC.

Ms. Justine Patterson from FDC noted that the tablets are not being sold and instead will be leased to inmates at a minimal cost. Ms. Paterson will provide exact cost for leasing.

An assessment will be conducted at Sago Palm Reentry Center to determine training needs.

h) Supplemental Budget Request

Ms. Nicole Bishop reported that Public Safety Department will ask the County for supplemental funding in the amount of \$643,000 to cover funding lost from FDC and the JAG dollars in order to maintain reentry services.

i) Leadership Palm Beach County

Ms. Jennifer Loyless advised of the upcoming summit hosted by Leadership Palm Beach County on June 15, 2018 with the aim of hiring 100 ex-offenders in 100 days. Mr. Spatara will sit on the panel, and she is hoping to incorporate other reentry individuals to participate.

j) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Ms. Dina Hill from CareerSource reported that CareerSource is working with the County to train and place people in jobs. She noted the push for training in the construction and trades industry, and mentioned the focus on employment related training to ensure that persons are placed in the job for which they are trained. Open enrollment is underway in Belle Glade and scholarships are available for training. She also advised of the Summer Internship program and noted the priority population including those with background. Individuals were asked to contact Mr. Mercedes for assistance with qualifying and placing clients. Ms. Hill will provide further information regarding training of currently incarcerated individuals.

VII. Task Force Initiatives/Updates

a) Department of Corrections Site Visits

A report on the .

Ms. Jennifer Loyless was noted that this is a very complicated matter that the most comprehensive fix would require legislative changes, there are also payment plans usually available for clients.

Mr. Oswald Newbold added that driver's license and child support are two main issues that incarcerate individuals worry about. He said that a deferment for six months can be requested for child support, but that a DC6 clearance is required to receive a payment plan for driver's license, however, reinstatement of the of driver's license depends on the source(s) of suspension. It was also noted that community service may also be used to

offset outstanding fees. Diana inquired about the percentage of individuals released are impacted by the enormous fees.

After a suggestion to create a small group to look into the issue, Mr. Al Johnson recommended that the issue be referred to the Employment, Training and Education Subcommittee for review and further action.

b) Sago Palm Reentry Center

Assistant Warden Scott Siegler spoke about the current programs at Sago Palm and remarked about the success of the programs. He mentioned talks with Palm Beach State College to provide some training. Other programs are set to come on stream, and an update will be provided at the next meeting. He further noted the dis-satisfaction with the GED results and noted that he is looking to provide supplemental evening instructions to help.

Dr. Bess will have further conversation with the School District regarding the GED program for Sago Palm.

c) Reentry Simulation

Rev. Kevin Jones reported on the reentry simulation held in February. The simulation served as an opportunity for participants to understand the challenges faced by returning residents. It is hope that participants will use the experience to focus on policies that can positively impact the lives of individuals returning from incarceration.

d) Reentry Strategic Plan

Each subcommittee will meet before the July Task Force meeting to determine short and long term goals for inclusion in the strategic plan

e) Second Chance Month

Each subcommittee will meet before the July Task Force meeting to determine short and long-term goals for inclusion in the strategic plan.

VIII. Additional Member and guest comments

- a) Mr. Newbold remarked about the tendency to wait until the last six months before individuals start preparations for release. Discussion around preparedness pursued, and it was noted that reentry should start at intake, and resources provided while incarcerated. Mention was made of a program available to prepare individuals of white-collar crimes. Lack of resources was cited as a huge barrier to providing these services.
- b) Dina Hill of CareerSource announced the Employment, Training, and Education Subcommittee meeting scheduled for March 21st. She asked for suggestions as we move forward.
- c) Margie Yansura thanked Commissioner Moffett for her services to reentry.

- d) Chrysalis Health, a mental health agency spoke about their mental health and substance abuse services. Brochures with available resources were provided
- e) CC Holloman spoke about her involvement in reentry services and expressed her interest in working particularly with the Employment. She noted the importance of preparing the community for the return of justice involved individuals.

IX. Adjourn

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