



**PALM BEACH COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION  
REENTRY TASK FORCE MEETING**

Palm Beach County Governmental Center  
301 N. Olive Avenue, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401  
Wednesday, October 26, 2016 - 12:00 P.M.

**SUMMARY MEETING MINUTES**

**A. Welcome and opening comments**

Chair Sylvia Moffett called the meeting to order and extended welcome to all attendees. She commented on a criminal justice forum held at the Palm Beach State College where Public Defender Carey Haughwout was a speaker. She also mentioned Chief Judge Colbath's comment at the CJC meeting about Seattle doing unsecured bonds for criminal justice involved residents. Special welcome was extended to Natalie Dixon of the Florida Department of Corrections.

**B. Introduction of members and guests**

Participants introduced themselves in lieu of a roll call. A total of 43 persons were in attendance.

**C. Approval and/or additions to the Agenda**

The agenda was unanimously approved.

**D. Approval and/or corrections to the 7/27/2016 minutes of the Reentry Task Force**

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

**E. Old Business**

a) Request for Applications (RFA)/Budget

Mr. Craig Spatara presented the 2017 reentry budget and advised that the program is fully funded for the year with funds from the Florida Department of Correction (FDC) and the County. He reported that the existing three agencies, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries, The Lord's Place, and Riviera Beach Justice Service Centers were selected by a committee to provide reentry services. South East Florida Behavioral Health Network was also selected to improve access of mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring treatment for the population.

b) Reentry's Move to Public Safety Department (PSD)

Public Defender Haughwout commented on a conversation from the last meeting that resulted in the establishment of a subcommittee to look at the first year of reentry's move to PSD. She noted concerns with sustainability of the program that lead to the move. She reported that the meeting held, reached a consensus that it was too early for a true analysis of the move. As such, subcommittee members agreed to return in three months to further review same. It was also reported that conversations are being held with County Administration and PSD Director Stephanie Sejnoha in this regard, and the support of community partners noted.

Ms. Kristina Henson added that reentry is a priority of the CJC and will continue to be. She also mentioned the good working relationship between the CJC and PSD.

## **F. New Business**

### **a) Sago Palm Reentry Center**

It was reported that Sago Palm is now under Okeechobee Correctional Institute.

Ms. Natalie Dixon of FDC stated that the reason for the move was because of the number of satellites under Martin Correctional Institute, and said that while everything remains the same, this will actually allow more focus on Sago Palm. She further remarked about the disconnect between the institutions and community corrections that lead to the creation of four positions statewide to identify and address existing gaps.

Public Defender commented on the disconnect where inmates are released without services that could be provided prior to release, that could equip them for returning to the community, and inquired if this will be addressed.

### **b) Children of Inmates, Inc.**

Children of Inmates (COI) is a not-for-profit agency that collaborates with faith-based and professional organizations to provide services for children of incarcerated parents. The focus is on family reunification through increased visitation.

Mr. Samuel Ludington, Deputy Director of Program Development and Policy provided background on how the organization started and evolved into one of the largest family reunification programs in the country. He noted that approximately 1.7m children are impacted by parental incarceration. He highlighted the focus of COI as: 1) Care coordination that provide wrap around services and intensive case management to the families; 2) Coordinate quarterly bonding visits – these are child-centered where parents and children enjoy special days such as July 4th; and 3) Advocate for stronger policies to strengthen the bond between children and their incarcerated parents. COI has a contract with DFC and are currently in 21 facilities throughout the state. Outcomes include increased communication, and increased visitation, demonstrated social anti-behavior, and self-sufficiency. The program helps to reduce recidivism according to Mr. Ludington.

### **c) Reentry Day in Tallahassee**

Ms. Diana Stanley, chair of the Sustainability Subcommittee reported on discussion held at the Sustainability Subcommittee meeting and the interest to have a reentry day in Tallahassee. The purpose is to advocate for changes and funding for reentry services. She spoke about possibly piggy backing on an already established day, and highlighted three legislative issues discussed. While the focus is on two or three major issues, Ms. Stanley invited all subcommittees to submit issues they wish to be addressed.

Ms. Henson mentioned the Palm Beach County Day in Tallahassee, and advised that the Reentry Task Force should in the future, present issues to the CJC early summer for recommendation in the Legislative package.

### **d) Business Engagement Event**

Chair Moffett thanked CareerSource and county staff for hosting a business engagement. Ms. Tamika Cooley reported that the construction and manufacturing industries were targeted, and approximately 12 employers responded. She said the

general feedback was that most employers are willing to employ people with criminal histories, but expressed concerns with the lack of soft skills, cost of training, and high turn-over. Apprenticeships and internships were mentioned as areas where the community can provide support. One roofing company expressed interest in setting up a training program at Sago Palm.

e) Adult Court Cost

Ms. Arlene Griffiths presented a juvenile court cost sheet that was created by the Youth Subcommittee, and discussed the possibility of having same for the adults. Ms. Shahzia Jackson provided the background on how it came about for the juveniles, and provided guidance on developing same for adults. Ms. Sherri Collins of the State Attorney's office noted that a list with cost breakdown already exist for adults. It was noted that the cost is based on charges and that the issue of paying fines is of great importance. Community services, participation in different programs and available payment plans were highlighted.

f) Palm Beach County Representation per Bylaws

Chair Moffett advised of the need to identify a new county commission representative with the departure of Commissioner Taylor. She also spoke about electing new chairs and vice chairs for all subcommittees, especially with the vacancy of Housing Subcommittee chairman. To this end, subcommittees were asked to review and elect new chairs and vice chairs for two-year term limits and report back at the next meeting.

**G. Special Presentation**

Mr. Daniel Gibson, Outgoing Chair of the Housing Subcommittee was recognized for his dedicated service to the Reentry Task Force and Palm Beach County.

**H. Task Force Initiatives/Updates**

Ban the Box

Chair Moffett reported that South Bay and Riviera Beach cities are the latest to ban the box.

**I. Subcommittee Reports**

a) Data and Evaluation

Ms. Loyless reported that the Second Chance Act evaluation by RTI and Urban Institute should be available soon, and that the Back to a Future Juvenile Reentry Program evaluation is completed by the University of Miami and will be presented at the Youth Reentry Subcommittee meeting in December. The County's Information System continues to work with the Mr. Spataro to enhance RENEW to become more user friendly.

b) Employment, Training and Education Subcommittee

Representatives from the Council of State Governments will be visiting from November 16 to 18. During this visit, they will present to CareerSource board on the Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies (IRES) project, and the Employment Subcommittee will meet on November 17th.

c) Housing Subcommittee

Chair Daniel Gibson provided an overview of the subcommittee's accomplishments including the engagement of local housing authorities to serving the reentry population., advising that a Memorandum of Agreement was drafted and been reviewed for approval by the HAs. Other accomplishments include getting providers to look at the hard to serve ex-offenders as a priority population, and having funders in the community that are not afraid to fund reentry. Mr. Gibson recommended bringing local, state and national funders together to thank them and explore expansion in this regard, and to also look at evidence-based practices that are tied to housing. He thanked Craig and Arlene for their leadership and support around the housing issue.

d) Sex Offender Subcommittee

Vice Chair Gail Colletta thanked Mathew 25 Ministries for hosting the September Sex Offender meeting. She reported that attendees were given a tour of the facility and were able to speak with residents. A workgroup was established to explore priority needs for services specific to this population, and discussed closer coordination with other subcommittees to identify housing, employment and health services. The matter of public education and awareness was discussed, and recommendation for a public viewing of the film "Untouchable" followed by a panel discussion of experts.

f) Youth Reentry Subcommittee

Ms. Jackson reported on discussions to visit four schools that the youth are place in, to ensure their participation. She also spoke about a meeting with Sequel (now Palm Beach Youth Academy) and the relationship going forward where the program will be notified when a youth is returning to Palm Beach County (PBC) to engage them before returning to the community. The Council of State Governments also expressed interest in continuing to provide technical assistance and to highlight PBC.

**J. Additional member and guest comments**

- a) Ms. Starks reported that over 120 inmates are enrolled in the PREPARE program in the West Detention Center and they are looking to include cognitive programs.
- b) Mathew 25 Ministries announced their "Christmas in the Village" celebration.

**K. Adjourn**

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