



Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Uma Ahluwalia
Director

COMMISSION ON JUVENILE JUSTICE

*Meeting Minutes for
Tuesday, November 19, 2013*

7:50 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

7300 Calhoun place, Suite 600, conf. rm. 6-C
Rockville, Maryland 20855

I. Announcements/Preliminary Business

- A.** There will be no meeting in December, we will resume meeting on January 21, 2014.
- B.** The CJJ needs to provide a new representative to the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. This is an appointed position and any interested member may contact Diane. Mike Subin explained that the Council was set up by law and addresses all Criminal Justice related activities. The interested CJJ member will be a voting member. The Council will meet once per quarter on the 4th Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

II. Old Business

- A.** September and October 2013 minutes were approved. The October minutes were amended to remove the last two sentences in Section IV, paragraph A. dealing with Care and custody.
- B.** The business of writing of a letter regarding vocational opportunities was tabled.
- C.** Commission member, Jennifer Gauthier, thanked Commission members for supporting events of her organization, Lead for Life. She invited members to the annual Thanksgiving celebration for youths at the Alfred D. Noyes center. The County Executive, Ike Leggett will be on hand and will serve meals. Commission Chair, Chris Fogleman, commended members for their continuing support for these efforts.

III. Speaker: Delmonica Hawkins, Regional Director, Department of Juvenile Services, Metro Region

The Chairman introduced the speaker, Ms. Hawkins, brought her team which included Scott Beal, Executive Director for Community Services and Antoinette McLeod who is the Director at Noyes.

Ms. Hawkins thanked the Commission for inviting her to speak. She was honored to be serving in the position and announced Frank Duncan and Scott Beal who joined DJS in 1994. She commended the work of the DJS in Montgomery County. With 16 kids in detention, this was good compared with the time when there were 67+ kids. She commended Frank for the good numbers. Montgomery County has relieved the strain of space by keeping its numbers low while the Waxter Center has been under repairs.

Questions for Delmonica Hawkins:

Ms. Hawkins proceeded to answer questions submitted by the Commission in preparation for the meeting. The first four questions were answered together, since they followed the same theme. The questions and answers follow:

1. What is the status of job training in the different detention centers? Will there be more money allotted towards skills training in the future?
2. Children that go to long term placements eventually come home. While they may attain their GED in placement, they often come without a job or on a career path. Has DJS ever followed up with kids released to determine employability?
3. What community based resources does DJS utilize to help children find jobs? Are these programs run by DJS, or privately run? Is there a reason why DJS does not partner with agencies or unions or other career oriented centers to help juveniles get on a career path/job. Is there discussion or an ability to create a DJS career/job program?
4. Is there anything the commission can do to encourage DJS to put resources into helping the employability of its juvenile clientele in the community?

Answer:

The DJS is setting up computers to facilitate job searches with the assistance of DLLR. Department of Education (MSDE) will teach the computer interface as part of the life skills curriculum.

It is recognized that not all youths will be job ready. Youths can investigate where the jobs are and find them on the website.

In answer to follow up questions, the team indicated that the primary Vocational training committed program is Silver Oak.

5. Last year, the Care/Custody Committee sent a letter regarding the dilapidated state of school facilities at the Noyes Center. We asked the Department to look into improving the facilities and did not get a response. The letter is attached.

Answer:

The Regional Director apologized for the unanswered letter, indicating that the MSDE is now in charge of education at Noyes and there is need for funding for three new trailers. There will be continued advocacy for additional or new trailers. Some trailers are rented. The Commission can help in this effort to upgrade the trailers and so can the General Assembly.

6. Has DJS has collected more information as to how the VPI program is doing? Has it been successful in reducing recidivism? How many youth from Montgomery County are currently involved in the program?

Answer:

VPI recidivism is not separated out of the overall in the DRG. There has been a downward trend of youth homicides over the past 6 years with the ultimate objective objective is to have zero. There is no data on recidivism rates. There are 800 youth in VPI statewide with 69 in Montgomery County.

7. What steps are being taken to increase the tenure of staff at Noyes?

Answer:

Three to four years ago, it was hard to recruit because of salary issues. Now, there is a higher starting rate. There are three facilities across the state with a 4-step difference in salary range. A degreed position has additional steps. There is a high turnover and staff is hard to retain, especially owing to a preference for more attractive opportunities in Virginia, Delaware and Washington, DC.

8. What challenges do you see for Juvenile Justice in the region and what are DJS's plans for overcoming them?

Answer:

Staff sustainability has been a problem. The loss of good staff continues. The Corrections Department is also in competition for these resources.

9. How recently has DJS reviewed its existing programs for effectiveness and what were the results?

Answer:

There is an annual assessment for recidivism. Providers use the UMD models on retention yearly as a resource guide. There is a Youth Advisory Board to provide guidance.

10. Are there any new programs/initiatives that DJS is creating?

Answer:

State-wide model for graduated sanctions and a strategic re-entry plan.

The Chairman thanked Ms. Hawkins and her team and encouraged her to suggest how the Commission can help in the DJS mission in addition to the ideas already expressed.

IV. Committee Reports

In the interest of time, the reports from Care, Custody and Placement Committee and the Government and Community Relations Committee were waived.

V. The Meeting Adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Commission on Juvenile Justice

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