

**Connecticut Juvenile Training School**  
**Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Minutes, 12/11/13**

**Present:** Debra Bond, CJTS Clinical Director, Francis Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney; James Connolly, Esq., Supervisory Assistant Public Defender; John DiPilla, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Robert Francis, RYASAP/Catalyst for Community Change; Lisa Hofferth, CJTS Quality Assurance Manager; Christine Rapillo, Director of Juvenile Delinquency Defense and Child Protection, Public Defender's Office; William Rosenbeck, CJTS Superintendent

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**Establish Quorum**

Based on the existing by-laws, three make up a quorum. The Commissioner appoints the ex-officio members and she will make that determination when the time comes. It is our understanding that the newly hired Assistant Superintendent of the Girls Unit will be appointed as ex-officio member. Atty. Connolly suggested that we appoint board members before we look to adjust the by-laws. Previously there was discussion to expand the board to look at broader juvenile justice issues and not just CJTS, but after reviewing the Connecticut General Statutes, it states the board is to address only CJTS matters.

**Accepting Minutes from 9/17/13 and 11/6/13**

The 9/17/13 minutes accepted. The 11/6/13 minutes accepted with one amendment. Mr. Rosenbeck will "review" as opposed to "obtain" the DOC policies.

**New Members**

Atty. Connolly suggested that this group agree on the process of how new members are brought in. Atty. Rapillo recollects the process to be that a name was brought up, the person would be invited to a meeting for a meet and greet and then they were voted on. There was also a letter of intent that they were asked to sign. The voting would not take place while they were present. The group agreed to review the list of potential members before they were approached.

- ❖ Melissa Pellitier of Journey House is a name that is currently not on the list. With her experience, it might be valuable to have her on the board. The problem with this is anyone who is awarded a contract from DCF may be a conflict of interest even though the statutes read that the board should have a private provider. Journey House will be working very closely with us on the Girls Unit so there will be a lot of collaboration with this person and she will serve as a trainer for the girls curriculum. It was suggested that we get a legal opinion on this contracting issue.

Perhaps we need to look at a third category for board members with this dilemma whereby they serve as an advisory member. Mr. Rosenbeck will follow up with DCF attorney Barbara Claire.

- ❖ Sam Gray, CEO of Greater Hartford Boys and Girls Club. Active in this facility and has done a very good job in the boys and girls programming. Can be helpful with connecting our residents back to the community. Mr. Rosenbeck spoke with him about the board a few years ago. Due to the contracting concern, he too may best serve as an advisory member.
- ❖ Judge Conway, Chief Administrative Judge in Juvenile Matters. Atty. Connolly will make a personal plea to the Judge to join or maybe she can identify someone who can in her stead. All agree in contacted Judge Conway.
- ❖ Abby Anderson or Lara Herscovitch, Juvenile Justice Alliance. Good idea as they are the advocacy people or voice of the state. Can't challenge their commitment to kids. Between the two, Abby has more of an interest to serve on the board.
- ❖ Senator Bartolomeo, representing Middletown, Meriden, Cheshire and Middlefield. Also, serves as Chair of the Select Committee on Children. Good idea, by approaching her she will know about our existence. She could send a designee, if unable to serve.
- ❖ Barbara Guthrie, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Tenured Professor of Nursing at Yale. A nurse by trade and a professor. All in agreement to put this one on hold for now.
- ❖ Christine Whidden, past Warden at Enfield and current Warden at Carl Robinson. Career in Corrections and very involved with raise the age and heard she may be interested if offer is extended.
- ❖ Sarah Russell, Associate Professor of Law at Quinnipiac. Leading the appeals regarding life sentences and working with the sentencing commission. Has a lot of expertise in that area, smart, measured and practical. Has a lot of access to research and national connections. All agreed to put this one on hold for now.
- ❖ Leonard Barbieri, past Superintendent at New Haven Juvenile Detention Center and past Warden at Cheshire CI. Out of the system for a while however, committed to these issues. Atty. Connolly reached out to him and he is somewhat on the fence of his commitment. Reach out to him again.

- ❖ Ann Smith, Yes
- ❖ Heather Panciera, Office of the Child Advocate. She attended the November meeting. Mr. Rosenbeck raised concern of an OCA representative on this board as we already have a process in place for the work that they do with CJTS. Atty. Connolly feels that as OCA representatives have access to the residents, they could bring their concerns to the board as there is very little ability to access the clients in this facility. If we, the board, are not directly connected to the kids, then we do not have an understanding of their needs. Ms. Panciera has the connection to the kids and feels that is valuable. Atty. Rapillo also sees value of Ms. Panciera's involvement as currently we only have the Public Defenders Office views. Under OCA statutes, they can come whether we invite them or not. Mr. Rosenbeck stated there are ways OCA can get involved with us where their views can be brought. The grievance process as part of the board is a conflict. We have a Student Council where our residents bring issues to be addressed. Atty. Carino questioned if the issues brought forth by the residents is for the Advisory Board to address as historically we have not done that. If we want to hear directly from the residents about their experiences then we should get it directly from them and not OCA or any other third party. We could have them come in to talk about their experience and be on the agenda; comments from the residents. It was suggested that part of the Student Council they fill out a form where they identify a topic / issue for discussion and then ask a representative to come in for discussion. This process will be presented to them at the next Student Council meeting. OCA will also be an agenda item, not every meeting but on occasion where they can serve as advisory member.
- ❖ Elaine DuCharme - was a good clinical voice as a member of the community or other private practitioners.
- ❖ CSSD is not represented here, and could be an important link. Perhaps Torello, Chapman, Olsen or Foley-Geib. Will ask Steve Grant to make a suggestion for someone with a clinical background.
- ❖ Martha Stone - She is very effective in her current capacity and provides the commissioner with advice. Heard she is very interested in being a member of this board. All agreed to put this one on hold for now.
- ❖ Having someone from the workforce on the board is critical to plan for older kids and planning for their return to the community. Will do some research on a name for this.

Pursue: Judge Conway, Senator Bartolomeo, C. Whidden, A. Smith, Abbey/Laura. Atty. Connolly will suggest names of kids who may want to come in to talk about their concerns that were not resolved in other venues. (It was suggested to video tape an advisory board meeting in order to familiarize the residents of the process)

### **Future Role of the Advisory Board**

Atty. Connolly is opposed to expanding the role of the board to include juvenile justice issues that affect the agency as this is a big responsibility. Although agree the Department can benefit from an expanded responsibility and we may be there at some point in time, but to do so now will diminish the role of the board. As many of our kids come from parole and community and really are systems kids, addressing the broader concerns was the reasoning for expanding the role of the board. The EIT already addresses many of the broader juvenile justice issues, although DCF has not had a permanent presence in this forum. They are tasked with investigating and making recommendations. It was suggested that the Commissioner be informed of the reasons why the board wants to continue to focus on CJTS issues and perhaps a link between this board and EIT be strengthened.

### **On-going Business**

Grievance Process - ACA Standards: Our grievance process is compliant with ACA standards. Before we used "substantiated" and "not substantiated" but to be in line with their language we moved to "has merit" and "does not have merit". There is nothing in their standards that indicates how much time the ombudsman has to be here or how we report to them. Annually we have to report all grievances, broken down by category and of those how many had merit in favor of resident. We use the DCF ombudsman policy which talks about the grievance. There is language under resident rights in the resident handbook and also in the orientation that the kids get upon admission. Kids know of the grievance process. The higher level grievances are addressed by Human Resources. Last year we had over 200 grievances; this is an indication that the boys know the process. Often residents do not know the outcome of the grievances particularly when it involves staff. We could do a better job of communicating with them what the disposition is, if we can, however, on many occasions the boys may already be discharged. Mr. Rosenbeck will be meeting with Gene Marchand and Ken Mysogland, the incoming Ombudsman team, to work out some of the communication and reporting concerns. The board feels that it would be very beneficial to have the commissioner appoint the Ombudsman as an ex-officio member.

CJTS and DOC Policy Re. Mandated Reporting / Use of Profanity: Mr. Rosenbeck reported that he reviewed the DOC policy and best practice language and felt our currently policy was comprehensive, but decided to add the following "The right not to be subject to abusive, obscene, threatening and intimidating language and / or

behavior". The policies are posted on the units and portions are in our behavior management orientation. Kids are also aware of these policies. Now that this policy was reviewed here and with CJTS management team it will be sent out to all staff. It will also be sent to Central Office legal department for approval. We will not wait for their feedback as we feel there is significant change and staff need to be apprised of those changes and put into practice immediately. Staff will be required to sign off on this policy as they are for most.

We've had a couple of homosexual youth and we work with True Colors. If we admit a transgender youth, based on past practice, we just adapt for that. We are working with Dr. Guajardo to train on transgender youth. ACA requires that same sex staff do the searches. If a young boy identified as a female, we would look to the girls unit or Journey House. Before we send this policy out will do an addition to be more specific with the sexual orientation. Mr. Francis stated that this month's *Youth Today* publication is devoted to transgender kids and worth checking out. Part of Dr. Guajardo's training is also on human trafficking of males as most are not aware that this affects the male population.

Facility Census and its Effect on Operations: Our census today is 136 with 11 identified to go home in a couple of weeks and admission will slow down a bit. We hope to be down to 125 by Christmas. Commissioner has been very supportive of our needs and we have been working very well with the Area Directors around discharges. We did not see an increase in aggression. We had a handful of boys creating some problems. Mr. DiPilla is tracking group events as he reviews every incident and every tape. There were three incidents with multiple players.

Average length of stay for congregate care admissions is 228 days, 242 new commitment admissions and 119 parole admissions. A placement identified as Journey is the boys program. We compiled census data and chose 12/1 as the snapshot day from 2003 to 2013. Since raise the age began in 2010 16 year olds stayed flat through the years. In 2007 we had many more staff. Staff are trained differently now and we are being more creative with scheduling. We are starting to get more staff now for direct care.

New Girls Facility: Bids are being opened next week with a 6 to 8 week build out. A lot of construction that we can take care of are being done by DCF staff. Most of the necessary work is in the residential units, such as repositioning of the bedroom doors and securing the windows. The fence was installed. We are in the process of hiring staff and conducting interviews. The main entrance is not fenced in but the back area is. There are three sets of locked doors that one would need to get through in the entrance

area. There is a rumor that there is a six month delay, which is not accurate. We are looking at mid February for opening timeframe.

Prone Restraint Policy: We asked for a waiver and have not received feedback on that yet. We think there will be exceptions but not necessarily a waiver. If done correctly its effective for short periods of time. It is impossible to cuff a resident in a supine position. We removed all the cuffs from the staff and now only supervisors have them. They are also placed strategically so now we have to wait for someone to come and put them on.

### **New Business**

Student Council: - Tracy Cotterell does a good job with the boys and Atty. Connolly is impressed with the way the kids handle their role and of speaking up. One of the complaints is the cleaning of the units. The ACA standards prevent us from using certain strengths of chemicals. Group discussions are taking place, the boys get responsibilities and it's a very positive experience. The council has on average 15 boys with a handful of staff. Mr. Francis expressed an interest in attending a future meeting. Mr. Rosenbeck will send future meeting dates.

Legislative Report: The legislative reports is due in February. We use last years report with this year's data. We have to wait until end of year to have all the data. Ms. Hofferth will prepare the report and send it to board members for review and input. What we need from the board is the recommendations. We will work through the e-mail system to come up with recommendations.

### **Next Meeting Date**

All agreed on 1/22/14 at 3:00 p.m. for the next meeting. Our hope is to have some feedback from the prospective new members and perhaps they can join the next meeting. We will give the potential members an option of coming at either 3 or 4.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.