

Correction Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 17, 2024  
7:00 PM via Zoom and YouTube Live

The following committee members were present:

Marisol Garcia  
Daryl McGraw  
Andrew Giering  
Tadhg Dooley  
Reena Kapoor  
Melvin Medina

The following committee members were absent:

Ben Howell  
John Bowen  
Kyisha Velazquez  
Scott Semple

I. CONVENE MEETING

Tadhg Dooley convened at 7:19 PM.

II. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRS

Chair Dooley stated that Ben was expected to join later due to other commitments. Chair Dooley stated that they would move on to the adoption of the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. A motion to adopt was made by Melvin Medina, seconded by Chair Marisol Garcia. Chair Dooley asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, the May minutes were approved by voice vote.

Chair Dooley moved on to updates regarding the interim Correction Ombuds appointment. He stated that he had reached out to but still hasn't heard much back. He said the Governor's office doesn't have much to report but that they were still planning to meet the July deadline of appointing an interim Ombuds. He also stated that when he spoke with Senator Winfield, he said the Black and Puerto Rican caucus were going through a list of names in the next week to find a suitable candidate.

Chair Garcia said she had heard plenty from people in the community that the appointment of this position is not getting enough attention and not being made enough of a priority. She urged members to continue to push things forward as strongly as possible due to how important it is to individuals incarcerated.

Chair Dooley said John Cipolli, who was Representative Fishbein's appointment, had resigned from the committee. He clarified the appointment requirement and stated that while he hasn't heard of any nominee to fill the vacancy, members

should feel free to make suggestions to Representative Fishbein's office if they can think of anyone who fits the criteria.

Chair Garcia voiced concerns about the statute that controls the governance of the Correction Advisory Committee and would like to see clarification added to that language.

Discussion took place between the Chairs about the vacancy regarding the fact that the position criteria included the individual having been a victim but also someone who worked for the Department of Correction. Chair Garcia expressed concern over this, to which Chair Dooley acknowledged those concerns.

### III. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

There was nothing to report from the Visioning Subcommittee.

Melvin Medina stated that there was nothing to report from the Funding Subcommittee. He said that he would be discussing things with the Chairs once the next subcommittee meeting was scheduled.

Chair Dooley stated that he wanted to establish a Governance Subcommittee to help move along the application process, refine the job description, and liaise with the Department of Administrative Services. Chair Dooley made a motion to establish it, seconded by Chair Garcia. He asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, the motion was approved by voice vote.

### IV. REOPENING OF APPLICATIONS FOR PERMANENT OMBUDS

Chair Dooley discussed the potential for improvement or changes to the job description and the application process and explained that the Governance Subcommittee will greatly help with that.

Chair Garcia expressed her desire to step down from the Visioning Subcommittee and to lead the Governance Subcommittee instead. She stated that she wanted to create a manageable working document for the job description, to be distributed to members for editing and finalization.

### V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cindy Prizio raised concerns about the lack of attendance at committee meetings, particularly from Scott Semple, and the impact it could have on the work being carried out. Chair Dooley confirmed that attendance records are available on the Judiciary Committee's website.

Nancy Peters expressed her concerns about the urgency of the issues discussed and the need for more action. She also questioned the decision to start the search for new candidates after two of the previous three had been rejected. Chair Dooley acknowledged the frustration and sense of urgency, but explained that they were bound by statute and had to follow the process again.

He encouraged increased pressure on those responsible for appointing an interim ombudsman.

Chair Dooley and Daryl McGraw discussed the importance of addressing the issues raised in letters from incarcerated individuals. Daryl emphasized the need for a strategic plan and understanding of the challenges, such as the water quality issue, before someone takes on the role of being an advocate for prisoners. Chair Dooley proposed making the letters a part of their meetings to increase awareness and invited more submissions. Chair Garcia suggested reaching out to the community inside to foster communication and proactive problem-solving. Chair Dooley agreed to explore ways to create a secure, confidential complaint system until an interim ombudsman is appointed, ideally within the next two weeks.

Barbara Fair questioned the Governor's decision not to appoint a preferred candidate, leading to the process being restarted, as well as the Committee's effectiveness in standing up to the Governor. Chair Dooley Tadhg acknowledged the Governor's discretion but urged members to ensure strong candidates are recommended for the next appointment.

Nancy Peters highlighted a fundamental flaw in the process, questioning the Governor's agenda and the committee's ability to represent the people effectively.

Nancy Peters and Chair Dooley discussed the need for clarity and justification from the Governor regarding his choice of candidates for a position. Chair Dooley suggested that the issue lies in the process of selecting candidates, and emphasized the need for a clear explanation for when the Governor skips over candidates.

Barbara Fair raised concerns about potential circumvention of the process in the future.

Cindy Prizio expressed confusion about the meeting's proceedings and highlighted the need for the committee to take more initiative and assert their power. She called for a plan to push back on the Governor's inappropriate actions, and suggested that some committee members should be replaced.

A discussion was had by members regarding the statutory limitations of their role and the need for advocacy to change the legislation governing their appointments and processes. Melvin Medina encouraged reaching out to state legislators to advocate for reforms. Daryl McGraw suggested having a frank conversation with the Governor to explain his nominee rationale and set expectations for any future appointments.

## VI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Andrew Giering, seconded by Reena Kapoor. The meeting was adjourned by Tadhg Dooley at 8:31 PM.