



## JJPOC Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2020

2:00 PM

Zoom Conference Call

### Attendance:

Rep. Toni Walker  
Deputy Sec. Kosta Diamantis  
Sarah Eagan  
Abby Anderson  
John Holland  
Astread Ferron-Poole  
Sen. Gary Winfield  
Erica Bromley  
Macklin Roman  
Sen. Marilyn Moore  
Janeen Reid  
Brenetta Henry

Hector Glynn  
Desi Nesmith  
Derrick Gordon  
Martha Stone  
Rep. Robyn Porter  
Judge Patrick Carroll  
Judge Bernadette Conway  
Gary Roberge  
Christine Rapillo  
Comm. Vanessa Dorantes  
Comm. Angel Quiros  
John Holland

Chief Joshua Bernegger  
Veron Beaulieu  
Lisa Sementilli  
Derrick Molden

### TYJI Staff:

William Carbone  
Erika Nowakowski  
Susan Cusano  
Kelly Orts  
Donna Pfrommer  
Amanda Pappas

Representative Toni Walker called the meeting to order at 2:02pm and welcomed everyone. Rep. Walker notified everyone that the meeting is being recorded. Deputy Secretary Diamantis provided opening remarks, focusing on Manson Youth Institution (MYI). He discussed his concern about how MYI's reintegration of youth back into their community and emphasized the need to keep track of children that leave the facility as many children do not integrate successfully back into their communities and some have even lost their lives.

Rep. Walker proceeded to give thanks to Abby Anderson and Francis Carino for their time served on JJPOC. Rep. Walker then welcomed their successors, Christina Quaranta and Brian Casinghino. Rep. Walker entertained a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting. The motion to accept the minutes was moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

### Update from Department of Corrections- Presentation by Warden Derrick Molden

The presentation discussed the review of the recent OCA report focused on MYI and YCI. One of the first areas discussed is the infrastructure and conditions of confinement. Unfortunately, infrastructure is one of the facility aspects that they cannot change, but they are actively trying to engage in improvements. Some infrastructure improvements include painting of housing units with therapeutic colors, increasing recess and out-of-cell time, and non-traditional housing settings, including the possibility of dorm-style or apartment-style settings.

When discussing the use of chemical agents, the Commissioner has tasked the DOC to figure out a way to provide staff with a tool that does not require the use of chemical agents. MYI staff has decreased the use of chemical agents. However, the chemical agents are used for life saving measures during times of violence.

In response to COVID-19, there is a relatively low percentage of positive cases at MYI. Increased testing of staff and population testing is performed on a biweekly basis. There was discussion on mental health services, developmental training to staff, and trauma-informed and evidence-based programming. In addition, they want to empower family engagement as a way to promote positive outcomes for youth. They are hoping to add a board-certified psychiatrist to the staff at MYI.

In terms of educational improvements, there has been a focus on intervention instead of punishment. Youth are provided incentives for good behavior, such as being able to play video games or gain extra recess time. MYI received 60 Chromebooks and \$30,000 to be put towards technological advancements for vocational programs. There is also a new barbershop vocational program that is certified through DPH, a collaboration with Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence to enhance equity learning, and increased social workers on the staff.

MYI is also seeking to develop a therapeutic wing and engage more with family. It is their goal to move forward with a restorative justice approach and need to highlight true accountability.

Following this presentation, there was a Q&A session. There was a discussion on the data system PBIS, trauma-informed training, and chemical agents. There was further discussion on the steps and timeline to balance the need of improving MYI conditions, but also eliminating youth entering corrections. The Incarceration Workgroup has developed a subgroup with DOC to focus on improving discharge planning and wraparound services. Due to time constraints of the meeting, some questions were unanswered but will be addressed in the future.

### **Update on New JJPOC Workgroup Recommendations**

#### ***Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup- Presented by Dr. Derrick Gordon & Hector Glynn***

RED workgroup co-chairs first presented a recommendation on pedestrian stop legislation. Young people usually first come in contact with the police through foot stops rather than traffic stops. The RED workgroup would like to look into these pedestrian stops to achieve a more comprehensive image of law enforcement interaction with youth. Looking at this issue, there were many models to fall back on including the Boston, NYC, DC, and Milwaukee Police Departments and certain legislation produced by California, Colorado and Illinois. The workgroup suggests adding to the racial profiling legislation. Specifically, the legislation should add pedestrian stops into the data collection on racial profiling. The workgroup also included in their recommendation a definition of “pedestrian stop” to help guide this recommendation. The basic concept of this definition is to create language that was as inclusive and broad as possible. When a person does not feel “free”, that is considered a police stop.

The RED workgroup co-chairs also discussed how there have been discussion on School Resource Officers (SROs) within their group. There are some national movements about removing police from schools and CT voices provided feedback on this. Children of color are adversely impacted and is truly an issue of racial disparities. The SRO subgroup agreed that the current system is what leads to these

racial disparities. This subgroup has reviewed other states' reform efforts, current MOUs and reviewed SRO data from CT Voices and ACLU. This workgroup will not be introducing any new recommendation on this topic at this time but will continue to meet and discuss this issue.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session. It was clarified that the pedestrian stop recommendation would not require new legislation and would only be an extension of the previous traffic stop legislation. In terms of SROs, there was a discussion on the alternative options to SROs and the purpose of their role in schools.

***Education Committee- Presented by Rep. Robyn Porter & Amy Vatner***

The Education Committee is proposing a new recommendation to require schools to document and report all 911 calls. This was influenced by the investigative OCA report on Waterbury public schools that was released a few months ago. The committee looked at the Waterbury report and noticed that 911 calls were made to address behavior of young students, specifically young students with disabilities. Demographic information (race, age, gender, disability classification- if any), background information on incident and less restrictive alternatives considered should be included in reporting requirements. Since CHDI already collects data on all 211 calls, the committee would work with CHDI to review the data on public school calls to 211. The end goal is for this recommendation to act as a deterrent and will be a steppingstone to understanding the relationship between youth and law enforcement.

The second recommendation is a proposed amendment to PA 15-96 about school suspensions and expulsions. Studies have indicated that suspension or expulsion can lead to negative outcomes of children. The committee seeks to amend PA 15-96 to ban suspension and expulsion of children in preschool through grade 2. The committee has met with relevant stakeholders to further develop the language for this recommendation.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session. There was a discussion on alternative sources for 911 data collection, as there is concern about this statewide requirement being time consuming. There was a recommendation brought forth regarding a collection of this data from only 10 districts instead. It was clarified that the purpose of this recommendation is to get the founding data so that we can draw conclusions and hopefully point out the root causes of these calls. In regards to the second Education Committee recommendation, there was discussion on the root causes of these suspensions and expulsions. The root causes are systemic, and discussion needs to be in the proper context.

**Next meeting:** January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021: Voting Meeting

Meeting adjourned at: 4:16 pm

\*Audio and/or video of the meeting can be found on: <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=18030>