



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
Palm Beach County (PBC) Full Reentry Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

PBC Governmental Center
 McEaddy Conference Room, 12th Floor
 301 North Olive Ave.
 West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Summary Meeting Minutes

<u>Members & Guests Present:</u> <i>Chair</i>, Carey Haughwout, Office of the Public Defender Angela Bess, School District of PBC Armando Fana, City of West Palm Beach Arnia Perpignand, Florida Department of Corrections Carla Randle, City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Florida Atlantic University Craig Spatara, GEO Group Cristina Lucier, The Lords Place Daniel Reyes, SOE Daniel Santiago, The Lord's Place Dhiny Mercedes, CareerSource of Palm Beach County Diana Stanley, The Lords Place Gina Nunez, Veterans Affairs Jennifer Ferriol, City of West Palm Beach Jennifer Loyless, Office of the Public Defender Jessica Younts, Justice Impact Alliance Kiera Hester, City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center Kim Raynor, SOE Laura Waterman, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries Lynn Trimble, Choice to Change Maggie Witherow, Restoration Destination Marcia Bahia, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Megan Rhoden, Okeechobee C.I.	Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veterans Affairs Monique Brown, The Counseling Center Nancy McConnell, Rebel Recovery Orie Bullard, The Riviera Beach Reentry Center Oswald Newbold, The Riviera Beach Reentry Center Ron Dixon, The Riviera Beach Reentry Center Shazia Jackson, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Sheila Kurzen, Sago Palm Tamara Starks, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Vanessa Klein, The Lord's Place Victoria Amoroso, The Victory Program William Freeman, People of Purpose Yvette Salinas, Florida Department of Corrections <u>Public Safety Department Staff Present:</u> Arlene Griffiths, PBC Public Safety Department Bridget Rodriguez, PBC Public Safety Department Jessica Hidalgo, PBC Public Safety Department Latronda Hayes, PBC Public Safety Department LesUnique Hessing, PBC Public Safety Department Margo Smith, PBC Public Safety Department Nicole Bishop, PBC Public Safety Department Shirlon St. Amour, PBC Public Safety Department Stephanie Senjoha, PBC Public Safety Department
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- I. **Welcome, Opening Comments, and Introductions**, *Chair Carey Haughwout, Public Defender*
 Roll call of voting members was conducted, while advisory members, guests, and staff introduced themselves. Chair Haughwout noted the importance of identifying voting members for purposes of voting on items.

- II. **Approval and/or Additions to the Preliminary Agenda**
 Approved with addition of action items from previous meeting.

- III. **Approval and/or Corrections to the 4/27/2022 and 7/27/2022 Meeting Minutes**
 Approved without corrections.

IV. Chairman's Comments, Chair Haughwout

Chair Haughwout thanked all for participating, and commented on the strength of the Reentry Task Force in collaborating with the various partners and spoke about future plans of collaborating with the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC). Recommendations gathered from the CJC's recent community dialogues included issues concerning reentry services, and were presented to the Board of County Commissioners. Chair Haughwout also remarked about the success of the recent 2022 Reentry Summit that drew over 300 participants to Palm Beach County from across the nation, and resulted in great connections.

V. Recognition of Housing Subcommittee Chairman Armando Fana, and welcome new Chair and Vice Chair:

Chair Haughwout presented a certificate to Armando Fana, *Assistant City Administrator*, in recognition of his service as Chair of the Housing Subcommittee for over three years. She thanked him for his service and wished him well in his new endeavors. Incoming Chair, Jennifer Ferriol, City of West Palm Beach's *Director of Housing and Community Development*, and incoming Vice Chair Jessica Younts, *Director of Justice Impact Alliance*, were introduced to the Reentry Task Force.

VI. New Business

Palm Beach County Youth Reentry, Judge Kathleen Kroll, 15th Judicial Circuit

Judge Kathleen Kroll spoke about the PBC Youth Reentry program. She discussed the critical role this program has assumed within PBC, particularly as it relates to changes within the juvenile justice system. The Palm Beach Youth Academy high-risk residential commitment program was recently closed due to program provider operational issues. DJJ has identified another provider to take over the current program contract, but it is only for the duration of the original contract (about 1 year left). She noted that Palm Beach County is having dialogue with Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Secretary, Eric Hall, in this regard. She also asked the stakeholders for guidance on how to leverage the PBC Youth Reentry Program and local resources to support piloting efforts to impact the quality and scope of the program provider and to serve youth closer to home.

Chair Haughwout highlighted the importance of engaging the Reentry Task Force, elected officials and community-based providers, and a champion to show a community-wide commitment, as was done for adult reentry that resulted in the establishment of Sago Palm.

Judge Kroll made a motion to add juvenile reentry as a significant focus of the Reentry Task Force plan for 2023. Motion was second by Oswald Newbold. To this end, members formed committee for the benefit of youth reentry efforts within the County, and will meet prior to the December 1, 2022 Youth Reentry Subcommittee meeting.

Jessica Hidalgo added an update on the status of the PBC Youth Reentry Program, and introduced the two new case managers: Bridget Rodriguez and Les'Unique Hessing. She gave kudos to Gulfstream Goodwill for assisting to ensure a seamless transition.

Diana Stanley inquired about the timeline for this program to be under the county, and stressed the importance of community-based agencies, and hoping the intention is for this to be a temporary solution since the county should be governing rather than delivering services. Director Stephanie Sejnoha responded that the county will take it year by year and see what the results will be, but noted long range planning, could be included in the goals.

VII.

Old Business

- a. **PBC Reentry Summit**, *Dr. Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Associate Director and Associate Professor, FAU*

Dr. Cassandra Atkin-Plunk reported on the success of the reentry summit, noting the attendance of 250 paid attendees, representing close to 100 more than the 2018 summit. She recognized members of the planning committee and remarked about the impact of the involvement of individuals with lived experiences. She also noted that the next summit will be 2024. Members remarked about the quality and diversity of speakers, as well as the engagement of summit attendees in the various sessions. The summit planning committee was commended for doing a great job. Chair Haughwout added that while many agencies are doing great reentry work across the nation, attendees were particularly interested with PBC's county-wide organization and strategy at the Task Force level.

- b. **BJA Grant**, *Jessica Hidalgo, Palm Beach County Public Safety Department*

Jessica Hidalgo reported that we are still waiting to hear if the grant is awarded.

- c. **Mentoring of Grassroots Agencies**, *Jennifer Loyless, Office of the Public Defender*

Arising from the recent response to the Notification of Funding Opportunities (NoFO) which saw just few agencies applying for funds, efforts are being made to assist in developing grassroots agencies to increase their capacity to be able to apply for future funding in this regard. Conversation are being held with Non Profits First, and a decision was made to for the Sustainability Subcommittee to undertake a one-day workshop on capacity building for these grassroots agencies. Armando Fana remarked about the challenges of non-profits keeping up with the many changes in funding, and stressed the need for consistency in regulations for federal, state, and county dollars, to which Diana Stanley agreed, saying it has to be more mentorship and flexibility, and helping the small companies along the way. Oswald Newbold highlighted the importance of also helping with agencies gathering data. Motion unanimously approved for the Sustainability Subcommittee to proceed with this.

- d. **Florida Department of Corrections Outreach**, *Jennifer Loyless, Office of the Public Defender*

Jennifer Loyless reported that FDC provided PBC reentry with the top ten releasing facilities to Palm Beach County, and that efforts are being made to utilize technology for increased access to these facilities. Orie Bullard noted the need for Public Safety to take the lead instead of the providers. Further conversation will be held with FDC and a report provided at the January meeting.

VIII.

Subcommittee Updates (*Written Updates Provided Via Attachment*)

- a. **Reentry Faith-Based Subcommittee**, *Rev. Kevin Jones, WPB Police Department & Dr. Angela Bess, PBC School District*

Dr. Bess reported on the September meeting, noting that efforts are being made to partner with two Kairos and Christ Fellowship that are currently doing work in FDC facilities, to work specifically with Sago, and develop an angel tree for Sago Palm to provide gifts to the children of incarcerated individuals, and to explore how faith leaders can be engaged to receive individuals on their return from incarceration. A list of pastoral organizations is being targeted to join in this work. In terms of the youth, faith-based agencies work is continuing with on different levels with existing grants.

b. **Sago Palm Reentry Center, Sheila Kurzen, Classification Supervisor, Florida Department of Corrections**

Sheila Kurzen reported that State College has started classes and individuals are in a Peer to Peer wing where they are peered to assist each. Yvette Salinas reported that FDC is in partnership with iBuild and Florida Hires who just did a tour of Sago, and has finally filled the vacant forklift instructor position. The instructor is from Polk State College will relocate to Pahokee and the course is set to begin on November 14, for four weeks, and participants will be awarded with four different certification upon completion. A fulltime HVAC and Plumbing instructor position is also currently advertised. Chair Haughwout remarked about connecting these individuals with employers, to which Ms. Salina's noted they have been doing and that it has proven successful so far. Stephanie Sejnoha reported that County Water Utilities, Parks, and Engineering Departments are very interested in providing additional training, hand-on experience, and also interested in hiring.

IX. Additional Member and Guest Comment

- a. Jessica Younts asked about changing the language in the bylaws to be more people first.
- b. Chair Haughwout advised that the Housing Subcommittee proceed with any legislative changes in discussion as time is of the essence.
- c. Vanessa Klein inquired about the categorization of individuals as having sexual offense when they didn't. Jennifer Loyless noted that the issues is being addressed with FDC as the categorization is based on how they are housed rather than their offenses, and will take care of it.
- d. Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veterans Affairs, announced a Notification of Funding Opportunity to provide legal services for veterans and will share this information with the members/attendants.

X. Action Items

- a. Voting Members will meet prior to the next Youth Reentry Subcommittee meeting to create a small group to research existing agencies and programs in the interest of the youth reentry program.
- b. Housing Subcommittee to draft legislative proposal for consideration at January Task Force meeting.
- c. Arlene to share NoFO information for Veterans Affairs.
- d. Reentry staff to work with FDC to modify the release lists with respect to sexual offender category for participants that were not charged with a sex crime.

XI. Next Meeting Date: January 25, 2023

XII. Adjournment