



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT
PBC Reentry Task Force's [Subcommittee Name]

Wednesday October 28, 2020

WebEx Meeting

Summary Meeting Minutes

Members & Guests Present:

Adam Davis, Palm Beach County Library Department
Angel Bess, Palm Beach County School District
Armando Fana, City of West Palm Beach
Carey Haughwout, Office of Public Defender: 15th Judicial Circuit
Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Florida Atlantic University
Craig Spatara, Geo Group
Cristina Lucier, The Lord's Place
Dhiny Mercedes, CareerSource
Diana Stanley, Thee Lord's Place
Emily McBay, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Geeta Loach-Jacobson, PBC Youth Services Department
Gregory Starling, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice: 15th Judicial Circuit
Jennifer Loyless, Office of Public Defender: 15th Judicial Circuit
Jessica Younts, Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
Julia Dattolo, CareerSource
Kevin Jones, West Palm Beach Mayor's Office
Laura Waterman, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Maggie Witherow, Restoration Destination
Mark Ferrante, American Institute for Research
Mary Fabricatore, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veteran's Administration
Mevsim Bacaksiz
Michael Morrel, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Negaysha Walcott, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
Nikole Konieczny, Palm Beach State College
Orie Bullard, The City of Riviera Beach Reentry Center
Oswald Newbold, Returning Resident Riviera Beach
Regenia Herring, Criminal Justice Commission
Ron Dixon, The City of Riviera Beach
Sarita Johnson, Lift Him Up Ministries
Sheila Kurzen, Sago Palm Reentry Center
Shirlon St. Amour, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice: 15th Judicial Circuit
Tamara Starks, Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office
Wenfred Dorsey, The Lord's Place

Members Absent:

Alan Johnson, State Attorney's Office: 15th Judicial Circuit
Alton Taylor, Drug Abuse Foundation
Ann Berner, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network
Audrey McDonough, Literacy Coalition
Barbara Cheives, Converge & Associates Consulting
Bert Winkler, Criminal Justice Commission
Charisse Van Bisesen, Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network
Javier Jones, Florida Department of Corrections
Joe Speicher, South County Mental Health Center
John Cohen, League of Cities
Justin Kunzelman, Rebel Recovery Florida Inc.
Laura Johnson, 15th Judicial Circuit
Marsha Martino, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Michelle Johns, Florida Department of Corrections
Patricia Mikulan, Salvation Army
Robert Graham, True Fast Ministries
Steven Spaulding, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County
Ted Rodarm, Restoration Destination
Tyrus McCloud, Prison fellowship

Public Safety Department Staff Present:

Stephanie Sejnoha, PBC Public Safety Department
Nicole Bishop, PBC Public Safety Department
Arlene Griffiths, PBC Public Safety Department
Chenise Bonilla, PBC Public Safety Department
Jessica Hidalgo, PBC Public Safety Department
Randi Taylor, PBC Public Safety Department
Sarah Sanchez, PBC Public Safety Department

- I. **Welcome, Opening Comments-** *Chair, Dr. Angela Bess, Chief Academic Office, PBC School District*
- II. **Introduction of members and guests-** Dr. Angela Bess gave a brief Introduction.
- III. **Approval and/or additions to the Agenda-** Agenda was unanimously approved.
- IV. **Approval and/or corrections to the 7/22/2020 meeting minutes and 10/7/2020 special meeting minutes,** Minutes were unanimously approved.
- V. **Reentry Program Office Updates, Chenise Bonilla, Manager of Criminal Justice Programs, PBC Public -** Ms. Bonilla discussed the breakdown of the funding streams for reentry case management and support services and provided program updates, highlighting the completion of 40 reports for funders, and updating of the Reentry Task Force Strategic Plan, coordination of trainings for reentry case managers, and finalizing contracts with the three service providers. She also mentioned some challenges that are being faced during COVID19.
- VI. **Subcommittee Updates**
 - **Employment, Training, and Education Subcommittee, Dhiny Mercedes, Reentry Program Supervisor, CareerSource -** Mr. Mercedes gave a brief update on the subcommittee objectives, noting that the main goals are to focus on researching jobs, increasing the number of employers who hire returning residents, providing returning residents with educational and training opportunities, and increasing the number of employers and city municipalities to ban the box. He advised of multiple on the job training (OJT) opportunities through CareerSource.
 - **Data and Evaluation Subcommittee, Jennifer Loyless, Project Coordinator, Public Defender's Office -** Ms. Loyless reported that the Reentry Task Force has partnered with FAU to improve Palm Beach County's (PBC) reentry data collection and evaluation. Tasks to be accomplish include creating an improved data framework, creating quality assurance measures, processes and reports, assisting in ongoing data analysis as well as completing an evaluation of reentry programing and services in PBC. Ms. Atkin- Plunk mentioned that she and her team will be working together to help the Reentry Task Force reach the mentioned objectives through the next couple of years.
 - **Housing Subcommittee, Armando Fana, Assistant City Administrator, City of West Palm Beach -** Mr. Fana discussed the subcommittee's objectives which are to identify resources for transitional housing and rental assistance, provide reentry participants with housing vouchers and wrap around services, including behavioral health treatment, and to investigate the needs of special populations including youth, women and those convicted of sex offenses. He highlighted the need to enhance the local housing project and explore additional funding. The key, he noted, is to identify a dedicated funding source for housing, and stated that Ms. Diana Stanley of the Lord's Place will share her thoughts with housing subcommittee in this regard.
 - **Sex Offender Subcommittee, Meredith Powers-Lupo, Healthcare for Veterans Reentry Specialist, Veterans Affairs -** Ms. Powers-Lupo reported on the main objectives of the subcommittee, including increasing awareness about barriers for individuals convicted of sex offenses. She talked about the need to better educate the Task Forece, and asked members to indicate areas that they would like to learn/hear more about, as she is preparing a detail presentation for the January Reentry Task Force meeting. She also heighted some of the work that Broward and Dade County are collaborating on, which include sending an email and a registered letter to every elected official in the State of Florida on issues surrounding this population.
 - **Sustainability Subcommittee, Diana Stanley, Chief Executive Officer, The Lord's Place, and Tamara Starks, Unit Manager, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office -** Ms. Stanley gave an update on the subcommittee objectives. She mentioned the main objective to identify funding

sources to sustain and enhance current reentry services. She provided an overview of the grant that the three providers are collaborating on to provide Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) to aid in the safe reintegration of high risk, high needs people convicted of a sexual offense and returning from incarceration. She outlined the process and invited individuals to participate as volunteers in the inner and outer circles. A flyer with details was shared with attendees.

• **Youth Reentry Subcommittee**, *The Honorable Kathleen Kroll, 15th Judicial Circuit, and Geeta Loach Jacobson, Director of Outreach and Community Programming, PBC Youth Services Department* - Judge. Kroll highlighted the four objectives which include, improving and strengthening pre-release engagement with providers, families and the youth, better coordinate youth-based initiative to streamline processes to ensure that the youth and families have access to available resources. Additional objectives are to reforming policies that allow the youth from PBC to be placed in local residential commitment facilities, and to research and seek more funding opportunities in order to establish a transitional step-down program that implements evidence-based services and develops optimal conditions of confinement. Judge Kroll mentioned some of the many challenges faced by the youth, and expressed thanks to all the partners involved in youth initiatives as well as to Randi Taylor for doing an excellent job with the subcommittee and the youth.

VII. Federal Interagency Council on Crime Prevention and Improving Reentry - Ms. Bonilla provided an update on Pastor Tony Lowden's visit to Palm Beach County to explore what is being done around reentry. The Council was established in 2018, and focused on the best practices for Reentry so that it can be replicated on the Federal level. He met with Task Force members, reentry participants and staff, as well as conducted a tour at the Lord's Place Mann's campus. He highlighted best practices around the country that PBC could model. Pastor Lowden also provided some guidance on things to look forward to in reentry, especially as it relates to funding, engagement, and learning opportunities around the country. He also stated that the Council is expected to be in tact even if the current administration changes.

VIII. Florida Department of Corrections' Sago Palm Reentry Center Updates, *Sheila Kurzen, Classification Supervisor, Florida Department of Corrections/Arlene Griffiths Reentry Program Coordinator, PBC Public Safety* - Ms. Griffiths gave a brief update, noting that the transfers of reentry individuals have significantly decreased since COVID, but that Sago has seen its first increased numbers (about 50) in over six months. Ms. Dixon of FDC remarked about the hold on transfer in an effort to decrease the spread of COVID. A discussion ensued regarding engagement, and the need to reach out to nearby prisons to improve connections of individuals returning. Public Defender Haughwout commented about outreach by mails and suggested that the frequency of outreach by mails be done more often in an effort to improve the connection and engagement of individuals returning.

IX. Additional member and guest comments:

- Ms. Witherow inquired about the scheduled reentry summit, to which Ms. Stanley noted is still on the agenda and that more information will be provided at the January Task Force meeting.
- Ms. Powers-Lupo announced the 10th year celebration of PBC's Veterans Courts, noting that this initiative has saved the county over \$300,000 in non-incarceration and non-treatment court needs. She also noted that PBC has the lowest number of veterans entering the Department of Corrections and returning to PBC.

- **Amendment 4:**

- i. **Fines and Fees Program, Jessica Younts, Research and Policy Director, FRRRC**

Ms. Younts in her update, noted that FRRRC allocated over \$2MPBC and paid fines and fees for over 3,000 individuals since August, and is hoping to serve more individuals with the current surplus of over \$100,000. She thanked the agencies involved for their partnership in this initiative. Ms. Younts will try to ascertain the number of returning residents whose rights were restored, and provide an update at the next meeting.

- ii. **County Orders on court costs, Jennifer Loyless, PD's Office**

Ms. Loyless reported on the process developed along with the State Attorney's Office by which the fines and fees could be separated legally from someone's sentence, to be eligible to vote. Through this process they worked with 125 individuals to get 250 orders signed by Chief Judge Marx to have the process completed. In addition to paying fines and fees, individuals were also able to get their driver's license back. She expressed her gratitude for the partnership, and hopes that this initiative will continue. Ms. Griffiths added that the initiative assisted individuals in the reentry program as well as those in the broader community.

Chair Bess expressed thanks to Ms. Loyless for the tireless work she is doing around reentry.

- iii. Ms. Bonilla announced that the 2021 meeting scheduled was made available in the meeting packet, and commented on feedback from the Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting, to potentially provide report on each subcommittee once or twice per year instead of quarterly, to allow better focus on one or two items per meeting, and more opportunity to hear from reentry participants.
 - iv. Ms. Hidalgo remarked about the recent increase in arrest and talked about exploring a toy drive to benefit reentry participants. Ms. Stanley said The Lord's Place could help in that regard, and Ms. McCarty mentioned the current initiative by Toys for Tots and suggestion for combined efforts.
 - v. Dr. Sarita Johnson advised of a network of churches that have partnered and are doing outreach to returning individuals to provide additional support in the community.
 - vi. Ms. Younts mentioned the opportunity exists for First Generation students that returning residents may tap into.
 - vii. Ms. Griffiths announced that Ms. Mona Duffus was no longer with the reentry team, and wished her well in her new endeavors.

X. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021

XI. Adjourn-