



PALM BEACH COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENT

Palm Beach County Reentry Task Force

Full Task Force Meeting

Wednesday April 26, 2023 @ 12:00pm

Palm Beach County Governmental Center

McEaddy Conference Room, 12th Floor

301 N. Olive Ave., WPB, FL 33401

Summary Meeting Minutes

Members & Guests Present:

Alan Johnson, State Attorney's Office
 Kevin Jones, City of West Palm Beach Police Department
 Jeffrey Gillen, 15th Judicial Circuit
 Julia Dattolo, CareerSource of Palm Beach County
 Michele Johns, Circuit 15 – FDC Probation
 Tamara Starks, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
 Teresa Johnson, League of Cities – Town of Haverhill
 Arlene Ustin, People of Purpose
 Carla Randle, The Reentry Center
 Cassandra Atkin-Plunk, Florida Atlantic University
 Cristina Lucier, The Lord's Place
 Cristina Morrison
 Darnel Paul, The Reentry Center
 Elmo Loden, Jack Brewer Group
 Florence Thompson, Salvation Army
 Helen Eddings, Eph 428 Anchor House
 Jasper Kandola, Supervisor of Elections Office
 Jennifer Ferriol, City of West Palm Beach
 Jennifer Loyless, Office of the Public Defender
 Jessica Younts, Justice Impact Alliance
 John Eddings, Eph 428 Anchor House
 Jonathan Bleiweiss, Florida Justice Center
 Jordon Joachim, Harm Reduction Center
 Joshua Luminoso, Harm Reduction Center
 Kevin Choi, Harm Reduction Center
 Kiera Hester, The Reentry Center
 Kim Raynor, Supervisor of Elections Office
 Lakiesha Linen-Neal, SEFBHN
 Latroy Monroe, The Reentry Center
 Laura Waterman, Gulfstream Goodwill Industries
 Liela Basili, Supervisor of Elections Office
 Leonard Neal, GAMA
 Lynn Trimble, Choice to Change

Maggie Witherow, Restoration Destination
 Marcia Bahia, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
 Melanie Magill, CareerSource of Palm Beach County
 Melvin Backsis, Drug Abuse Foundation
 Meredith Powers-Lupo, Veterans Affairs
 Monique Brown-Faust, Integrated Healthcare Systems
 Mayra Geldent, SEFBHN
 Natalie Dixon-Williams, Fl. Department of Corrections
 Nicole Davis, Office of Equal Business Opportunity
 Orie Bullard, The Reentry Center
 Ron Dixon, The Reentry Center
 Sarita Johnson, LHU Ministries
 Serena Marlow, Fl. Department of Corrections (Sago Palm)
 Shawn Bergstrand, Jack Brewer Group
 Shazia Jackson, Palm Beach Sheriff's Office
 Sheila Kurzen, Fl. Department of Corrections (Sago Palm)
 Tina Robinson, Department of Juvenile Justice C-15
 Timothy Gradsom, Salvation Army
 Vanessa Klein, The Lord's Place
 Vickie Rossy Health Council of SE Florida
 Victoria Amoroso, The Victory Program
 William Freeman, People of Purpose
 Willie, GAMA

Public Safety Department Staff Present:

Arlene Griffiths, Reentry Program Coordinator
 Cathy Wolf, Program Evaluator
 Jessica Hidalgo, PBC Public Safety Department
 Nicole Bishop, Director, Victim & Justice Services Divs.
 Shirlon St. Amour, PBC Public Safety Department
 Randi Taylor, PBC Public Safety Department

I. Welcome and Introductions *Rev. Kevin Jones*

- a. Rev. Jones chaired the meeting and apologized for the absence of Chair Carey Haughwout and Vice Chair Greg Starling who were unavoidably absent. He extended welcome to members and guests.

- b. Roll call of voting members was conducted for quorum purposes.
- c. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

II. Approval and/or Additions to the Preliminary Agenda – Approved

III. Approval and/or Corrections to the 1/25/2023 Meeting Minutes – Approved

IV. Chairman's Comments

Commented on his excitement about the work being done and looked forward to a productive meeting.

V. Subcommittee Updates (Written updates provided)

- a. **Faith-Based Subcommittee:** Ms. St. Amour reported on the Bags of Hope initiative that took place at Sago Palm Reentry Center where the Faith Based Subcommittee prepared and delivered packages with various items including toiletries, inspirational notes and candies to all residents. This was well received and members used the opportunity to share opportunities for help from the faith community on their return to the community.
- b. **Sustainability Subcommittee:** Ms. Loyless reported on the status of grant that will focus on the Glades, noting that a supplemental budget request was submitted to County Administrator Baker for consideration to increase the numbers or individuals to be served from 30 up to 60. This will likely go before the County Commissioners for approval, pending the outcome of meeting with Administrator and Chair Haughwout.

Additionally, she reported on efforts to build capacity of small community organization that would like to do this work, but are not at the capacity to do so. A survey is being done to identify agencies to participate in seminars to provide training in capacity building which will focus on building a non-profit, finance, etc.

BJA Grant Opportunity: She highlighted a grant opportunity from BJA to the tune of \$4M that is available to non-profits for capacity building, and asked if persons were interested in applying. Public Safety staff will be sending an invitation to members and other agencies who are interested in the grant to learn more about this opportunity that ties in with building local agencies capacity. A motion for staff to move forward with providing guidance in this regard was moved by Alan Johnson and seconded by Dr. Teresa Johnson.

VI. Old Business/Follow Up Items

- a. **Bylaws Revision** – Ms. Jessica Hidalgo provided update on the bylaws that was revised with a change of language to replace “ex-offender” throughout the document. Members unanimously approved after motion moved and seconded.
- b. **Voting Membership** – Deferred to July’s meeting in the absence of the individual that was nominated to fill the behavioral health seat (Atensia Bowen, NAMI Board member and Faculty at FAU) with whom staff met and she is excited to participate. Also, regarding the expansion of membership to include a seat from the business community, Ms. Loyless noted that this will be incorporated in the Task Force strategic planning session during the Fall.
- c. **Criminal Justice Commission (CJC)/Reentry Task Force Update** – Ms. Hidalgo reported that ongoing updates will be provided to the CJC. Additionally, she updated on reentry

videos of individuals with lived experiences that Channel 20 is currently recording. The hope is to include a recorded session at a GEO facility that can be used to bring hope for individuals currently incarcerated, those the community, as well as families of those impacted by the justice system.

- d. **Outreach Efforts Updates** – In an effort to better outreach and engage individuals returning to the community from incarceration within Florida Department of Corrections, the top ten releasing facilities were identified and a policy established to in this regard. However, due to the challenges experienced in moving forward, reentry team is looking at identifying one facility for as a pilot with the hopes of getting others on board at a later date. Ms. Meredith Powers-Lupo offered her support in this regard as she does this for veterans.

Ms. Kiera advised that residents are now able to access podcast and broadcasts on the new tablets, and that a reentry app might be an option to explore.

- e. **Sago Palm Transition**- Mr. Orie Bullard in his update, noted that The Reentry Center currently has two staff working out of Sago Palm on a full time basis. A kick-off event was held in February and of the 365 current residents, 176 are returning to Palm Beach County, and of the 176, 58 intakes have been completed, three programs (In-side Out Dads, Peer Mentoring and Casual Conversations) in addition to case management are have been implemented. The residents are excited and fully engaged, and other programs will be rolled out in the near future. Mr. Bullard highlighted the intention for cognitive based programming coupled with vocational. He thanked Assistant Warden Serena Marlow and the FDC staff for their support and collaboration in this regard. Ms. Hidalgo commented on the current partnership with Education staff and RESTORE team. Ms. Griffiths mentioned an upcoming town hall meeting with Mayor Weiss, and also spoke about organized tours to Sago. A brief history of the RESTORE team at Sago Palm was provided at the request of Task Force member Dr. Johnson, who indicated her interest in visiting the facility.

VII. **New Business**

- a. **PBC Reentry Summit** – Dr. Cassandra Atkin-Plunk remarked about the prior summits and reported that discussions have started around the 2024 summit. She mentioned several webinars that will be hosted in an effort to keep participants engaged and how to stay in the fight to do this work. Persons were asked to indicate their interest in volunteering to help plan the event. She noted that over 350 individuals participated in the 2022 summit. An email will be sent to Arlene Griffiths for distribution later today. Rev. Jones added his enthusiasm with the reentry summit and requested a motion for co-chairs Atkin-Plunk and Loyless to continue as co-chairs for the 2024 summit. Motion was moved and seconded, and members unanimously voted accordingly.
- b. **DOL Building Pathways to Infrastructure Jobs Grant Program** - Dr. Teresa Johnson presented the grant as an opportunity that she feels the Task Force to consider. It provides approximately \$80M in grant funds to train job seekers, and advance manufacturing, information technology and professional scientific technical services occupation that support renewable energy, transportation and broadband infrastructure. She think this is a viable opportunity with the transition to electric vehicles and other emerging industries. This focuses on marginalized individuals included those impacted by the justice system. July 7, 2023 is the deadline and she

hopes that a committee can be established to explore the possibility of applying for same.

Ms. Julia Datallo agreed that the infrastructure is in place for this, and expressed her interest in working with the committee and a decision made to move it to the Employment, Training and Education Subcommittee for action.

She also remarked about her participation at the League of Cities where she shared the Housing Subcommittee's interest in legislative changes to the SHIP program, and noted their eagerness in supporting this effort. Ms. Griffiths noted that because of the timing this legislative effort will be deferred for next session, but that the Subcommittee will continue to work on having it ready.

- VIII. Sago Palm Reentry Center, Serena Marlow, Assistant Warden, Florida Department of Corrections** – Ms. Marlow advised that FDC is using tablets and that there is a way to have each individual use same, but not sure about getting additional programming on same, as these tablets are being hacked every day. She reported on several basketball tournaments held at Sago. She also talked about Atlow Program, a self-taught programming where individuals are able to access the internet and have access to programs such as. She advised that the legislature through their budget process is looking to provide the Department with 60 portable buildings, and that Sago Palm is scheduled to receive two which would allow for four classes. She noted that any support in this regard would be greatly appreciated. The Second Chance Pell Grant program is approaching their third semester with graduation scheduled for December 2024. The class started with a total of 20 residents which is now down to 15 because of disciplinary and other reasons. A volunteers meeting was held recently and everyone was asked to assist with finding volunteers to teach vocational classes, and to have Palm Beach State College to provide the certification. She remarked about the need for transitional housing in Lake Worth for a current Pell Grant student with a 4.0 GPA who is on the verge of quitting college because of lack of housing.

Mr. Eddings commented on the need for returning residents to learn computer skills, especially since employment is one of the most challenging issue, and most job applications are online.

IX. Additional Member and Guest Comment

- a. **Second Chance Month** – Ms. Griffiths shared pictures of Second chance events held to date, and thanked individuals for their participation in the various events. She announced the upcoming Youth Summit taking place on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00p.m. Ms. Marcia Bahia added that students are able to obtain community services.
- b. Dr. Johnson commented on her eye opening experience participating in the reentry simulation, noting that she continues to make her voice heard regarding the challenges faced by returning individuals.

X. Next Steps

- a. **Recap Action Items**
- b. **Next meeting date: July 26, 2023**

XI. Adjournment