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**JJDPC Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**December 14, 2023**

Location: Rustin Conference Center  
2085 Rustin Ave., Riverside, CA 92507

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**In Attendance:** Christopher Collopy, Paul Parker, Cynthia Magill, Laurel Cook, Amanda Wade, Jennifer Kopfler, Emily Headlee, Veronica Soto, Dulce Cendejas, Michael Gunther, Todd Hough, Shannon Crosby, Rachel Ligtenberg, Daniel Castaneda

**Unexcused / Excused Absence:** Michael Malsed (excused), Charles Trembley (excused)

**Applicants:** Daniel Marmolejo, Michael Belknapp

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**1. Call to Order**

- a. With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 1:40pm.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

- a. Commissioner Amanda Wade led the pledge of allegiance

**3. Roll Call / Welcome / Introductions**

- a. Roll call - JJDPC Executive Assistant
- b. All participants were welcomed by Commission Chair Christopher Collopy, and given the opportunity to introduce themselves (by name and title).
- c. Chair Collopy made an announcement that Ms. Amanda Wade has been officially sworn in as a JJDPC Commissioner a few weeks ago. Furthermore, he warmly welcomed Mr. Daniel Marmolejo and Mr. Mike Belknapp, who are attending their first of two mandatory meetings today, as new JJDPC applicants.
  - i. Amanda was officially sworn in a few weeks ago. We were delighted to have her join our team. Additionally, we are thrilled to welcome two new applicants today, Mr. Daniel Marmolejo and Mr. Mike Belknapp. We extend a warm welcome to both of you.

**4. Public Comment**

- a. No Public Comment

**5. Motion to Approve Agenda**

- a. Motion was made by Commissioner Parker, seconded by Commissioner Cook

**6. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes (November 09, 2023)**

- a. Motion was made by Commissioner Wade, seconded by Commissioner Cook

**7. County Counsel Report**

- a. No Public Comment

**8a. Riverside County Probation (Special Services Division) - Division Director, Shannon Crosby**

- a. Youth Report: Overview and Updates
  - i. Shannon Crosby, the Division Director, gave a brief introduction of Dulce Cendejas. Dulce joined the Special Services Division in July as the Assistant Division Director. Unfortunately, she hasn't been able to attend the meetings yet due to scheduling conflicts. However, Shannon Cosby announced that despite this, they are thrilled to have her on their team and she has been a valuable addition to the Special Services Division.
  - ii. There are currently 31 youth in placement, with two in emergency placement, one in an approved resource family home, and one in an approved family foster agency home. The remaining 27 youth are in STRTPs, with two of them in county. Additionally, there are 20 dual status youth with DPSS as the lead agency and 30 participating in extended foster care. It was discussed that the 20 youth placed out of county are located as far as Oakland and on the border of California and Nevada, near Reno.
  - iii. During the discussion, it was emphasized that Riverside Probation is in compliance with Divisions 31. This entails the probation officers visit youth placed outside the county once a month and maintain regular face-to-face contact with them.
  - iv. The conversation continued about youth being placed outside of the county, improving the procedure to expand the number of STRTPs in Riverside County, They also addressed the exhausting and expensive licensing process for facilities to become STRTPs. Additionally, they talked about Riverside County facilities that accept youth from other counties, as well as facilities that may not have the capacity to meet the specific treatment requirements of certain Riverside County youth.

**8b. Riverside County Probation (Institutional Services) - CDPO Joe Doty and Division Director, Daniel Castaneda**

- a. Overview / Highlights
  - i. CDPO Joe Doty provided a brief introduction of the individuals present with him today, including Rachel Ligtenberg, Division Director, Todd Hough, Assistant Director of YTEC, and Veronica Soto, Assistant Director of Pathways. He then proceeded to inform the group about some important changes. Daniel Castaneda, the newly appointed Chief Deputy, will be taking over Institution Services by the end of the month. Monica Rose, Division Director for the Pathways to Success program, will be retiring officially within the next month, and Rachel Ligtenberg will assume responsibility for both YTEC and Pathways, with the two assistant directors possibilities. Furthermore, CDPO Joe



- Doty announced he will be returning to his assignment in the Strategic Development Bureau, and the department will be filling the vacant Division Director position at Southwest Juvenile Hall, previously held by Daniel Castaneda.
- ii. Furthermore, Daniel is overseeing SWJ until a replacement is found for his vacant position. In the meantime, Laurie Wilson and Rebecca Cloyd, who are Assistant Directors at SWJH, are currently managing Southwest Juvenile Hall. Division Director Mike Brinkman and Assistant Director Emil Fischer continue to oversee IJH.
  - iii. Moving ahead, Daniel will be in charge of updating the Institutional numbers, as mentioned by CDPO Doty. The commission will receive an email containing the statistics for their review, which will be made available to them by the Thursday before the meeting.
  - iv. The commission expressed their appreciation to CDPO Doty for furnishing the report. Additionally, they inquired about the potential to monitor changes in population (males and females), ethnicity data, incidents of youth fights, and staff injuries.
  - v. CDPO Doty acknowledged the request and stated his intention to collaborate with Daniel. Together, they would develop a proposal and seek Chair Collopy's feedback to ensure its suitability for the commission. Their aim is to present a more practical and valuable solution that caters to the commission's needs.
- b. Current Population / Updates:
- i. The current population at Indio Juvenile Hall as of November 30th consisted of 50 males in detention. Among them, there was 1 RM, 6 pending placement, and 41 going through the court process. One youth was deemed unfit, while two DJ returnees who were in PTS have been released. One was released by the court and probation was terminated unsuccessfully, while the second one was released into temporary housing and is currently under probation supervision.
  - ii. CDPO Doty clarified the definition of "terminated unsuccessfully" for the DJJ returnee youth during the discussion. This term indicates that the individual did not successfully complete the program, but since he was close to turning 25, his time in probation care came to an end. As a result, the court ordered his release, and he is now responsible for himself without any additional supervision from probation. Additionally, the duration of the probation period after release was also discussed. It was noted that it varies, and in the case of the one DJJ returnee youth who was released, he could be on probation until he reaches the age of 25.
  - iii. On December 8th, there were a total of 49 youth at SW Juvenile Hall, consisting of seven young ladies, and there are two that are RM. Seven youth are waiting placement, one was waiting for PTS and was admitted to the PTS program yesterday, and 39 were waiting for court status. The most recent count this morning showed that SWJ count had risen to 52.
  - iv. Additional discussion took place regarding the SWJ Christmas decorating contest, and the commission was extended an invitation to partake in the judging process. Furthermore, there was further discussion regarding the activities planned for the youth on Christmas day. CDPO Castaneda mentioned that there would be a variety of events including gingerbread house making, games, snacks, and a festive meal. The commission was also invited to join in the Christmas day celebrations.
  - v. At present, YTEC consists of a total of 30 youth, with 33 males and 5 females. On the 11th, there was one male detainee from their population.
  - vi. The usual practice is to release clients to placement through the YTEC facility, so Southwest will be contacted to arrange for the youth to be sent there and ensure that everything is prepared for their placement. This allows for proximity to the field unit and typically results in placements that are closer to the YTEC facility.
  - vii. At present, there are 27 males on the Pathway side. Out of those 27 youth, 26 are males and there is one female youth. Additionally, there has been one induction since these numbers were last updated on the 11th, bringing the total count to 28.
  - viii. The programming for the three young people in Pathways generated further conversation. It was mentioned Pathways is continuing to separate any youth that require special accommodation. Moreover, the Pathways youth are actively involved in all activities, including decorating their unit and taking part in Christmas events. They have their own unit and have been provided access to the multipurpose room for their use.
  - ix. The conversation progressed to the other youth at YTEC and Pathways each youth is responsible for decorating their own door for Christmas, creating a competition for the best decoration. However, the girls have a slightly different arrangement as they are decorating their entire living space, which is turning out to be quite impressive. Ms. Ligtenberg and Mr. Huff will be present on Christmas Day from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, while other staff members will be there before and after those times. The commission is invited to visit during this festive occasion.
  - x. CDPO Doty provided an update on the PTS female who has been transitioned into a less restrictive environment, allowing her to leave the premises. She has been attending equine therapy sessions on a weekly basis and has also been accompanied to the bank to set up necessary arrangements. Additionally, she successfully interviewed for a job and is currently employed, with probation transporting her to and from work. Efforts are being made to eventually transition her out of the facility. Although her maximum duration is expected to last until December of next year, probation is exploring the possibility of an earlier release if she continues to make progress and



maintains stable employment while they secure housing for her.

- xi. In addition, Div. Director Rachel Ligtenberg provided a comprehensive report on the young woman. She also discussed the court's order for the Pathways step-down program, Probation's evaluation criteria for determining readiness, her treatment plan, addressing victimization, the change model, and the process for integrating her into the community and workforce. Additionally, she highlighted how the law protects juveniles from having to reveal their criminal records.
  - xii. Additional discourse was held to explore potential funding sources and identify grants that could assist in facilitating the transition for step-down programs. Furthermore, the ongoing discussion revolved around the limited time frame provided to the counties for implementing transitional or step-down programs, and the those challenges, and engaging community business for involvement, support, and awareness to aid in the transition and foster collaborative solutions.
  - xiii. Further discussions were held regarding the probation department's efforts to investigate various funding possibilities and locate grants that could aid in the smooth implementation of step-down programs. Moreover, the ongoing conversation centered on the restricted timeframe given to the counties for executing transitional or step-down programs, as well as the difficulties associated with it. Additionally, strategies to involve communities and local businesses in contributing to support, raise awareness, and assist in the transition process were explored to foster collaborative solutions.
  - xiv. The occurrence at YTEC during the commission's inspection was also brought up for discussion. There was an initial concern regarding the presence of drugs within the premises, but it was later proven to be a false positive. Moreover, the conversation delved into the security measures enforced by probation to effectively detect any potential dangerous substances.
- c. Critical Incidents:
- i. At SWJ, there were four altercations involving the girls unit, four involving the security unit, and one involving unit one. As of today, which is the 14th of this month, there have been three fights at SWJ.
  - ii. In November, there were two youth fights at YTEC and two at PTS. Fortunately, there were no significant injuries reported in any of these incidents.

## 9. Behavioral Health: Administrator, Michael Gunther

### a. Updates:

- i. The only update from Behavioral Health is regarding the youth transitions. They've taken a proactive step by establishing the New Life Clinic to address the youth's mental health requirements. This means that when the youth transition out and require mental health services, behavioral health is prepared to assist them. The behavioral health staff at the New Life Clinic have already undergone training using the change model provided by DJJ. Additionally, we're collaborating with probation to ensure that individuals in need of these services, or any other essential services, are connected ahead of time.
- ii. During the discussion on staffing levels, Mr. Gunther mentioned that there are a few vacant positions, such as substance counselors. However, the hiring and background process takes time. Behavioral Health is actively exploring creative solutions and considering the utilization of other staff members to support probation work and service provision. He also mentioned that only a few positions are yet to be filled.

## 10. Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Director of Public Social Services, Jennifer Kopfler

### a. Updates / Highlights:

- i. DPSS organized a fantastic holiday celebration for their non minor dependents at New Beginnings in Norco. It took place on Tuesday night and was filled with an amazing display of various cultures, delicious food stations, fun games, and memorable photo opportunities. The youth had a blast, capturing moments and receiving wonderful gifts.
- ii. In addition to that, DPSS held their annual "shop with the firefighter" event. This event allowed the youth to enjoy a \$250 shopping spree with firefighters at Target. The event took place last Saturday in Indio, followed by Eastvale on Sunday, and Menifee this coming Saturday. Each facility aimed to include 50 youth, resulting in a total turnout of around 40. It was also heartwarming to see many of the Harmony Haven youth being a part of this event. Everything went smoothly, and they managed to capture some incredible pictures of these memorable occasions.
- iii. DPSS has made special arrangements for Christmas by organizing special meals for Harmony Haven and other DPSS locations. Additionally, all the cottages at Harmony Haven have been beautifully decorated, which is an exciting experience for the children who actively participated in the process.
- iv. DPSS experiences what they refer to as March Madness every year, which brings in a wave of referrals. Similarly, in September, there's always a spike in calls to the hotline.
- v. To tackle this, DPSS has assembled a Surge Plan team. These dedicated workers focus on our busiest months, namely March, April, and May, as well as September, October, and November. By analyzing data trends and identifying regions with the highest influx of referrals, they are able to provide effective support during these peak months.



- vi. The breakdown of response priority can be observed in the chart, showcasing our immediate responses. A significant action taken two years ago was the centralization of all immediate responses across the entire county. This resulted in the establishment of a 24-hour operations command post that operates throughout the county, effectively eliminating the need for daily transfer of immediate responses to the region. This strategic move aimed to allow regional investigators to allocate their attention to other response times, such as those within 5 and 10 days.
- vii. In addition, Ms. Kopfler delved into the topic of Evaluate Out referrals, constituting around 34% of the total, which are specifically allocated for prevention services. This data will serve as a valuable resource for monitoring progress and, after a year, assessing the impact of prevention services on reducing reentry rates or subsequent referrals. It is worth noting that Prevention Services is also situated at the hotline.
- viii. The discussion continued regarding the arrangement of a date to visit Harmony Haven. It was concluded that the commission would be able to visit after the JJDC monthly meeting in March 2024.
- ix. The expansion of DPSS into the third cottage at Harmony Haven was a topic of further discussion. However, this cottage had encountered electrical problems, which prompted DPSS to prioritize their resolution before accommodating more children. DPSS was keen on avoiding the inconvenience of relocating the children for repairs. Despite the initial challenges, the children have now been successfully moved into the third cottage. One notable benefit of this expansion is the reduction in the number of children staying in hotels. Currently, DPSS has the three cottages at Harmony Haven, in addition to the BOLO court house location, where an average of three children, who require separation, are housed. Furthermore, there are six youths residing in hotels who also need to be separated due to concerns regarding violence towards other youth.
- x. DPSS reported that they currently have 5100 dependent youth, with approximately 3000 of them placed in out-of-home care, while the others receive supervision while still under their parents' care. Consequently, the percentage distribution of the different placement types remains largely consistent. Notably, there are just over a thousand youth in FFA placements within Riverside County, and 871 placed with relatives or non-related extended family members. Outside of Riverside County, the percentage is smaller, as illustrated in the accompanying pie chart.
- xi. Questions were raised by the commission regarding the emancipation of youth. Ms. Kopfler provided a concise explanation about the circumstances under which DPSS has not established permanent plans for the youth. In such cases, the youth is offered extended foster care once their dependency is terminated. DPSS then arranges a child and family team meeting between all of them where all the necessary information about the services is provided to the youth. If the youth decides not to avail any further services, they are given the DPSS hotline number, which they can call at any time, 24 hours a day. By calling the hotline, they will be immediately connected to someone who will assist them, regardless of the time of day or night. This person will provide the necessary support and help the youth in whatever they require, aiming to reintegrate them into their extended living programs, including independent living programs. These programs cover various aspects such as transitional plans, housing, career development, and other related matters.

#### 11. New Business:

- a. JJC Youth Advocacy Letter:
  - i. Chair Collopy presented the commission with a letter/petition (attached in the packet) aimed at garnering support from elected officials for California's high acuity youth. The original letter was drafted by the Contra Costa County JJC and endorsed by the JJC Task Force and 15 other JJC's. Chair Collopy sought the commission's concurrence on the letter.
  - ii. Following a brief examination and deliberation of the letter, the commission unanimously voted to proceed with the letter in its current form.
- b. JJDC Applicants:
  - i. Chair Collopy brought forth the two JJDC applicants for Commission positions to the commission. He pointed out that the commission has adopted a different method of evaluating applicants. To expedite the lengthy background process, the applicants will now be interviewed after the first meeting. If the commission approves, their applications will proceed directly to the background check stage. Today, the commission will interview the two applicants after the conclusion of the meeting.
- c. Timely attendance at meetings or notification
  - i. Tabled
- d. Inspection Reports (Outstanding, Responsibility and Completion):
  - i. Chair Collopy has made a formal request for the submission of any pending reports by the conclusion of this year. A short discussion took place among the commission regarding the inspection reports that still needed to be completed.
  - ii. Further dialogue ensued regarding the completion of the three remaining inspections. It was duly noted that VC Parker will be responsible for inspecting the Blythe Sheriff Station on January 24th. Additionally, the Community



Access Facility in Riverside and in Perris will undergo their inspection on January 06<sup>th</sup>, with Chair Collopy, VC Parker, and Commissioner Wade overseeing the process. Lastly, the New Beginnings Residential Treatment Facility will undergo its inspection on January 13<sup>th</sup>, led by Chair Collopy, and VC Parker.

## 12. Correspondence Discussion:

- a. Merced County JJDPC:
  - i. Chair Collopy made a reference to the email sent by Merced County JJDPC to fellow JJDPC Commissioners. They requested information about WIC § 233, which pertains to supervisors making appointments to the commission. The email also inquired about the process and procedures involved in making these appointments. Additionally, the appointee is required to undergo the usual steps of an interview, background check, and being sworn in by the court. Furthermore, the email also request if the commission would share ideas on project or other things the commission has done on the prevention/delinquency side.
  - ii. Chair Collopy gave a brief summary of his response to the email from the Merced County JJDPC, outlining the procedures followed in Riverside County for appointing commissioners and discussing the various prevention and delinquency projects undertaken by the commission.

## 13. Activities of the Commission

- a. School Violence:
  - i. Tabled
- b. Anti-Trafficking:
  - i. Tabled
- c. Ad-hoc Legislative Committee
  - i. No Report
- d. JJCC Activity
  - i. Chair Collopy expressed his gratitude towards commissioner Cook for representing him at the recent JJC meeting and for agreeing to actively participate in the subcommittee. Additionally, he requested her to provide a concise summary to the commission. Commissioner Cook informed the commission about her positive impression regarding the potential involvement of employers from the community in supporting justice-involved youth and offering them opportunities. This was the main point she took away from the discussion, and she expressed her interest in observing if there will be further developments in this area and how the employers are collaborating with the youth. Chair Collopy proposed that reaching out to organizations such as the Rotary, Elks and Lions Clubs, and Chambers of Commerce could serve as effective means of outreach for collaboration and employment of youth.
  - ii. Furthermore, Chair Collopy reiterated the existence of a pending Request for Proposal (RFP) aimed at conducting a thorough examination of the efficiency of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) throughout the county. The study aims to determine whether our CBOs are effectively catering to the appropriate areas and target audience. Additionally, it seeks to understand the complete life cycle of CBO activities in relation to the youth they serve. Chair Collopy informed the group that he was requested to join the Evaluation committee responsible for reviewing the RFP responses. They have reached a decision, and the announcement will be made shortly.

## 14. Old Business

- a. Inspections / Lock Up Inspection Report (Moreno Valley Sheriff Station)
  - i. Chair Collopy presented the commission with a preliminary letter (attached in the packet) addressing the violations identified at the Moreno Valley Sheriff Station during the annual inspection conducted by Commissioner Malsed. The report had been previously reviewed during the JJDPC meeting held last month.
  - ii. Following a brief examination and deliberation of the corrective action letter, it was observed that the report or letter did not provide any explanation or justification for the violations. Chair Collopy will consult with Commissioner Malsed to inquire if he possesses any additional information. If Commissioner Malsed does have any relevant details, they will be included in the report and letter. In the absence of any additional information, the commission unanimously voted to proceed with the letter in its current form.

## 15. Commission Member Reports

- a. Updates:
  - i. None

## 16. Adjournment:

- a. There was no further comment from Commission members or attendees. The Chair thanked all everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 3:03pm.

## Next Meeting:

Date: January 11, 2024

Time: 11:30 am

Location: Rustin Conference Center (Entrance 1) Room TBD  
2085 Rustin Ave., Riverside, CA 92507