



JJDPC Monthly Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2024

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

In Attendance: Christopher Collopy, Laurel Cook, Paul Parker, Pam Torres, Amanda Wade, Michael Belknapp, Cynthia Magill, Allison Donohoe-Beggs, Shannon Crosby, Cari Shepherd, Carolina Ayala, Dwayne George, Todd Hough, Bruce Fordon, Leslie Cordero

Unexcused / Excused Absence: Micheal Malsed (resigned)

Applicants: Michael Belknapp, Patricia Watson, Georgia Hussein

1. Call to Order

- a. With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 1:36pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

- a. The pledge of allegiance was led by commissioner Torres.

3. Roll Call / Welcome / Introductions

- a. Welcome:
 - i. Chair Collopy provided an update on the commissioner applicants. Georgia Hussein, a former commissioner, will be rejoining after going through meetings, interviews, and background checks. Chair Collopy expressed gratitude towards Ms. Hussein for being his mentor in 2019. In addition, applicant Pat Watson was welcomed, and it was informed that applicant Mike Belknapp will be sworn in as a commissioner in early April.
 - ii. Chair Collopy also welcomed Bruce Fordon from County Counsel, as Emily has transitioned to a different role.
 - iii. Division Director Shannon Crosby introduced Cari Shepherd, Assistant Probation Division Director for Field Services - Special Services, who will also attend future JJDPC meetings.

4. Public Comment

- a. No Public Comment

5. Motion to Approve Agenda

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

6. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes (March 14, 2024)

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

7. County Counsel Report

- a. Updates:
 - i. Mr. Fordon expressed his gratitude to the commission for the warm welcome. He provided a concise overview of his responsibilities in County Counsel, highlighting his role in supervising the Litigation Section. He briefly mentioned Emily's transition to a new assignment due to the influx of cases, emphasizing the need to manage workload effectively. Additionally, he shared insights into his extensive experience, having served on various boards and worked in the county for 17 years. Prior to this, he was involved in the jobs program at DPSS in San Bernardino County. He expressed his familiarity with similar groups and his eagerness to learn more about the commission. Recently, he has been participating in probation committees and councils, which has been a rewarding experience thus far.
 - ii. Mr. Fordon communicated to the commission that there were no new developments from the County Council. Nevertheless, he pointed out that the Brown Act has been a widely discussed topic among many people. He also shared that he had conducted a Brown Act training for the JJCC, and proposed to offer the same training to the commission.
 - iii. The commission asked whether virtual meetings were permitted for Brown Act subcommittee meetings. Mr. Fordon pointed out that since January 2024, California has lifted the Brown Act regulations to permit virtual meetings. Virtual meetings may be utilized sparingly in cases of "emergency circumstances". Mr. Fordon emphasized that the virtual alternative comes with very specific criteria, and thorough examination is necessary. If such a situation arises, Mr. Fordon can be contacted for a determination on whether the criteria are met.
 - iv. Additionally, Mr. Fordon shared details regarding the permissible actions under the "Teleconference rules". The Traditional Brown Act Teleconference Requirements allow a commission to employ teleconferencing during a meeting. Teleconference is defined as a gathering of individuals in different locations connected through teleconference technology. To have a member participate via teleconferencing, the traditional rules must be followed, including: (1) posting meeting agendas at all teleconference locations; (2) identifying all teleconference locations in the notice and agenda; and (3) ensuring that each teleconference location is accessible to the public.
 - v. Mr. Fordon explained that if a committee has ongoing jurisdiction, it is generally covered by the Brown Act. A meeting with the entire committee present is always considered a Brown Act meeting. If there is less than a quorum present, but the matter is ongoing and established, it is still subject to the Brown Act. The only exception is for an ad hoc committee with less than a quorum, which has a specific short-term purpose. This exception is



limited. Public meetings are typically open and noticed, but there may be instances where a smaller group is formed to address a specific need or provide advisory input, and in those cases, the Brown Act may not apply.

- vi. Chair Collopy notified Mr. Fordon that Commissioner Belknap has passed the background check. Nonetheless, due to a court delay, the official swearing-in ceremony will be postponed until April. He raised the question of whether Commissioner Belknap can actively engage in the group or if he must wait until the swearing-in ceremony. Mr. Fordon clarified that although Commissioner Belknap cannot vote until he is sworn in, he is encouraged to attend the public meeting and share his opinions. However, he cannot hold the official position of a commissioner until the swearing-in process is completed.

8a. Riverside County Probation (Institutional Services)

- a. Current Population / Updates:
 - i. According to AD. Hough's report, the statistics from Indio indicate a population of 29, which remains relatively high. At SWJ, during the same period, the total population was 48, consisting of 43 males and 5 females. Two individuals are awaiting placement, while one is awaiting PTS. However, the population at YTEC did decrease, with 15 graduates in January and February. As a result, the population decreased to 27 males and 6 females.
 - ii. During the time of these statistics, there were two males in detention, and in PTS, there were 31 males and 1 female.
 - iii. In terms of fights, February was a positive month for the institutions. Indio reported zero fights, Southwest had 5 fights, YTEC had one fight, and the Pathways to Success program had zero fights.
- b. Projects:
 - i. Indio continues to make progress on their Court project by constructing their new Courthouse. Meanwhile, YTEC is also making strides in building the SB 81 Round two training center. They have successfully completed the design phase and are now moving on to the construction phase. Approval has been granted for the construction of a comprehensive automotive shop as well as a welding and fabrication shop for the youth. They are hoping to break ground for the project to take place in August of this year. It was noted that when ground breaks in August, ribbon cutting would take place one year from that point.
 - ii. AD Hough shared exciting news from a recent YTEC event where they took a group of eight YTEC Youth and two PTS youth to visit the USS Midway in San Diego. This trip was special because it was the first time a male PTS youth joined them on a supervised outing, and he had a great time. Additionally, this PTS youth is set to graduate with an AA degree in June, making him the first PTS youth to achieve higher education. YTEC has been supporting him by providing transportation to his classes at RCC. Currently, they are also focused on helping graduated youth find employment opportunities. Their goal is to assist youth at YTEC in securing jobs outside of the program.
 - iii. The necessity of truck drivers nationwide, now deemed eligible to drive semis at age 18, was discussed. The possibility of offering training programs to prepare graduates for this job opportunity was raised, but it has not been thoroughly explored yet. AD Hough noted that many youth encounter difficulties obtaining a driver's license due to past juvenile incarcerations, but efforts are being made to help them obtain identification from the DMV. However, the implementation of a driver's education program and related initiatives has not begun and is a matter that warrants further investigation.
 - iv. The commission has also inquired about any communication with trade unions that provide in-house training, specifically electricians and plumbers, as they believe it could be a valuable source of training and job opportunities. AD Hough mentioned that they have investigated a few unions and reached out to some of them, but they have not received much response. They have been particularly focusing on welding shops, including mobile ones, although currently, they do not have the funds allocated due to the SB 81 round two project.
 - v. The commission has asked about communication with trade unions that offer in-house training for electricians and plumbers, as they see it as a potential source for training and job openings. AD Hough said they have investigated several unions and reached out to a few, but the response has been limited. Their focus has been on welding shops, even mobile ones, but funds for the SB 81 round two project is currently hindering their efforts.
- c. Critical Incidents:
 - i. The commission asked about any significant fights, and AD Hough confirmed that there were none in February. He explained that the staff assault occurred recently, not in February. The attack, which lasted about 7 seconds, was extremely violent, and the officer had to be taken to the hospital by ambulance. The youth responsible was handcuffed and restrained without any further issues. After decontamination, the youth was transferred to the county and now faces adult charges in court. It was mentioned that the youth was a Pathways to Success youth and had been ordered to the program.
 - ii. The commission discussed the employment of the assaulted staff member and AD Hough acknowledged the heroic actions of two female staff members who saved his life. The commission also asked for information about the background and motives of the youth, but it was noted that those details remain unclear. The youth had been in custody for six years, including four in Juvenile Hall, and had a prior offense of shooting into a dwelling and at his pregnant girlfriend. No reports indicated that the youth was not taking medication.



- d. Institutional Activity Inquiry:
- i. The commission has requested an update on the data report, specifically asking for the data to be categorized by ethnicity. AD Hough mentioned that CDPO Daniel Casandra is currently investigating this matter.
 - ii. The commission questioned the use of a classroom at the Indio location, suggesting it may be used for culinary arts. They inquired about the program's status and any improvements that had been made. The commission noted that the space seemed underutilized. AD Hough apologized for not having any information and Chair Collopy requested JJDP EA to investigate further.
 - iii. The commission had two concerns: morale and staffing. They asked about the progress of staffing and if it was close to the desired level. AD Hough acknowledged vacancies and an ongoing recruitment process. In terms of morale, AD Hough expressed pride in the YTEC staff and their response to a recent event. Officers have shown unity by volunteering for extra hours and enhancing facility safety. Despite the demanding workload, they persevere, reflecting the institution's strong and familial nature. AD Hough assured that any challenges will be overcome in the future. The commission asked about resignations indicating a systemic issue.
 - iv. AD Hough reported that recent resignations were due to various reasons such as injuries, retirement, and better job opportunities in the sheriff's department. He also mentioned that working in juvenile hall involves more responsibility working with youth than working at the Sheriff's department. Also noted was the educational requirement has been reduced to a high school diploma or GED and starting salaries for PCOs is \$23.00 per hour, with incentives for higher degrees.
 - v. The commission inquired about the recovery of the assaulted staff member and AD Hough shared that although they haven't returned to work, they are doing well. Additional support services, such as EAP and counseling, were provided to other staff after the incident. He noted that Managers and SPOs had an emotional debriefing session, as it had been a while since such a violent attack had occurred at the facility.
 - vi. Concerning the welfare of the youth in the unit, AD Hough stated that the situation is complex and poses ongoing risks to the staff. There is talk among the youth that the assaulted staff member could face fatal harm upon their return. Some youths have voluntarily handed over weapons intended for the staff attack, while others are hesitant to get involved in the situation. Threats against the staff persist.
 - vii. There was a discussion about the reasons behind the assault. It was noted that previous cases where youth were sent to county jail and later received prison sentences have led to a belief among the youth that they would serve less time in jail or prison compared to probation's PTS program. As a result, some youth view attacking staff as a viable option, thinking they'll end up in county jail with lighter consequences. However, they fail to realize that being sent to county jail could result in longer prison terms.
 - viii. Dwayne George from Behavioral Health mentioned their involvement in the aftermath of the attack and their work with the youth. He emphasized the importance of conducting debriefing sessions with the youth after such events. Mr. George noted that a youth's behavior during counseling sessions may differ from their behavior in other settings. He also stated that there were no signs of threats or potential attacks from the youth responsible for the incident, and any safety concerns are immediately reported to the duty officer.
 - ix. The commission inquired about awarding a commendation certificate to acknowledge the outstanding performance of the staff in response to the serious incident. AD Hough agreed and noted that a list of staff members would be sent via email for coordination after debriefs and counseling are concluded. They also mentioned plans to coordinate with the JJDP to ensure appropriate distribution of awards after the team's debriefs and counseling sessions are finalized.
 - x. Applicant Georgia Hussein highlighted the observant nature of youth who take advantage of staffing shortages by acting out, potentially placing staff members at risk of attack. As a former correction officer, Ms. Hussein emphasized the recurring patterns of behavior displayed by youth in such situations. The discussion also mentioned the prohibition of stab proof vests and explored alternative tools for staff safety, as well as segregating volatile youth in separate units.
 - xi. According to AD Hough, Probation is still considering implementing the PTS 4 phases, assigning the first and second phases to Indio and the third and fourth phases to YTEC due to their vocational building. This aims to provide opportunities for youth who have embraced the program and progressed. Currently, the PTS 4 phases are temporarily halted, but there are plans to reassess the situation soon.
 - xii. AD Hough announced that Elisa Judy, the Chief Deputy Probation Officer, and the young lady from the PTS program who is doing well and has successfully secured employment in the community will be attending the Transforming Juvenile Justice Youth forum in Washington, DC. When asked about the accompanying CBO representative, AD Hough was unable to provide the information as he was unaware of who was elected to attend with them.

8b. Riverside County Probation (Special Services Division) Division Director, Shannon Crosby

- a. Youth Report:
- i. Shannon Crosby reported that there are currently 26 youth placed in STRTPs, 1 youth in a Foster Family Agency Home, and 15 in full status DPSS lead youth. Furthermore, there are 28 non minor dependents participating in



extended foster care, with no youth currently placed in the county.

- ii. The commission asked Division Director Crosby if she could provide her report in a format similar to the probation report. Division Director Crosby agreed to do so, and it was mentioned that the JJDP Executive Assistant would reach out to her to obtain the Field Service report for the monthly packets.

9. Behavioral Health: Dwayne George, Behavioral Health Supervisor, Dwayne George

a. Updates:

- i. Mr. George discussed the issue of substance use counselors in response to questions from the Commission. Currently, there are no substance abuse counselors, but efforts have been made to recruit for substance abuse counselor for the past 1.5 years. Previously, Behavioral Health had three counselors, and currently, there is one new hire undergoing a background check while another is hopefully expected to accept an offer today, starting their background check process.
- ii. Furthermore, staff from jails are willing to work overtime to provide substance use treatment, with approval from Behavioral Health administration. Additionally, one Behavioral Health staff from Southwest Juvenile Hall, is currently providing treatment at AMC-YTEC, with plans to expand the services offered to include substance use treatment for youth in Pathways to Success.
- iii. Mr. George noted that Behavioral Clinical therapists are skilled in substance abuse counseling and are incorporating substance use treatment into moral reconnection therapy (MRT). MRT involves reconsidering choices made, essentially moral rethinking. This program follows a 12-step approach and is similar to AA and NA but conducted by professionals.
- iv. Mr. George discussed the PTS realignment phase 4, where some treatment youth will be moved to Indio juvenile hall. Behavioral Health will increase therapist presence, as over half of the youth in the pathways program will be initially at Indio. Currently, there are two therapists in Indio, with another undergoing a background check. The plan is to fill these positions and provide training. They also discussed hiring staff with partial clearance, who have passed the Department of Justice background check through probation and the county's background check. These individuals start working before the probation background check is fully completed. However, they undergo intensive training and shadow other clinicians during this time and do not meet with youth alone.
- v. The availability of substance use counselors and support groups for youth was questioned by Ms. Ayala. Mr. George mentioned that AA or NA groups have been considered but not yet implemented.
- vi. Ms. Ayala also discussed the challenges her organization is facing in getting approval for credible messengers to enter Riverside County Institutions. The importance of having individuals who have overcome similar backgrounds to help and support youth in similar situations was emphasized by Ms. Ayala. In addition, Ms. Ayala mentioned that her organization has substance counselors, a mentor internship program, and people obtaining social work licensing or CADC certification to provide assistance to the community.
- vii. The closure of doors for her organization using credible messengers was discussed, attributed to the possibility of Probation's background process. Other organizations were mentioned as having gained access through a possible grant, and she was exploring that possibility. The commission requested Ms. Ayala's presence at the JJDP quarterly meeting to address the issue in an open forum. Commissioner Wade expressed her desire to connect with Ms. Ayala after the meeting and inquired about the job requirements for Substance Use Counseling, clarifying the need for a CADC certificate.
- viii. The commission asked Mr. George if there was a shortage of staff in Behavioral Health, other than substance abuse counselors. Mr. George explained that they currently only need to fill one clinical therapist position, as well as two behavioral health specialists and substance abuse counselor. All other positions have already been filled. Additionally, they are finalizing an MOU with Probation to use existing staff for the treatment of Pathways to Success Youth, without requiring extra staff. This situation is a concern and will be addressed in the MOU. The issue of salary hindering the hiring of substance abuse counselors was brought up, but it was confirmed that salary was not a hindrance.

10. Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Deputy Director of Public Social Services, Allison Donahoe-Beggs

a. Updates / Highlights:

- i. It was reported that the hotline receives between 5,000 and 6,000 calls per month, with 5,026 calls in January and 5,903 calls in February. These fluctuations affect staff morale and workload. In January, there were 2,900 referrals, up from 2,300 in December. February saw another increase to 3,300 referrals compared to 2,700 in February 2023. Call volume typically rises after the Christmas break, peaks from March to May, and declines in the summer. DPSS is considering population growth as a factor for the significant increase. However, managing fluctuating caseloads remains a constant challenge for our staff due to the unpredictable nature of incoming calls.
- ii. There are over 5000 children in care, with over 3000 in out-of-home care. Some are in family maintenance or on their way to adoption, but still have open cases. Out of the more than 3000 in group homes or STRTPs, only around 110 are in group homes. Most of the children in out-of-home care are placed in relative or non-relative resource family homes, with approximately 1100 in relative homes and nearly 1200 in non-relative homes.



- iii. The population of Harmony Haven has grown with around 40 children currently residing there. The number of youths staying in hotels has decreased from 11 to 4, with efforts being made to further decrease this number. These youths often exhibit problematic behaviors like running away and aggression, sometimes leading to law enforcement intervention. Unfortunately, one youth's aggression toward staff resulted in a 5150-hold, making their return to Harmony Haven unlikely. Notably, the decrease in hotel stays is attributed to the utilization of a cottage that was previously inaccessible due to electrical problems.
- iv. Harmony Haven site visit postponed due to timing issues, cancelled commission meeting, and upcoming Awards event. JJDP Executive Assistant to coordinate with DPPS for available visit days.
- v. Lastly, Deputy Director Allison Donahoe-Beggs noted that Harmony Haven has obtained their transitional shelter license, allowing for a 72-hour stay. Two youths are set to interview for Starview, a Simi locked facility. Part of the discussion focused on partnerships with enhanced STRTPs, who are creating successful programs for DPSS youth. Due to increased insurance costs and higher risks, many FFAs struggle to find coverage for teens in their care. The county of Riverside has the authority to approve fostering homes, but most foster homes come from FFAs, independent entities with contracts. She briefly touched on the out of county enhanced STRTPs, their roll as licensed enhanced STRTPs facilities and the state program that reimburses counties for those higher level of care facilities.

11. New Business:

- a. Updates:
 - i. None

12. Correspondence Discussion:

- a. Updates:
 - i. Discussion on letter sent to Riverside County Office of The District Attorney office acknowledging Emily Headlee's transition to a new assignment, and thanking her for her dedication and commitment to the JJDP.
 - ii. Commissioner Malsed has tendered his resignation due to ongoing challenges with his work schedule. Over the past few months, he has had to utilize his vacation time to attend commission meetings, which has become burdensome. Consequently, the commission has duly accepted Commissioner Malsed's resignation.

13. Activities of the Commission

- a. School Violence:
 - i. Chair Collopy proposed that the commission delve deeper into this matter during the upcoming JJDP quarterly meeting next month. It seems that there may be some overlap or potential duplication of efforts with the DA's office. A more thorough discussion during the quarterly meeting would be beneficial, especially regarding issues such as trafficking, anti-bullying initiatives, and the school violence problem that Commissioner Malsed was addressing. Chair Collopy expressed confidence in the DA's office handling this issue based on the information shared. Therefore, it was decided to postpone the discussion until next month when the DA's office representatives will be present. The commission unanimously supported Chair Collopy's suggestion.
- b. Anti-Trafficking:
 - i. To be discussed during the upcoming JJDP quarterly meeting.
- c. JJCC Activity:
 - i. Chair Collopy noted that there has been a significant amount of JJCC activity recently. The upcoming quarterly meeting is scheduled for Monday at Rustin. Various issues, including the budget, will be discussed by the JJCC. Additionally, several ad hoc or subcommittees have been established. One such committee, comprised of several CBOs, is focusing on expanding the reach of CBOs throughout the county. Services are currently concentrated in the Riverside area, with limited activity in the desert or on the far West side. Therefore, it is important for CBOs to address this issue. The ad hoc committee assigned to this task has already had multiple meetings to address the issue. Chair Collopy mentioned that he was requested to serve on this committee as a tie-breaking vote, due to the JJDP having a seat on the JJCC. As a result, The JJDP are voting members of the JJCC.
 - ii. Commissioner Cook reported that the JJCC subcommittee on Parent Involvement, had one virtual meeting and had planned another one last month. However, due to the chair and Commissioner Cook being absent, the meeting was postponed. The chair, who lives in Coachella Valley but works up north, expressed interest in holding more virtual meetings and seeking guidance from the County Counsel. The committee is currently awaiting instructions on how to proceed with virtual meetings.
 - iii. During the last JJCC Parent Involvement subcommittee meeting, some individuals from the Probation Department believed that providing sufficient funding and relocating youth would lead to their success and the success of their families. However, Commissioner Cook expressed doubts about this approach. She highlighted that Moreno Valley (formerly known as Sunnymead) was originally focused on a racetrack and military base, but an influx of people from inner cities like LA brought their behaviors, resulting in the emergence of additional gangs in the county.



Commissioner Cook emphasized that relocation alone cannot guarantee success, raising skepticism about the proposed solution. Commissioner Cook noted that since the last meeting, the subcommittee has not reconvened and is awaiting further developments and clarification on virtual meetings under the Brown Act from the subcommittee chair.

- iv. Chair Collopy extended an invitation to the Commissioners to attend the JJCC meeting as observers at any time. The meetings take place quarterly, with the next one scheduled for Monday at 2:00 PM at the Rustin Conference Center.

14. Old Business

- a. Updates:
 - i. None.

15. Commission Member Reports

- a. Updates:
 - i. Commissioner Torres indicated that she still needed to RSVP for the swearing-in of CDPO Castaneda tomorrow and Commissioner Belknap's swearing-in on April 2nd. It was also mentioned that CDPO Castaneda's swearing-in could be watched on Facebook Live.
 - ii. Commissioner Wade inquired about any pending inspections. It was confirmed that there were none, only reports from completed inspections needed to be submitted. Additionally, discussed were inspection report from ex-commissioner Trembley that was still outstanding, it was noted that Commissioner Torres who accompanied Trembley during the inspection would finalize the report and Chair Collopy would approve it. The conversation then shifted to another inspection that ex-commissioners Trembley and Bowen had not submitted. Chair Collopy requested that this inspection be included in next month's agenda, as the commission would have to revisit the site to complete the inspection report.
 - iii. The May 16, 2024, JJDC awards ceremony was mentioned, and the different awards presented by the commission were discussed. It was noted that the Ruth Brewer Memorial Youth Achievement Award received multiple nominations. New commissioners requested the list of awards to review, and Chair Collopy requested to add the review of the Awards Ceremony and nominations to next month's agenda.
 - iv. Following a short introduction and update on the two new commissioner candidates, Chair Collopy emphasized the importance of adhering to the Brown Act by scheduling their interviews for the upcoming meeting next month and asked for the interviews to be included on the agenda.
 - v. No other updates were provided.

16. Adjournment:

- a. There were no further comments from the Commission members or attendees. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 3:32pm.

Next Meeting:

Date: April 11, 2024
Time: 11:30 am
Location: Rustin Conference Center (Entrance 1) Room TBD
2085 Rustin Ave., Riverside, CA 92507