

Minutes of the Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Commission
April 28,2020
5:15-7:15 pm
Remote Meeting

MINUTES

Commissioners Present: Toni Barrack, Co-Chair; Debora Telleria, Co-Chair; Rebecca Flores, Co-Vice Chair; Sonoo Thadaney, Co-Vice Chair; Michele Gustafson; Monroe Labouisse; Susan Swope; Melissa Wilson

Commissioners Absent: Douglas Winter; Valerie Gibbs; Paul Bocanegra

Additional Attendees: Judge Susan Etezadi – Juvenile Court; John Fong—Human Services Agency; Kate Heister – Fresh Lifelines for Youth; Ally Hoppis – Behavioral Health & Recovery Services; Kristen Hughes—Member of the public; Jenee Littrell – San Mateo County Office of Education; Sathvik Nori—Youth Commission; Aurora Pena - Behavioral Health & Recovery Services; Brianna Ramos—Fresh Lifelines for Youth

I. Administrative Business

- a. Call to Order: Co Chair Barrack called meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.
- b. Roll Call and Establish Quorum: A quorum was established at 5:16 p.m.
- c. Welcome and Introductions
- d. Agenda Review: **Approved** as distributed.
- e. Approval of Minutes of February 23, 2020: **Approved** as amended. “County Based Organizations” should read “Community Based Organizations”
- f. Sathvik Nori was sworn in as Commissioner by Judge Susan Etezadi

II. Oral Communications

None

III. Impact of Coronavirus Outbreak on SMC Youth Today and Concerns about Future Implications

- a. Jenee Litrell, County Office of Education

Since shelter in place, the team has been able to pivot 100% in a new direction. All curriculums are online; youth are working 4-5 hours/day with Google classroom. Gateway students were given devices. There are 10 students at Gateway, 10 at YSC. At YSC, students are learning in 2 different classrooms; each unit reports to its own classroom space. The students also see 2 to 3 teachers via Zoom and the teachers are holding "office hours."

Because of concerns about the social and emotional wellbeing of the students, COE is making contacts with families. COE has contracted with bilingual counselors to make sure family needs are being met. All social and emotional needs were not being met prior to COVID and now the gap is greater than ever. There has been an increase in calls to the suicide prevention hotline and counseling services. Only 60-70% of students are logging on. Since they are unable to contact some students, COE would like to see welfare checks by law enforcement. (Commissioner Nori

stated that there are 1500 high school students from Sequoia High School District who have not logged on or had contact with their teachers.)

Directors and other educators met to discuss a pandemic recovery response plan on how to continue distance learning or come back to in person learning. Students will not come back all at once, but rather in sections. She anticipates there will not be the same enrollment once we come back from COVID because of medical concerns of families.

b. Aurora Pena, Behavioral Health & Recovery Services:

Clinicians are not meeting face to face with the youth but rather continue to check in by phone; YSC is the safest place some youth can be. There haven't been any outbreaks, fights or crisis calls. Youth report that they are doing pretty well. Camp Kemp group Zoom calls have been implemented and Zoom calls are available for family visits. BHRS/Star Vista have five groups with the girls for an hour everyday. Youth report enjoying these sessions.

Outside of the hall, there are reports of families needing basics, parents losing jobs, worry over how they will pay rent, being undocumented, etc. There are a lot of webinars and calls, but not enough are in Spanish; Spanish parents need more support. Some parents are not savvy enough to do Zoom; some don't even have access to it.

Kate Heister said FLY has a little bit of bandwidth to do short term support and resource navigation for families who are not part of their programs, three case managers are fluent in Spanish; may also have some financial support.

Announcement - 2 youth (15 years old) who were formerly incarcerated both passed away within a couple weeks; they do not know the cause of death; suspect it is drug use. BHRS has been in contact with their families and will connect them to counseling services. There is a lot of drug use going on right now. Some kids are gathering and partying and not practicing social distancing.

c. Ron Rayes, Private Defender Program (reported by Commissioner Barrack):

The lack of in person communications makes it difficult to assess client's level of understanding of legal concepts. He therefore has concern about building a trusting relationship with clients. Some clients come from poor families, live in cramped spaces, and have no phone numbers so there is no way to get a hold of them to make sure they are OK. Other clients are also victims of crimes and there is concern they are safe in their own homes, without being pressured in some way. Attorneys want to give youth a safe outlet to discuss fears. PDP has contacted victim advocates to help the youth.

d. Judge Etezadi, Juvenile Court

There is one courtroom functioning at the moment. 2 judges rotate 2 weeks on and off. Most employees for the court are working remotely. Youth are appearing remotely; attorneys may be in the courtroom or on the phone. They stopped conducting timed-waved hearings. Other hearings are done over the phone. Hearings (602) that are contested are in person if possible. Still conducting arraignments, pleas, etc.

e. Probation (reported by Commissioner Barrack):

In YSC, phone calls have increased and videoconferences have been implemented instead of in person visits. Zoom is working well for family visits and court conferences. A crisis line is available if necessary. In addition, if needed, there is a no-contact visiting room with plexiglass protection. For out of custody youth, they are using teleconferencing to stay in regular contact. There is some concern about youth and their families due to lack of normal routines, lack of employment, or pressure of telecommuting with youth at home. Probation is modifying their Star Vista contract, so if PO's sense a family issue related to COVID they can refer them to counseling even if family members are not part of the court order.

IV. Strategic Plan

Commissioner Labouisse made a motion to approve the Mission and Aspirations document as distributed. **Approved unanimously.**

New Project Proposals:

1. Hold Commission meetings in community locations
2. Communicate regularly with elected officials
3. Recruit youth commissioners
4. Describe substance abuse, mental health and transitional programs
5. Identify additional transitional, mental health and substance abuse services that are needed
6. Serve on the Board of Supervisors task force investigating alternatives to incarceration
7. Describe current after school programs for elementary-age children in at-risk neighborhoods
8. Identify additional afterschool programs that are needed
9. Develop a marketing and communications strategy

The need to reevaluate projects because of COVID-19 was discussed. Commissioner Thadaney recommended an additional project to address the digital divide in our communities. The pandemic has made the digital divide and inequity very clear.

Another new project was proposed by Commissioner Swope to address truancy because not all Student Absence Review Boards are effective. We can be critical advocates to get schools to address truancy. She suggests convening various stakeholders to come up with a recommendation.

Commissioner Labouisse will send an email with a form that has three sections: 1) a list of projects. Please vote for your 3 highest priorities. 2) Please rate the top 3 projects you would like to work on (do not have to be the three that you voted on the first section. 3) Indicate how many projects you want to work on at once? There will be 2 people per project. It is expected that every commissioner will work on at least one project but no more than 2. Results will be tabulated and e-mailed to commissioners this week.

V. Project Report Outs

Commissioner Swope reported the Parent Guidebook has been approved and funding is expected to be approved by the Board of Supervisors in June. She is looking at designers to do the layout.

Commissioner Telleria reported that she will reach out to get directions from the state level about how and when to do inspections this year.

VI. Youth Commission Update

Sathvik Nori reported the Youth Commission meetings have been online; they wrapped up for the year and will do annual showcase on Zoom. Working on online to develop projects for the new school year.

VII. Announcements: None

Meeting adjourned at 7:10