

Connecticut Juvenile Training School

Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes – 3/17/14

Present: Karl Alston, Deputy Director, CSSD; Francis Carino, Esq., Supervisory Assistant State's Attorney; James Connolly, Esq., Director of Juvenile Post Conviction; John DiPilla, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Debra Bond, Ph.D, Clinical Director; Robert Francis, RYASAP/Catalyst for Community Change; Lisa Hofferth, CJTS Quality Assurance Manager;

Before the meeting, William Rosenbeck (CJTS Superintendent) cancelled the tour of the new Solnit Girls Facility due to construction delays. The meeting began with Attorney Connolly acknowledging that with the members present there was an established quorum.

Minutes – 2/24/14

Attorney Carino made a number of edits to the minutes and they were accepted as amended.

Board Membership

- Ex-Resident member status

Attorney Connolly continued the conversation about a CJTS resident/ex-resident becoming a member of the board. Prior to the meeting there was e-mail correspondence between Attorney Connolly and Mr. Rosenbeck on this subject. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that he believes that any past resident should complete a period of 90 days in the community before being eligible to be considered as a member of the Board. The resident Attorney Connolly had considered is currently at CJTS, but will soon be discharged into the community. Mr. Rosenbeck did not feel that this resident would be an appropriate candidate for membership on the Board due to some alleged behavioral issues that are being investigated. It was agreed that as a preliminary matter the Board must clarify whether the by-laws identify a present resident or an ex-resident. Although a present resident would have better insight into the issues that affect those being held at the facility, there may also be a level of reluctance to speaking up for fear of retaliation from staff. There was a suggestion made to amend the by-laws to allow a current resident to sit on the Board and continue their term after discharge into the community. There was a suggestion made that the Board allot time for comments from residents and ex-residents at future meetings. Several Board members stated that they were in agreement. This issue will be raised at the next meeting.

- Members with Potential Conflicts

Based upon DCF Legal's determination that individuals with potential conflicts of interest may be appointed as Board Members, Attorney Connolly contacted Melissa Pelletier, Clinical Director of Journey House. After reviewing the by-laws and the Annual Report, Ms. Pelletier stated that she is very interested in becoming a member of the Board. She will speak to Journey House administration and reply to Attorney Connolly with an answer. Sam Gray was suggested by Mr. Rosenbeck however due to Mr. Rosenbeck's absence, there was no further discussion regarding Mr. Gray. Mr. DiPilla suggested that the Board consider a representative of the Work Force as a Board member.

- **CJTS Line Staff as Members**

Attorney Connolly was contacted by line staff at CJTS who had requested an opportunity to come before the Board and present their views and perspectives on the facility. These individuals asked whether or not they could be active participants of the Board. It was stated that the by-laws are clear in that the Commissioner appoints all ex-officio members. Question as to whether Board should request that the Commissioner consider appointing a line staff to the Board. Mr. DiPilla stated that he is aware of every issue that staff have in the facility and is concerned with how accommodating this request could affect Union issues. Attorney Carino stated that because the meetings are public, they can come in and observe, but only make comments regarding topics on the agenda. Mr. Francis stated that there are public comment sections in every Board of Education meeting. Everyone was in agreement that a public comment section should be added to the agenda.

Grievance Procedure and Ombudsman

Attorney Connolly raised the question of whether the Board was prepared to make recommendations to the Commissioner regarding changes to the CJTS grievance procedures and role of the Ombudsman. The Board had heard from Mr. Mysogland and Mr. Marchand at a prior meeting and Mr. Alston presented information on the CSSD Ombudsman and grievance process. Attorney Connolly also reported that Mr. Rosenbeck sent him an email that stated he was in the process of making some amendments to the grievance procedure. Attorney Carino stated that there needs to be a clear graduated response system spelled out for the residents and it needs to mirror CSSD's protocol. It was agreed by all in attendance that DCF should develop a detailed written policy similar to that of CSSD. Based upon the monthly CJTD Grievance Reports compiled by the Ombudsman that were provided to the Board as well as concerns that were raised by members of the Student Council, it appears that some of the residents do not have faith in the grievance process or the role of the Ombudsman. Attorney Connolly further proposed that the Department should contract with an outside provider to perform the duties of the Ombudsman; someone from DCF should not hold this position. Attorney Carino was in agreement with this, but questioned if this should be a full-time position. Although CSSD has a full-time Ombudsman, that individual is responsible for 7 different facilities around the state. The DCF Ombudsman would be responsible for 2 facilities (CJTS and the new girls Solnit Facility), which are in close proximity to each other. Consideration was also given to the fact that the CSSD Ombudsman and the DCF Ombudsman would be responsible for similar caseloads. Mr. Alston also reported that CSSD does monthly surveys with their residents on conditions of confinement. CJTS does not survey residents on this issue. CJTS staff did conduct interviews with residents who were returned to the facility on parole violations; however it was not clear how this information was used. Attorney Connolly suggested that the Ombudsman provide regular reports to the members of the Advisory Board however Attorney Carino felt that this should only be done if there is a policy issue; noting that the Ombudsman works for the Commissioner, not for the Board. Attorney Connolly said that he did not want details of every event, but rather monthly updates so we are aware of issues that affect the residents of the facility. Attorney Carino said that what the Ombudsman reports need to be made known to the

Commissioner, not to the public. There was no vote on grievance process/role of the Ombudsman. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

By-laws

The following suggestions were made regarding amendments to the by-laws:

- Amend the membership to allow a present resident or an ex-resident to be a voting member
- Meetings will be held on a monthly basis but not more than 10 per year as summer months may be challenging with vacations. Special meetings can always be called by Attorney Connolly or Mr. Rosenbeck
- All Board members are to sign the Confidentiality agreement as well as the Conflict of Interest forms
- Attorney Carino suggested that once the Board has full membership, specific terms must be established. These will need to be staggered (perhaps 2 and 3 years) so terms do not expire at the same time.

New Business

- Construction and Changes in Use of Unit #2

Unit 2 was originally the maximum security unit at the facility, but due to construction, it has been modified for use as a general population unit. During a recent visit, Attorney Connolly observed some possible issues with getting the doors on the unit opened. A prior consent decree requires that the residents are not locked in their rooms. Mr. DiPilla said that the locks are now functioning properly. Mr. DiPilla stated that Unit # 4C has also made adjustments and there will be a recreation space added to the 14 beds already in use. Unit # 4D will be able to hold 18 residents instead of 14. The new school building is projected to be done August/September and will provide programming for the 17 and 18 year old post graduates. Attorney Connolly suggested that the Board consider reviewing the education policy and procedure, especially for the post graduates. Mr. DiPilla reported that no more than a dozen residents have their diploma. Board members asked about whether CJTS invites those with vocational expertise to come into the facility and meet with the residents. Mr. DiPilla said that this is an area they need to revisit.

Things to Do:

--A public comment item will be added to future agendas.

--Attorney Connolly will put out proposal for recommendations to the Commissioner regarding the Ombudsman/grievance process for Board members to consider prior to the next Board meeting.

--Board will review educational programming for post graduates at CJTS by having John Mattera (principal) and Esperanza Diaz (Pupil Service Specialist) present to the Board on what is presently being offered as well as any proposed changes to this programming.

--Ms. Hofferth will look for historical emails on terms for Board members as well as the draft of the by-laws discussed at a previous meeting where there was a lack of a quorum.

--Notify members that the May meeting must be rescheduled because it falls on Memorial Day.

NEXT MEETING IS 4/28/14