

Connecticut Juvenile Training School
Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes, 9/26/14

Present: Karl Alston, Deputy Director, CSSD; Abby Anderson, Executive Director, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance; Francis Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney; James Connolly, Esq., Director of Juvenile Post Conviction and Reentry Unit; John DiPilla, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Robert Francis, RYASAP/Catalyst for Community Change; Kristy Ramsey, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; William Rosenbeck, CJTS Superintendent

Invited Guests: Sarah Eagan, OCA; Josh Kovner, Reporter, *The Hartford Courant*; Heather Panciera, OCA

Mr. Rosenbeck asked that this meeting ends at 11:30 a.m. as he needs to participate in a case related conference call and Ms. Ramsey has a discharge and an admission scheduled for today.

Establishing a Quorum

With the members present, a quorum was established.

Minutes

- Review and Vote on Minutes From July Meeting
The July meeting minutes were accepted as written.

- Review and vote on Minutes From August Special Meeting
Atty. Connolly stated he recalls a discussion around mechanical restraints and that Mr. Rosenbeck made a statement around its use and asked Mr. Rosenbeck to provide that language in order to include it in these minutes. Mr. Rosenbeck stated he did not recall this and was unable to provide it at this time. The Board agreed to hold off on voting on the minutes to allow Mr. Rosenbeck an opportunity to think it through so we have an accurate representation.

Membership

- Donald Highsmith, YSO ex-officio member
Mr. Rosenbeck stated that Mr. Highsmith was recently hired into the Chaplain position and is unable to make today's meeting.

- Sam Gray
Atty. Connolly communicated with Mr. Gray and he is interested and planned on attending the 9/16 meeting. He will attend the next meeting. He is the CEO of Hartford Boys and Girls Club.

- Barbara Guthrie
Atty. Connolly stated that Ms. Guthrie is a nurse and holds an administrative position at Yale. She was recommended by Atty. Connolly as a valuable addition to the board and he will continue to pursue her as a voting member of the Board.

Old Business

- Follow-up on Posting of Minutes and Meeting Agenda
Mr. Rosenbeck informed the group that a CJTS Advisory Board site was created under the DCF web page where agendas and approved meeting minutes will be posted.
- TRAC Update JRI
Mr. Rosenbeck reported that he visited the site, met with CJR management team and had conversations with Central Office regarding using them for our residents. The next step is to work out a budget and a build out and we are hoping to have this information by mid October. Admissions into the program would be based on a risk assessment and would occur at 30 days of admission into CJTS. The length of stay will be four months and would serve boys experiencing substance abuse problems with a focus on family clinical interventions. Ms. Anderson asked if there is any way we could divert them before they come into CJTS and expressed concern why they would be locked in a secure confinement. It was clarified, that it is for new commitments and there needs to be an assessment. Mr. Alston stated that CSSD has been using CJR for short term Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) for some time.
- Resident Quality of Life Surveys
The Board made a recommendation to the Commissioner to conduct Quality of Life Surveys and she accepted. CJTS has been conducting exit surveys for boys and girls and a copy of the data was shared with this group. Dr. D'Amico aggregated the survey responses from January to August. Most helpful to CJTS is how they responded to the question "what was the best thing this facility did to get you ready to move to your next placement or to go home?" The climate surveys are much more in-depth and will be administered to the kids twice a year; April and October. We will have the Boys Club staff administer it to the kids, they will be done anonymously, placed in a sealed envelope and Dr. D'Amico will compile the data. We are also working on a staff climate survey which will be given to the staff at the same time, however, as this needs to go through the IRB we will not be able to have it ready for this October, but will conduct one in April. In addition, a family survey is also being developed. Atty. Connolly raised a concern on the Pueblo question number 24 where 5 grievances were filed, 6 were not and 5 said that the grievance was not taken care of. Some questions perhaps can be reworded as their response

may mean they were not satisfied with the handling of the grievance. As the boys raised the same concern at Student Council meetings, perhaps the question should be "do you believe the grievance process is successful in resolving issues within the facility." Dr. D'Amico will work on rewording the questions. Another concern raised by Atty. Connolly is why would this survey be only conducted twice a year? Dr. D'Amico clarified that this is a PBS standard and we would need to look at the benefits and drawbacks of conducting them more frequently. Mr. Alston stated that CSSD conducts random surveys twice a week, however, their turnover is much higher. CSSD's length of stay is 2 weeks. From Bridgeport alone he sees 15 surveys per week and finds them helpful. Atty. Connolly commented that he is glad to see the Department moving on this, but would like to see the surveys conducted quarterly. The Ombudsman goes through the questions with the kids at CSSD and that is what the Boys Club function will be at CJTS, to ensure they understand the questions and that they remain confidential. Atty. Connolly asked if the kids will be made aware that this survey will be conducted at the Boys Club and also has the Student Council had an opportunity to review the questions or played a role in developing them. Dr. D'Amico stated that as we are using the PBS questionnaire, we are more inclined to add questions that the Student Council suggests. In the initial survey we will ask them if there is any information that is missing from the interview to empower the kids and then look to add the questions to the April survey. Mr. Rosenbeck added that when we conducted the "fight survey" the Student Council helped us with developing those questions. Dr. D'Amico stated that our exit survey is done with every discharge. This is a homegrown questionnaire and we will move this to the Boys Club as well. Ms. Ramsey stated that the unit leader conducts the exit survey with the girls the day before they are discharged.

▪ Ombudsman

Atty. Connolly asked for an update on the Ombudsman and how often he comes to CJTS. Mr. DiPilla stated he just spoke with him yesterday and he comes to CJTS periodically and meets with the kids. He also stated that the DRC level for response that was recently implemented is working well and the kids seem to like it. The Ombudsman does not meet with every one who files a grievance, but when the grievance involves staff it is flagged immediately. Mr. Rosenbeck offered to invite the Ombudsman to the next meeting so he can present his data. Atty. Connolly stated that his presence at the facility a few times a month is concerning. Atty. Rapillo asked if he meets with kids even if they don't file a grievance. It was clarified that he meets the kids through the intake orientation process so when they move through the facility they had that introduction. He also meets with the kids when he is on the units retrieving the grievances and kids have access to him in person. Atty. Connolly agreed that having him come to the next meeting would be helpful to get a better idea of who he is meeting with and how often.

▪ Length of Stay Protocol

Ms. Anderson stated that she appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback which was incorporated into the protocol. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that all are working hard to establish discharge dates for the majority of the kids as we want to be ready for the 10/1 implementation date. All kids and their families had the process explained to them. We are working to establish a rubric for those youth who enter CJTS via a community or congregate care by 11/1 as they are more complicated. One thing our clinical staff thought of is one month prior to discharge the boys stop earning incentive time. In the coming months as we track the progress of the protocol we will have more information. Atty. Connolly questioned how well the residents know of their plans. It was clarified that clinical staff talk with the kids every day so they know they are on the right track. All agree that it is important to have the kids and their families participate in the discussions and we hope to have this in place by March. Also, part of the intake packet the boys / parents / guardians are made aware of this protocol and they know how they can earn days. Atty. Connolly questioned the overrides particularly when youth receive outside charges. Atty. Rapillo asked if we will be working with the school systems around discharge dates. Dr. D'Amico stated that there is a push by the school systems to keep the boys here but we will work with the youth and families and encourage them even if it means a sooner discharge date. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that PSS will be discussing the discharge dates with the school systems and we may need to pull in the educational consultants from the regions to help with this process. Ms. Anderson stated that if we find that we need help with this process, the advocates can be helpful. Atty. Eagan clarified that schools cannot block kids from returning if they didn't have a PPT yet. That is not lawful and the system has to take them. It was suggested that we track how often this happens as we can ask SDE for assistance if necessary. Mr. Rosenbeck stated this protocol is being implemented as a working draft and it can be shared with stakeholders. Ms. Anderson shared concerns around kids establishing relationships when they are moved frequently also they don't need to come to prison to figure out that they don't need confinement. She also asked what role Linda Dixon has in this process. Mrs. Rosenbeck clarified that she is using this model and applying it to the system as a whole. Mr. Francis stated that the Regional offices are doing much better arranging meetings with community providers, however, some services are not fully developed yet particularly substance abuse treatment and mental health.

▪ Boy's Version of the Girl's Circle

Ms. Ramsey stated that Dr. Bond ordered a copy of it but is not here to talk about it. Mr. Alston stated that CSSD uses it and they like it.

▪ Protocols for Restraints of Residents with Medical Alerts

Atty. Connolly asked what the department is doing specifically for kids with medical alerts. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that we are working on a multi level system. One is we are enhancing the internal nursing care plan that is posted on each console highlighting each alert with a different color, whereby an asthma will be a different color from a food allergy. The information is also on the status sheet, the behavior intervention plan and in the communication log. Mr. Alston asked how we know staff is aware of the alerts and Ms. Ramsey clarified that staff sign the communication log at each shift. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that we are also looking at our policies and procedures and contacted JKM who provide the SCM training program to see how they handle this in blended systems across the country. There is a significant amount of information around verbal de-escalation and we are meeting with our trainers here to enhance our training. They also teach the side assist, however that presents some dangers as well. Atty. Connolly expressed concern that once an assistance call is made and staff rushes in to help, how they will know the medical alerts. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that we are also implementing a roll call for each shift so all staff come into Operations at the beginning of each shift where information is shared around campus wide activities. The roll call is in addition to unit meeting that we have regularly at each shift. Ms. Anderson asked for clarification around prone restraints as congregate care providers were asked to eliminate them. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that at that time CJTS was exempt from that directive with a goal that we would work towards that move. It's important to know that sometimes when kids are in a fight and land in a prone we try to protect the kids. Every level of technique that we use has to be textbook, as one hand position in the wrong way can change the intervention. Mr. Francis asked for clarification around the use of mechanical restraints. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that we use mechanicals for transportation purposes from one part of campus to another or to a safe area and try not to use it on the unit unless we have to. For example, we may use them to move a resident from a room to a padded cell so we can end the physical intervention as we know the longer the restraint the risk of injury goes up. Atty. Eagan stated that it seems that the use of cuffs and restraints are higher and longer at the Pueblo Program. She reviewed 30 interventions and under half used mechanicals. There were 37 incidents between April and July and 15 or 17 were mechanical and not just for transportation but in a sitting position. Ms. Ramsey stated this is a training and coaching issue with new staff which is being addressed. The importance of having a strong supervisor who can lead the staff is critical. Supervisors authorize mechanicals in the absence of Ms. Ramsey. The ones in question were authorized by a supervisor who is no longer at Pueblo. In addition, since July there were no interventions in August and only one in September.

- Updates on DCF Pueblo Inquiry

Mr. Rosenbeck informed the group that the Commissioner and he are in the process of meeting with national consultants with Juvenile Justice and Mental Health backgrounds to contract with do a review of the Pueblo Program and CJTS.

- Pueblo Incident on 9/10/14

Atty. Connolly asked what measures have been put in place as a follow up to this incident. Atty. Carino questioned why this agenda item is under "Old Business" if this occurred on 9/10. Atty. Connolly stated that perhaps it should have been put under new business; however, this was a fairly serious suicide attempt and had questions surrounding the incident. Ms. Ramsey replied that prior to her admission there was no thought of self harm. This resident prefers to sleep on her mattress on the floor and staff checks on her every seven minutes. Because of her size, different clothing had to be ordered and she took something from the inside of her pants to tie it to her neck. As she is 18 she refused to go to the hospital and the nurse upon her initial observation did not see an emergent need for hospitalization. A clinician came in and placed her on 1 to 1 observation. Ultimately clinical and medical team was able to convince her to go to the hospital. At that point Atty. Carino stated that this line of questioning goes beyond the scope of the board and asked whether Atty. Connolly was establishing a precedent whereby the board would be investigating every incident at the facility. Atty. Connolly stated that he was merely trying to learn about the incident. Atty. Carino stated that the board can review policies and procedures of the facility but it cannot sit in judgment regarding a specific incident. Atty. Connolly then challenged this assumption and a brief discussion took place. At that point the questioning ended.

- Board Recommendations re OCA Investigation

It was clarified that the OCA investigation was not the start of the investigations as there were letters that were presented to the board and a number of other stakeholders who raised concerns. The OCA investigation was a brief snapshot of Pueblo and CJTS that ultimately brought concerns on the conditions of confinement that resulted in the Board making a recommendation to the Commissioner. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that the Commissioner has decided to contract with an independent national consultant with juvenile justice and mental health background to conduct an independent review rather than doing it internally. Meetings are now being scheduled with a number of candidates. Atty. Connolly raised a concern that the Commissioner is moving forward on hiring a consult without the help of the board. Upon further discussion, the board suggested that they would make a recommendation to the Commissioner that they have an opportunity to meet with the consultant and have input into the scope of the review. The following is the language which will be forwarded to the Commissioner as a recommendation: "After

the Department identifies a proposed consultant to conduct an independent review of CJTS and Pueblo, the CJTSAB and Stakeholders should be given an opportunity to comment. The CJTSAB also recommends that Stakeholders, including the CJTSAB be given an opportunity to review any contract with the chosen consultant and provide input on the scope of the inquiry. All documents, including the final report, should be made available to the public".

New Business

▪ **FOIA Restrictions on Communication**

Atty. Connolly clarified that he sent an e-mail to the board members which he read asking for information about who he can talk to about the review which the Commissioner stated would take place of the Pueblo program. This then raised questions around FOIA restrictions.

Superintendent's Updates

▪ **Girl's Facility**

Ms. Ramsey stated that we are spending a lot of time on training the staff. The unit has not used physical restraints in August and is moving in the right direction with strong supervision. The supervisors are offering staff a lot of guidance and support as the culture with girls is different. Placing hands on only causes escalation. There has been some push back by the unions, but they have been making headway with staff and continue on the right track. She conducted a focus group with the girls on 9/15 and one with staff on 9/18 where they were given an opportunity to provide feedback with healthy discussions. Atty. Eagan stated it is good to see the decrease in interventions and acknowledged and appreciated the hard work. Ms. Ramsey continued that the current census is six with two upcoming discharges and one may be coming in from Journey House who is in crisis. One resident with whom staff worked tirelessly was discharged into a foster home. Staff is learning what works with individual kids and what does not. Atty. Connolly acknowledged how well the staff worked with a girl during a meeting and commented how well the whole team handled that situation. Ms. Ramsey stated that this progress will continue as she is committed to giving the best quality of care to the young women. Her style of management is to be an active and involved administrator. Atty. Eagan stated that at the boy's side the use of seclusions and restraints has not gone down. She acknowledged that there is a focus on reduction of interventions and it's not going to change overnight, also it is not easy to tease the data from CONDOIT. Mr. Francis acknowledged that this was a packed agenda with big discussion items. It is important to hear from Ms. Ramsey and Mr. Rosenbeck and suggested that for future meetings they be placed first on the agenda. Atty. Connolly stated that he will be mindful of that for the future meetings.

Public Comment

No public comments, however, Office of the Child Advocates asked a few questions during the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

No meeting was scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Irene Yanaros