

**Connecticut Juvenile Training School**  
**Advisory Board**  
**Meeting Minutes, 1/19/16**

**Present:** Debra Bond, CJTS Clinical Director; Joseph Bruckmann, Public Defenders Office; William Carbone, Senior Lecturer and Director of Experiential Education, University of New Haven; Francis Carino, Supervising Assistant State's Attorney; Liz D'Amico, Ph.D., LCSW Behavioral Health Clinical Director; Antonio DePina, DCF Parole Services; John DiPilla, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Joette Katz, DCF Commissioner; Kristy Ramsey, CJTS Assistant Superintendent; Christine Rapillo, Public Defender's Office; Eugene Riccio, Young & Riccio; William Rosenbeck, CJTS Superintendent; Ann Smith, JD, MBA, Executive Director, AFCAMP

**Guests:** Jacqueline Rabe Thomas, Reporter, *The Connecticut Mirror*

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Attorney Carino acknowledged that with members present, a quorum was established. Meeting began at 5:20 p.m.

Mr. Rosenbeck clarified that Jacqueline Rabe Thomas of *The Connecticut Mirror* will record this meeting for her use.

**Review Draft Advisory Legislative Report**

The following were comments/suggestions to the report:

- It was suggested that going forward any new policies and/or changes be sent to board members electronically for review.
- Atty. Carino suggested to include the definition of "congregate care admissions".
- Through the JJPOC we may have a better indicator for recidivism. In table 8 it was suggested to break out the 25 youth and where they came from.
- It was suggested to include an explanation as to why there was a drop in the resident's completion of the Seven Challenges. One of the reasons is shorter length of stay and the boys are not fully engaged. We encourage them to participate, but would not keep them here longer to complete the program. Seven Challenges can be completed in 6 months although the developer of the program does not want us to rush through it. Currently there is not a way for the boys to complete the program in the community. We find ourselves trying to balance the shorter stays while addressing their issues. Mr. Carbone asked if there was a greater impact if they go through the entire program vs. portions of it. Dr. Bond clarified that completing 7 Challenges at CJTS has the greatest impact for their success in the community. Perhaps doing a better job of explaining to the boys that their discharge date is something they need to work towards was Atty. Carino's suggestion.

Teachers too are feeling that the boys are not here long enough to make educational gains. It's about finding that right balance.

- Table 14 includes Pueblo numbers. The more the census drops the higher the cost. It was suggested to include a footnote to clarify this information. Mr. Rosenbeck added that we recently closed two units to try to impact the cost. Mr. Carbone asked what the average per diem rate was based on and it was clarified that the figures come from DCF Central Office.

The committee approved the report with the few amendments / suggestions.

### **Determine Recommendations for this Report**

One recommendation could be to study the impact of the Length of Stay Protocol on programming and identify where the service gaps are in the community.

In late December, 2015 we discharged our last girl from the Pueblo Girls' program and moved staff to the boy's side. Right before Christmas, Journey House needed respite for a girl and we took her in moving staff back to Pueblo. This required additional staff due to her aggression and size. Today she left the Pueblo Unit and the unit is once again vacant. Commissioner Katz asked Mr. Rosenbeck to look into how we can better use that facility. Some ideas are a mental health unit for boys with significant substance abuse issues or a transitional unit where boys are brought back into the community through that unit. A mental health unit requires a lot of staffing. Atty. Rapillo commented that these are all great ideas but questioned how this will work with the girls. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that this would require modifications to the physical space to allow for separation. When the Pueblo Program came on line we did need that program in order to keep the girls safe and long enough to work through their involvement in minor sex trafficking. Following this discussion the board members agreed that repurposing the Pueblo Unit be the second recommendation for the legislative report.

The third recommendation is for CJTS to continue to cooperate with the goals and objectives of the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee.

### **Brief Update**

#### **ACA Accreditation Audit**

Mr. Rosenbeck stated that we began the ACA Audit with a meeting where each department shared with the auditors significant changes and accomplishments since the last audit cycle. The auditors found this to be very helpful and stated they will implement this practice with other sites they audit. We received our actual report last week. We received 100% compliance on the mandatory standards. In the other 301 standards we were found non-compliant with only 7 giving us a final score of 97.7. The report also talked about the uniqueness of this facility as we do not have a segregation unit and acknowledged the hard work that goes into it. Mr. Carbone acknowledged that

this is a remarkable accomplishment as he knows how thorough the audit is where they look for policy, practice and evidence. Mr. Rosenbeck will be traveling to New Orleans where he will review the report and the correction plan before the ACA panel.

Commissioner Katz announced that Connecticut Voices for Children published a book written by a youth who serves on the youth advisory board that talks about their experiences in state care. It may be available on line through the CT Voices website.

### **Discuss Plan for Closure of CJTS**

On December 18<sup>th</sup> Governor Malloy came to CJTS to talk with staff about the closure of CJTS. Staff had an opportunity to ask questions and overall it went very well. After the Governor left Commissioner Katz stayed and continued the discussion and answered additional questions. Feedback from the staff was that they felt the Governor and Commissioner were honest in their discussions. Commissioner was clear that DCF should own the process of closing CJTS. Next step is Deputy Commissioner Fernando Muñiz will engage with stakeholders and CJTS staff and make recommendations on how to proceed. Commissioner Katz invited all members to view the DCF website, CJTS – Development of a Plan section, where information around the closure is shared and ideas and comments can be submitted. It is important to this process to hear from everyone, including parents and providers. Mr. Muñiz already consulted with Shay Bilchik, from the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University as well as Anne E. Casey Foundation. Commissioner Katz reiterated that this is not about the staff at CJTS and more about the brick and mortar. We also know that former Governor Rell tried in 2008 to close CJTS and open three smaller settings; it came down to the cost and location. We have the High Meadows location in Hamden, but it would require serious work to turn it into a secure facility. Also this plan may be further complicated by the Raise the Age bill. Atty. Carino stated that it is a shame to let this program go particularly after it has evolved so much. Atty. Riccio too questioned why close a facility where there is such good work being done. Mr. Carbone clarified that this goes back to former Governor Rowland's administration. Over time what developed has been the advocacy community questioned whether dealing with this population requires this level of security and could it be done differently. Atty. Rapillo added that this model is not the right model for a large secure facility. Atty. Riccio added that CJTS is not a prison nor does it operate as one. Commissioner Katz stated there is not a state in the country that does not have a secure facility with the exception of Vermont and they send their youth out. Mr. Rosenbeck offered that perhaps we could make modification to CJTS, but this conversation would need to go through the JJPOC. Atty. Rapillo stated that if the Raise the Age goes through then it will most definitely be a game changer. This is about what makes the most financial sense. Atty. Riccio stated it is going to cost a lot of money to build facilities but Atty. Rapillo stated there are some facilities that can be used and will not need to be built. Mr. Carbone clarified that the deadline for closing CJTS is July, 2018 with a plan to be in place by end of 2016, which give us some time for planning. The current census at CJTS is 57 and declining. Mr. Carbone raised a question about privatizing this facility. Atty. Rapillo clarified that state run facilities have a no

reject no eject policy, whereas private facilities do. Mr. Rosenbeck stated that CJTS has some very difficult kids right now. Commissioner Katz stated without CJTS we may be putting too much tension on the system that is not equipped to care for them. All agreed that CJTS is not the structure we would build today but we need to have all options on the table. Commissioner Katz stated once this stops being a political issue we can then put all our efforts into serving the young men. Currently we are not hearing much about restorative justice in the community or what they are doing to help us reintegrate the kids back into the community. Mr. Carbone talked briefly about a grant that addresses community supervision and second chance act where kids coming out of detention in Hartford, Bridgeport and Waterbury make that transition as fluid as possible. Commissioner Katz stated that CJTS has these boys for a brief time, at times 3-6 months, and this has to be a community issue.

**Set Dates for this Year's Meetings:**

April 19, 2016

June 14, 2016

September 13, 2016

December 13, 2016

**Public Comments**

None.

*Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.*

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Irene Yanaros*