

## Youth Justice Committee

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Date: Friday, 2/5/2021  
Time: 10:00 A.M. CDT

**Staff Present:** Richard Kennedy, Exec Dir., Craig Hargrow, Dep. Exec. Dir., Bill Latimer, Jerri Moore, Russette Marcum-Embry, Melissa McGee, Latasha Mitchell, Tristine Nguyen, Steve Petty, Vicki Taylor, Zanira Whitfield

**Commission Members Present:** Rob Mortensen, Chair, Judge Sharon Green, Amy Jones, Trey Jones, Charmaine Kromer, Judge Rob Philyaw, Stan Settles, Dr. Altha Stewart

**Guest:** No guests present

### 1. **Call to Order – Rob Mortensen, Chair**

After ascertaining there was a quorum, Mortensen called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Mortensen asked Commission members and staff to introduce themselves.

### 2. **Approval of November Juvenile Justice Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**

Mortensen asked for a motion to approve the Youth Justice Committee minutes from the November Commission meeting.

***Judge Sharon Green moved to approve the minutes from November 2020. Trey Jones seconded. Unanimously Approved.***

### 3. **Staff Updates**

#### **CASA Grants Management – Russette Marcum-Embry**

Marcum-Embry reported second quarter CASA reimbursement claims and quarterly reports are coming in for processing. She continues to maintain contact with CASA

program directors and provide technical assistance when necessary.

Mortensen asked Hargrow to provide an overview of the Youth Justice division for our newest Commission members.

## **Federal Formula Grant Update- Vicki Taylor**

Taylor reported that TCCY currently has 11 Federal Formula grantee programs being implemented. Grantees continue to make adjustments to their programs to minimize possible COVID-19 exposure. A couple of school-based programs have resumed in-person learning while other programs continue to utilize virtual outlets to provide services. Whitfield and Taylor maintain contact with grantees and plan to schedule virtual site visits with each grantee in February.

## **Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders (DSO) Violations – Zanira Whitfield**

Whitfield stated there were 31 DSO violations for the federal fiscal year (10/1/2019 – 9/30/2020). All reports for the FY 2020/2021 first quarter have not been received. There are currently 3 DSO violations for the first quarter.

## **Compliance Monitoring Update- Latasha Mitchell**

### **CPO Plan**

Mitchell informed the commission members that the 2021 CPO plan received approval without request for revision. The Grant Contract Monitor is continuing to update the plan as 2020 monitoring continues and comes to a close.

### **2020 Monitoring**

Mitchell also reported that the subrecipient monitoring for 2020 is still in progress. Subrecipients have demonstrated significant improvement, as none of the programs reviewed thus far will require another review in 2021. Findings and observations are steadily decreasing in comparison to 2019 and 2018. The Grant Contract Monitor is currently evaluating strategies and devising a plan to improve 2021 monitoring in light of the continued pandemic. Mitchell monitors approximately 35 grants per year.

## **Racial and Ethnic Disparities- Craig Hargrow**

Hargrow stated none of the local task forces have met since the last Commission meeting. Hargrow continues to work individually in Shelby, Madison and Davidson counties to address racial and ethnic disparities. Additional information is in the Director's Report.

## **COVID-19 Challenges- Open Dialogue**

Dr. Stewart asked if there were updates or new information regarding the use of pepper spray that was discussed in previous Youth Justice Committee meetings. At this time, there are no updates.

Dr. Stewart gave a brief update for Shelby County. The juvenile court is moving forward with work to create a trauma-informed court. The court has hired a specialist to advise on policy and practice. Shelby County schools are looking at the first ever re-entry program. The collaboration includes schools, Department of Children's Services, University of Tennessee Memphis and other major non-profits who work with youth.

Judge Philyaw reported the new deputy commissioner start date was delayed to this week. Hamilton County Juvenile Court numbers in are lower than they have been in decades. However, one issue may be that DCS is sending kids back to the communities too soon.

Jones said challenges in her area continue to be lack of placement. Case numbers overall are down, but the seriousness of what they are seeing is worse. Detention traffic has picked up as well. There is frustration with the Supreme Court order to cancel courts through the end of March. Pre-court resources are taxed thin.

Judge Green reported their court is frustrated as well with in-person hearings being suspended. Currently, they are holding Zoom hearings eight to ten hours a day. The additional cameras in placements have been good.

Hargrow will re-send what was prepared for the new deputy commissioner. He will attempt to establish a time within the next two weeks to meet with the new deputy commissioner.

Kennedy shared updates regarding the possibility of a new online grants management system. The Youth Justice team is staying on top of possibilities, but it is proving to be challenging.

Kennedy said regarding the State Advisory Group, five youth members, three having involvement with the justice system, are needed to be compliant. We need two more youth members to follow the regulations. Kennedy has weekly conversations with the Governor's office regarding potential appointees. Our federal contract currently cannot be signed until these members have been appointed.

Kennedy briefly reported on the Juvenile Justice Reform Act implementation council. Kennedy said this council came out of the Haslam administration to stay on top of the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2018. Clark Milner left the Governor's office in December, as of now there is not a new point person to lead this council's work. The Committee will be updated as the work moves forward.

Kennedy gave an update on CASA funding. The legislature allocates enough funding so that every county that has an operating CASA receives \$22,000. In FY 20-21, we had unused funds for three new counties and one county who does not use our funding, for a total of \$88,000. TCCY offered this funding as part of the budget reduction requested last year. Tennessee CASA says there is one county that is almost ready to begin serving children and another county that is close. As a result of the budget reduction, we do not currently have the funding to support two new programs.

***Jones moved to rename the Committee to Youth Justice Committee. Dr. Stewart seconded. Unanimously Approved.***

#### 4) **Motion to Adjourn**

***Amy Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Judge Green seconded and all approved***

***Meeting ended at 11:00 a.m.***

Prepared by: Russette Marcum-Embry