

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 13, 2023, AT 2:00 P.M.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Host Location:** Rustin Conference Center, 2085 Rustin Avenue, Conference Room 1051, Riverside

**1. Call to Order – Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Chief Probation Officer Christopher H. Wright at 2:03 p.m.

Roll call of the members was taken. The following representatives were present:

Chris Wright, Chief Probation Officer, Chairman  
Janine Moore, Riverside University Health Systems, Behavioral Health  
Dr. Deanna McCarty, Riverside County Office of Education  
Laurel Cook, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Committee  
Joelle Moore, Deputy Public Defender IV, Public Defender's Office  
Michael Cabral, District Attorney's Office  
Judge Michelle Mathis, Riverside Superior Court  
Jeffrey Greene, Chief of Staff, Board of Supervisors First District  
Norma Biegel, Operation Safe House  
Cesar Gomez, StudentNest Foundation  
Cynthia Prewitt, Carolyn E. Wylie Center  
Dr. Mona Davies, Community Outreach Ministry  
Marc Sakoda, Nathanael Foundation  
Kevin Kalman, Desert Recreation District

In attendance but not present during roll call:

Bridgette Hernandez, Department of Public Social Services  
James Krachmer, Correctional Chief Deputy, Sheriff's Department

New members voted in:

Mary Jo Ramirez, California Family Life Center, BOS 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Pete Serbantes, Camino Real Family Services, BOS 5<sup>th</sup> District  
Jessica Clark, Solid Ground Wellness, Drug and Alcohol Program

**2. Approval of Minutes from the August 2, 2023, Special Meeting**

Chris Wright presented the minutes from the August 2, 2023, JJCC special meeting (handout).  
Chris Wright moved a motion for the JJCC to approve the meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Dr. Mona Davies. Minutes were approved.  
Oppositions: None

### **3. Appointment of new Voting Members**

Division Director LaToya Thomas first congratulated those members who have been serving on the committee for several years. In accordance with the Bylaws, some of the CBO representatives have a maximum of two consecutive terms of two years each so for three of our members this will be their last session sitting on the board. We would like to acknowledge and commend them for their huge contributions over the years and offer certificates of appreciation to Operation Safe House, Norma Biegel; Wylie Center, Cynthia Prewitt; and StudentNest Foundation, Cesar Gomez. Thank you all for your service and commitment!

A friendly reminder to everyone for the next meeting in January this membership is specific to currently funded CBOs, and we will be looking to fill these three seats. If anyone in the audience is eligible and you are interested in serving on the committee, please attend the next meeting in January.

Chris Wright moved a motion to appoint the following CBOs to the board: representative Jessica Clark, Solid Ground Wellness for the Drug and Alcohol program; representative Mary Jo Ramirez, California Family Life Center for BOS 3<sup>rd</sup> District; and representative Pete Serbantes, Camino Real Family Services for BOS 5<sup>th</sup> District. Motion was seconded by Cynthia Prewitt. Motion passed.  
Oppositions: None

### **4. Brown Act Overview**

County Counsel Eric Stopher will not be able to present the Brown Act Overview today. This item will be added to next meeting's agenda in January 2024.

### **5. Settlement Agreement Audit Report**

Co-monitor Scott MacDonald gave a brief overview and comments of the settlement agreement audit 3<sup>rd</sup> year report. In summary, the Probation Department is in substantial compliance with the settlement agreement. The agreement managers assigned have done a very good and comprehensive job ensuring the multiple requirements were fully addressed with YAT and other supervised diversion programs. We recommend the Probation Department continue to work with this body to prioritize getting feedback from the community particularly for those that are affected by the programs to really understand what's working for them. The number of youths receiving diversion (YAT and DUI program) has dropped considerably down to less than 2%. The bulk of non-mandatory cases are being diverted and see very few mandatory cases being referred from the District Attorney's office to Probation. Another positive sign is that overrides (non-mandatory cases that are eligible for diversion but referred to the DA for review of filing) have gone down significantly since the start of the settlement agreement. We found youth of color are more apt to be referred to the justice system and are less likely to be granted diversion than others. We recommend a laser focus on race equity as your maximizing diversion. The connection between Probation Intake and community resources is not as strong as it could be. We are encouraged by the fact that Probation is actively looking at improving that piece of diversion to be a more community-led diversion model.

**Comments:**

Rebecca Acevedo asked if there is a mechanism in place to show the success of the diversion programs and if they are able to track that and of those referred to diversion how many have completed successfully.

Scott MacDonald mentioned that was not a requirement of the report but absolutely recommends that to be one of the measures that is kept and maintained. As you maximize diversion you will see better rates of success than similarly matched youths that are formerly processed.

## **6. Diversion Model Re-Design**

Division Director LaToya Thomas mentioned the Probation Department is taking a more comprehensive look at diversion. Some active steps taken so far have been attending a community lead diversion conference in San Diego in June, networked with attendees from throughout the State getting feedback of what has worked and what has not and possibly replicate some of the same positive outcomes within our county. We brought back these ideas and met with our partners from the DA's office and Public Defender's office. We compiled feedback from Probation staff including line-level all the way up to the executive level. We also met with Probation staff from Contra Costa County and Santa Clara County to see how their diversion models work. We have one more presentation with Los Angeles County tomorrow. All the information will be gathered to get a better sense of how we can reconstruct our eligibility criteria, the structure, the routing procedures, how the entire program could run. The goal is to have a layered system with an umbrella agency routing all referrals that are received within our county. We anticipate bringing a full proposal back to the board in January for review and next steps.

### **Comments:**

Chris Wright stressed the old idea of just complying with the settlement agreement and not expanding our diversion model has changed. We are looking at the best options to create the best plans for our kids and communities.

Scott MacDonald mentioned he appreciates the update from Probation as this was one of the aspirations from the settlement agreement that is coming to fruition. Scott is hopeful that Riverside will come out of this and become a model for the State.

Michelle Mathis asked are you seeing a significant distinction between the willingness to engage in the participation for the 654.1 DUI diversion as opposed to the other forms of probation diversion.

LaToya Thomas mentioned yes, but it is different for youth as the driving program is determined per code. When the juvenile referral has certain violations that fall under vehicle codes, they are offered the driving program and we do see a significantly higher acceptance.

Michelle Mathis asked regarding the YAT model what are you seeing as the primary impediment to the youth engagement and family's willingness is to participate.

LaToya mentioned the parents are not giving us a lot of reasons as to why they are rejecting participating. We have seen higher rejections than previously.

Jessica Aparicio thanked LaToya for the information and mentioned a concern, that it is difficult to determine whether referrals that previously routed through YAT are being diverted or formally held in court, with the latter suggesting net-widening and highlights how the data is important to avoid this issue. Can you clarify how this issue will be resolved in the community lead diversion.

Scott MacDonald mentioned previously the need for good solid data and the ratio of referrals will determine if there is net-widening or not.

LaToya Thomas mentioned we learned going back to the historical data internally we did not have a mechanism in place tabulating the difference between mandatory and non-mandatory referrals. This was a concern from the monitors. Moving forward we are making sure our new client management system will have an element in place to clearly identify all referrals and categorize them with a goal to route eligible, appropriate referrals through the new community lead diversion model and minimize the net-widening issue.

Laurel Cook asked if the diversion model will be available to the local PDs (police departments).

LaToya mentioned we are having conversations with law enforcement agencies from other counties to see how those run and will eventually explore those options as well. Our initial priority, however, is implementing a comprehensive, effective model for Probation and the DAs office.

Laurel Cook asked will you know if a case was referred at the PD level or at the school level. Have you identified what services are already out there?

LaToya mentioned the schools would have different programs in place and their referrals may not rise to the criminal level. If an actual arrest has not been made in a matter, Probation by procedure will not get involved and will return all such referrals to the sending school. Again, we are primarily focused on getting the best diversion model up and running for Probation matters and will look at police agency diversion as a secondary layer. We will be gathering all the information regarding programming/services and working with an umbrella agency to help us determine how to best ensure the wide availability of services, county-wide, in the proposal.

## **7. RFP for Evaluation of Services**

Division Director LaToya Thomas gave a brief recap and update. The board voted several meetings ago to go out to bid for an RFP to bring in a vendor to help us create the most efficient and appropriate strategic plan for youth and families in need of services in our county. The RFP closed on October 12, 2023. Currently, the evaluation committee is reviewing all the applications that were received.

## **8. Integrated Services Model**

Chief Deputy Elisa Judy provided a brief history of the JJCC which started in 2000 from AB1913 and WIC Code 749.22. Thank you to those that worked on the Integrated Services Model that was submitted last year: While the board voted to stand up a committee, after several attempts there was not sufficient participation. With the support of the council, it is respectfully recommended to disband the previous subcommittee and form a new committee in January that will keep

elements of the integrated services as well as work alongside the selected vendor from the RFP to develop a comprehensive plan for the JJCC.

Chris Wright made a motion to vacate the Integrated Services subcommittee. Motion was seconded by Dr. Mona Davies. Motion passed.

Oppositions: None

**Comments:**

Chris Wright mentioned if anyone is interested in joining the new committee, please contact Elisa or LaToya. In January, we will look at how we will form this committee and select the members.

Bridgette Hernandez asked how many members will make up the committee.

Elisa Judy mentioned three from county agencies, three CBOs, and one member from the JJDC for a total of seven members.

Valentin Pedroza mentioned the concern that some CBOs may not have the time or resources allowed from their busy schedules to participate on a subcommittee. What are some of the strategies you will think about to reward their participation and volunteering.

Chris Wright mentioned we want to look at the best plan and relook at the funding aspect to make sure we are getting the right resources and services to the community making sure the CBOs investing their time are being funded in the right way.

Elisa Judy mentioned that within the CBO community if there someone that can speak on their behalf in those types of meetings and has more flexibility, that might be an option.

Deanna McCarty asked if there is a way to allocate funds to the CBOs in the planning phase to make sure you have a commitment.

Jessica Holstein responded that the funding comes after the plan. You must develop the plan first.

Rebecca Acevedo asked if we are incorporating the community-based approach document that this council already voted on to use for this new subcommittee.

Elisa Judy responded, yes and we are communicating that membership can come from CBOs that are not on the committee. If anyone is interested in participating, please see Elisa and LaToya after the meeting to help answer any questions.

Jessica Aparicio mentioned funding is a major issue and recommends the board support the recommendations that are outlined in the initial proposal.

Chris Wright mentioned we approved the proposal we just did not get any participation. As such, we will be bringing those ideas to the new subcommittee to work on.

## 9. CBO Review Ad-Hoc Committee

Division Director LaToya Thomas gave a brief update and mentioned the CBO Review Ad-Hoc Committee has not been able to meet after several attempts. Therefore, it is respectfully recommended to terminate the Ad-Hoc Committee as all the work mentioned today will encompass and be assigned to the new subcommittee in January.

### Comments:

Rebecca Acevedo mentioned tapping into those CBOs that have a passion and have perhaps advocacy budgeted in their organization to really push on these items so that you can calendar a meeting and we can have meaningful conversations.

Chris Wright mentioned with this board's approval and the development of the new subcommittee that will encompass all the plans moving forward moved. He made a motion to nullify the CBO Review Ad-Hoc Committee. Motion was seconded by Pete Serbantes. Motion passed.

Oppositions: None

## 10. Senate Bill 823 Sub Committee

### a. Vote to Fill 3 Vacancies

Division Director Monica Rose thanked the subcommittee members for all their work and participation. We have four teams with only one CBO and need three more CBOs. We received five applicants (handout). After further review of the applications, we would like to recommend the board to approve the following candidates to fill the three vacancies: Alejandra Gutierrez, Liz Reid, and Laurel Cook.

Chris Wright made a motion to approve Alejandra Gutierrez, Liz Reid, and Laurel Cook to the Senate Bill 823 Sub Committee. Motion was seconded by Dr. Deana McCarty. Motion passed.

Abstain: Laurel Cook

Oppositions: None

### b. Overview

Supervising Probation Officer Kathy Arias gave a brief overview of the SB 823 Sub Committee, Legislative Framework and Expectations (handout). The new members just voted in will all receive a welcome packet that will include points of contact, the secured track local plan, and a power point overview that includes the Legislative Framework and Expectations.

Subcommittee Teams and Projects:

**Team 1: Transitional Services** (*Housing, Behavioral Health-Individual therapy, Mentors, Substance Abuse, Parenting classes, etc.*)

CBO – Dr. Mona Davies; Behavioral Health – Dr. Michael Gunther; Public Defender – Joelle Moore; DPSS – Mike Scebbi

**Team 2: Vocational Training/Life Skills Programs** (*Career Developmental Programs, Adult Life Skills*)

CBO – Vacant; Riverside County Office of Education – Dr. Deanna McCarty; District Attorney – Amy Glaudini

### **Team 3: Parent Services and Resources**

CBO – Vacant; CBO – Vacant; Behavioral Health – Dwayne George; DPSS – Mike Scebbi

### **Team 4: Outcome Measures** (*Measure the fidelity of and success of current and new processes*)

CBO – Dr. Mona Davies; Superior Court – Marcus Walls; Public Defender – Joelle Moore; Behavioral Health – Dr. Michael Gunther

## **11. Approval of Fiscal Year 23/24 Budget Adjustment**

Administrative Services Manager Jessica Holstein presented the adjusted budget for Fiscal Year 23/24 that was approved by the JJCC on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, which funded each agency at 100% of their requested budgets and placed the remaining funds into the contingency balance.

The FY23/24 budget was approved at \$10.3M which included a base allocation of \$6.7M, as well as the use of one-time funds of \$3.7M. The final allocation schedule was distributed by the Department of Finance (DOF), the state growth allocation for FY22/23 received in October was \$5.7M originally estimated at \$5.5M.

The year-end closure resulted in an additional one-time funding increase of \$3.8M. Overall, the total available FY 2023/24 JJCPA funds have increased from \$23.4M to \$27.4M, or a \$4.0M increase. This increase had resulted in an adjustment to the contingency fund balance from \$13.11M to \$17.13M with no impacts to the agencies approved budgets by the JJCC.

#### **Comments:**

Rebecca Acevedo asked what the plan for the contingency funds is. Back in 2016, the contingency funds were at \$2M and now they are at \$17M. The funding should go to the intended places we need to eliminate the trickle-down effect and get it to the organizations that are doing the work.

Elisa Judy responded, “Yes Rebecca, you nailed it that is why we need this committee.” We need to have a comprehensive plan and the right people together so we can invest this money in the community to the CBOs providing the work.

Chris Wright made a motion for the JJCC to approve the budget adjustment for FY 23/24. Motion seconded by Laurel Cook. Motion passed.

Oppositions: None

## **12. Proposed 2024 JJCC Regular Meeting Dates**

Chris Wright presented the proposed 2024 JJCC regular meeting dates (handout): January 22, 2024; March 18, 2024; July 15, 2024; and November 18, 2024. All meeting times at 2:00 p.m. and in-person.

#### **Committee Comments:**

Pete Serbantes mentioned he would not be able to attend the July meeting.

Chris Wright reminded Pete that Camino Real Family Services can send a designee on their behalf.

Chris Wright made a motion to approve the 2024 JJCC regular meeting dates. The motion was seconded by Kevin Kalman. Motion passed.

Oppositions: None

### 13. Public Comments

#### Miracle Jacquez and Gregory Flores, Hope Culture Inc.

We are a community-based program, HOPE Culture located in San Bernardino but services both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Within Riverside, primarily service the Coachella valley and Indio areas. We are open to service any city that has a need to service youth and families. Some of our key partners are Loma Linda University Hospital and SBPD. Together we can collaborate to identify the most dangerous areas in the city where group and gun violence occur. By monitoring the entire city and surrounding areas we can understand street dynamics that spill into middle and high schools.

Here are some statistics:

- From 2019-2022, provided supportive services to 528 individuals
- Over 60 % of program participants remain arrest free
- Home visits to 700 dwellings
- Implemented 40 proactive community engagement events throughout the city.

We would like to duplicate these stats in the Coachella valley and Indio areas.

Also, would like to partner with any committees to help the success of youth and their families.

#### Ramon Ramos, President of The Exception.

It has been refreshing to hear the conversation and sharing the passion. It seems like there is a changing of the guard where there are people that really want to see the change in the community. This is exciting for us and the other CBOs. I want to thank Rebecca Acevedo for inviting us here. She has been a great support in what we do. We provide culturally relevant programs to at-risk youth and impacted youth. We have credible messengers and mentors who have been previously justice involved which includes me and most of our staff. We also partner with Hope Culture Inc. Gregory Flores is the product of one of our programs. Excited to see the changes happening and we want to be a part of it. We have been working with the Boys and Girls Club of Coachella Valley for the past few years. We are looking to find more partners and happy to be here and looking forward to the opportunity.

#### Tremale Ratcliffe, Field Representative of Just Us 4 Youth and oversee our Youth & Young Adult Employment Services program.

Our main office is in Pomona. We serve at-risk youth in the communities to develop them into people, scholars, and leaders. We provide services across multiple counties including Los Angeles. We work with county departments including partnering with Pomona's youth diversion program. Thank you for letting me be here today and look forward to bringing our services to Riverside County.

#### **Comments:**

Judge Michelle Mathis asked for clarification when referring to at-risk youth and wanted to know if that is a group that would generally be referred to as at-risk, or if these youth are particularly promising but maybe their community or family situation is not sufficient to meet their success.

Tremale Ratcliffe clarified we no longer utilize the phrase at-risk as it has a negative connotation on our high promise youth and young adults. This has been passed into law. We must speak promise into them as we want to remove that negative stigma from them that they are at-risk of gang violence, homelessness, suicidal ideation, depression, etc.

Sonny Von Cleveland, President, and founder of the Von Cleveland Foundation.

We are located in Palm Springs. Frequent volunteer and mentor at Indio Juvenile Hall and in Los Angeles for the Anti-Recidivism Coalition. I am putting forth a mentorship program called The Choice Effect. It is a 12-week eight module curriculum to empower youth and teach them they are worthy of a good life and past mistakes do not have to define who they are and what their future must be. If kids do not feel worthy, it does not matter how much we teach them. You must let them know they are worthy. Self-forgiveness is one of the most important things and this comes from a past felon starting at the age of 7. I went into prison at 17 and served 18 years in the Department of Corrections and fell under the mentorship of a Muslim. I understand the importance of mentorship and providing it to someone that has been through the fire. I own multiple businesses in the Coachella Valley area and want to help show these kids there is a viable path to getting past their own self-doubt and that they are worthy of a future.

Abidan Padilla, President, and founder of AP Concrete Inc. and AP Construction Training.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. We are located in Moreno Valley. The reason I created this company is that I saw the need for young adults to find a job. We offer skills and on the job training especially for those that cannot afford college, we are a good place to start. We have mentors and offer a support system. Our services include carpentry, construction training, job safety skills, and handling work-related hand tools. We have an aftercare program that includes quarterly follow-ups making sure our members are on the right track and help with personal budgets. We want to make sure young adults understand financial responsibility.

Chris Wright thanked everyone for being in attendance today. Per the JJCC Bylaws, starting in January and moving forward in the event any voting member cannot attend a meeting you will need to submit in writing a letter in advance indicating who your designee is. Send the information to the JJCC recording Secretary Bryon Hansen.

**14. Council Comments**

Norma Biegel acknowledged and introduced Operation Safe House New Executive Director, Dr. Erin Franco, who is in attendance today.

Jessica Clark, Solid Ground Wellness introduced herself as a new member to the committee.

Jeffrey Greene announced that Supervisor Jefferies will no longer be the Chair of the BOS and Supervisor Washington will likely be the new BOS Chair for 2024.

**15. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

An attendance sheet was signed by all present and will be kept on file.

Meeting Minutes submitted by Probation Executive Secretary Bryon Hansen