**ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING**

**THURSDAY, March 24, 2022**

**2:00PM - via ZOOM**

Attendees: Director Ramos, Judge Degnan, Jody Polidoro, Keisha Walker, Anthony Higgans, LaQuanda Williams, Michelle Callari, Tourae Freeman, Director Hughes, Tyrone Hunter, Lt. Ricks, Collette DeGrezia, Shelton Thurman, Lori Scott-Pickens, Amy Godfrey, Jasmine Joseph-Forman, Milagros Ortiz, Altarik White, Roger Imhof, Samantha Wilkerson, Edward Morris, Mark Comesanas, Bernard Wilkins, Eddy Sosa Rosa, Christynah Estivene, John Henriques, Amanda Santana, Jenn Remsen, Stephanie Cedeno, Jason Martinez, Michelle Washington-Davis, Wonder Henderson, Alicia Holman, Ron Small, Amanda Compton Dover

This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 -10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been provided on the Essex County Website.

**Agenda Item I**

**Reading of the Open Public Meetings Act**

**Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2022**

The Open Public Meeting Act was read by Director Anibal Ramos. Director Anibal Ramos then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Director Ramos asked for a roll call which was administered by Administrator Martinez. Motion made by LaQuanda Williams and Second by Amy Godfrey. The minutes from February 24, 2022 were approved.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Planning Committee:**

LaQuanda Williams reported that they broke into smaller committees to deal with the pilot program they have before them. The first meeting was in the area of Education Development and met with those involved in that section to answer the questions that are listed in application. The next meeting for that committee will be the 28th of March. Jason and staff are scheduling meeting dates for the other areas of the plan i.e. courts, probation, prosecutor and social services.

Director Ramos asked if there were any questions and there were none. Director thanked Ms. Williams for taking the lead on the preparation of this new pilot program. It will require a number of break out meetings and groups.

**Monitoring Committee:**

Lori Scott Pickens reported that there are no updates. One group that had some corrections. They are starting the process all over again moving forward to look at all programs. Director Ramos also requested volunteers for the monitoring session from the Commissioners. If interested please notify Administrator Martinez.

**Allocations Committee:**

Michelle Callari reported that there is no update as of today.

**Administrator Updates:**

Administrator Martinez stated that revisions for the 2022 Comprehensive Plan and Innovations will be submitted by tomorrow. Regards to the updates March 1st he had the first vendors meeting with topics of program participation, Jam reports, goals and outcomes. March 3rd Department of Children and Families hosted a meeting with YSC administrators and care management organizations from Essex, Mercer, Camden and Passaic along with JJC to discuss strategies and share information for the pilot program.

On March 9th, at the Board of Commission meeting they renewed all state community partnership grants and contracts. On March 14th, the Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youth and Communities Pilot Program was introduced to the Educators of County Vocational Schools, Newark charter schools and Alternative schools.

Director Ramos asked if anyone had questions and stated that there was a representative here from Newark Public School. They were not able to participate in the break out group related to the pilot program and asked that they reach out to Jason to make sure they have information related to that meeting so that they will be able to participate.

**Presentations:**

**Day Reporting Center (DRC)**

Shelton Thurman gave a presentation on the above program which is open to all 16-24 year olds to receive Educational, career development, and mental health services available through One-Stop Resources and cooperating agencies. Will focus on decision making, coping skills, managing stressful situations both at home and in public.

Director Ramos advised that this program is not funded through the YSC but through the Essex County One Stop Division of Employment and Training. This program is offered to the court system. Have had very good success through the program. Thanked Shelton and his team.

Ms. Walker asked if youth who are court involved but not in the program can they come and obtain identification and other services offered by the One Stop. Mr. Thurman advised they don’t turn any youth away whatever their needs are.

**COPE Division of Oaks Integrated Care**

Jennifer Remsen presented their program which is a dispositional option program that offers Comprehensive Evaluation, Substance Abuse Prevention & Counseling, Psychoeducation, Group & individual therapy, drug screening and case management. There is an assessment and evaluation process and referrals are made through the court or station house adjustments.

**Family Connections**

Amanda Santana presented their Juvenile Sex Offender Program (JSOP). This program is for youth ages 10-17 identified as having engaged in inappropriate assaultive/abusive sexualized behaviors. They provide individual and group counseling services for the youth. They also encourage family involvement to support the youth. Two tiers for treatment those who are admitting and those who are non-admitting youth. Also provide wrap around services to youth and family.

Director Ramos asked if any other provider had any updates they would like to share.

**Eddy Sosa Rosa of Aspira (ERC)** gave a brief update that they are now full in person and have been able to employ someone thanks to Newark’s North Ward Councilman job fair held yesterday. The person should be able to start tomorrow.

**Alicia Holman MDT** stated that the MDTs have serviced 19 youth thus far and keeping track of those youth that they have started the program. We are tentatively scheduling a meeting to do a Home Detention review. Also spoke with Mr. Higgans in reference to doing a case management conference with the public defender and prosecutor to develop a plan of action to present to either judge before the case is heard in court.

Anthony Higgans added that we do want to have a better communication to provide opportunities that will help our youth to both judges. Also stated that Michelle Callari and Donna Cameron as well as he anticipate having a meeting to further increase efficiency to provide services for our children.

**Wonder Henderson** reported on the **Supported Work**, which has been actively recruiting employers and have secured employment with Essex County Parks, Essex County Zoo and two social services. As a result of the job recruitment fair held yesterday Newark Airport Food and Beverage Assoc. are interested in recruiting our youth. Currently awaiting the grant to be approved and they are ready to move forward.

**Shelton Thurman** advised that the Essex County Youth Program will be hiring youth between the ages of 16-24 for summer employment paying 13.50/hour. Information should be circulated in the next month. Need photo ID birth certificate and social security card. Looking to hire 250 youth.

**Lori Scott Pickens** shared that Middlesex County has under the direction of Superior Court Judge Michael Toto has invited her to sit on an advisory group to look at gun violence in that county because of the work that has been done here in Essex County. Trying to immolate what has been done here in Essex County.

**Amanda Compton Dover** of JJC stated that JJC have not received corrections or classification for innovations. There is a new monitoring tool that will be used this year which has taken out a lot of the repetitive questions that were being asked to providers. Will meet with the monitoring committee before they start monitoring providers to share the new tool.

**Adjournment:** Director Ramos thanked everyone for attending and asked if there were any further questions or comments. With no further announcements motion was made by Anibal Ramos & second by Shelton Thurman to adjourn the meeting.