

ESSEX COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING

THURSDAY, August 19, 2022

2:00PM - via ZOOM

Attendees: Judge Degnan, Kesha Manning, Jody Polidoro, Nkechi Onwudingo, Anthony Higgans, Michelle Calari, David Sims, Tourae Freeman, Director Ramos, Director Hughes, Tyrone Hunter, Lori Scott- Pickens, Amanda Santana, Colette DeGrazia, Apryl Caldwell, Dr. Jobi Odeneye, Maria Docherty, Lori Scott-Pickens, LaQuanda Williams, Michael Schiavo, Amy Godfrey, Roger Imhof, Andrea Melancon, Mariela Gabriel, Michele Richards, Craig Lee, Nicole Watson, Christynah Estivene, Stephanie Ceden, Craig Lee, Jenn Remsen, Rebecca St. Louis, Reggie Bledsoe, Robert Frascati, Sheri Parrish, Gino Arevalo, Jason Martinez, Michelle Washington-Davis, Wonder Henderson, Alicia Holman, Ron Small, Courtnie Thomas

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 – July 21, 2022

Director Ramos asked for a roll call of voting members which was administered by Administrator Martinez. It was determined that there was a quorum. The Open Public Meeting Act was read by Director Anibal Ramos. Director Ramos asked for a motion to approve the minutes May 9, 2022. LaQuanda Williams Motioned to approve the minutes from May 9, 2022, Maria Docherty 2nd the motion.

Subcommittee Reports

Planning Committee - LaQuanda Williams stated that there are no updates at this time and asked that members look for an email coming from Jason to schedule a Planning Meeting in the upcoming weeks.

Monitoring Committee – Lori Scott Perkins reported that the monitoring process will start in the next week or so and committee must consist of 4 individuals that consist of 2 YSC members, 1 youth commission administrator or staff and 1 JJC court Liaison. JDAI monitoring team must consist of 5 to 7 individuals between 2 to 4 CJJSI members and YSC members with a total of 1 YSC administrator or staff and 1 JJC research & perform specialist and 1 JJC court liaison. Need 2 members for each monitoring for State Community Partnership Grant and 2-4 for Innovations grant. They are ready dates have been set and partners were notified of monitoring sessions. Director Ramos reiterated how important it is for members to participate. Great way to familiarize themselves with the various programs YSC funds.

Allocations Committee – Michelle Callari reported that there are approximately \$37,000.00 that is unallocated. Plan to have a meeting on August 18th to discuss way to disperse the funds to some of the existing programs and by the next meeting our subcommittee will have suggestions to present to the Commission of how funds should be dispersed.

Director Ramos asked if there were any questions. There were none and asked that Administrator Martinez give his update.

Updates:

Administrator Martinez advised that State Community Court Grants for 2022 the Comprehensive application is still waiting approval from the JJC. Once we have approval all current funded programs will have access to JAMS. Corrections to the Comprehensive plan we requested on June 8th and again on June 21. Sent in and awaiting JJC

approval. As it pertains to JDAI Innovations the award letter was received for our 2022 grant. On June 23rd and July 6th he presented to the Board of Commissioners the award to insert the allocations of the three programs. Today, he and the two chairs received a letter in regard to the 2023 Innovations for the eligibility criteria and based on the lack of some documentation Essex County will only receive \$60,000.00 instead of \$120,000.00. There are a lot of things that need to be accomplished before the deadline of August 5th to submit the remaining proposal. There will be a meeting on August 1st with the YSC and CJJSI members more details will follow.

For the Restorative and Transformative Justice for Youth and Communities Pilot Program. We received the revisions and was due July 18th. He asked for an extension and is almost complete. Will forward to the chairs for their approval.

New Business:

Director Ramos introduced Dawn Rouse who was formerly associated with the DRC Program and is currently working with the Electronic Monitoring and Home Detention Program. Ms. Rouse reported that there are 58 on GPS and 31 on Home Detention. Will continue to monitor and supervisor the participates daily and hopefully can decrease the number of violations. Director Higgins wanted to remind everyone that this is a public meeting and to try to refrain from using the names of the individuals participating in the program. Remember that the meeting is also being recording. He further stated that he met with Director Hughes and Warden Barcliff and will be scheduling a meeting with Jody Polidoro to get the 24 hour monitoring up and running with the ability to get the warrants when necessary for sever violations. Waiting on the Sherriff Dept for one issue and the Courts regarding their protocol.

State Community Partnership/Family Court Grant Programs

Michael Schiavo of NCC representing Mr. Morris the academic coordinator of the TEN Program. Reported that they had 3 students of Science Park High School which they assisted in their essays, mock interviews and Fasfas. Also assisted with any communication with colleges and financial aid programs. One youth accepted to Cornel with almost a full scholarship, one accepted to NJIT and the other accepted to Kean University. In their summer program they had 3 students from Central High School whom are prepping to go to college and will be assisting them through their final year. Program provides practice test and meet with him during the week. Learning robotics and coding.

Apsira Issac Medina reported that there are 11 youth attending the program and going good thus far.

Prosecutors' office summer program Nicole Watson reported that summer youth internship is going well and in the 3rd week of program. Preventive program from cities in Essex learning about making positive choices. What to do when stopped by police, job etiquette and how to dress etc. Program concludes August 12th. What's its all about conference, hopefully will be in person in December.

Family Connections – Amanda Santana reported that they still have spots available and received referrals through MDT.

MDT – Wonder Henderson reported that there is a total of 100 youth that have been served. Both Judges want MDT services in place prior to releasing the juvenile. They have looked for various programs to assist with the needs of the youth.

Alicia Holman reported that 10 have been discharged from the program negatively. Also conducted site visits in June and July to see about 5 programs. Currently working on updating a resource directory. We scheduled a providers meeting so the judges were made aware of the programs that are contracted and those that do not have a contract with YSC. We are also resurrecting the Detention review meetings for detained youth and those who are in detention alternatives programs. Gave thanks and gratitude to both judges for all their help in making referrals to MDT.

National Center for Innovations – Stephanie reported that they have closed out 39 cases. 6 graduated from high school and moving on to universities to further their education. Program is running virtually. Will be doing community service in the near future.

TAP program stated that they have been very busy this summer. Have a new judge and thought it was necessary to keep program running through the summer. 16 youth receiving summer internships.

Substance Abuse Evaluator – Robert Frascati reported have met with stakeholders to strive for somewhat normalcy after the shutdown. Now receiving referrals from probation. Assisted the telephone notification with familiarity with JAMS.

UCC Summer recreation – Andrea Melancon reported that they have 23 youth in their program. Team bldg. exercise, mock interviews, career readiness, etc. 1 youth accepted to College of NJ for summer program and one accepted to Stockton University.

Supported Work Site – Administrator Martinez reported there was a late start and thanked Kecia Walker for list of juveniles interested in working. Asked Nkechi if anything to add/update on youth engagement program. Stated it is going very well. Have been doing interview and budgeting skills.

Community Family Engagement – Craig Lee reported that he has 42 youth involved in the program. Thanked Ms. Henderson, Ms. Holman for their assistance. Thanked the Administrator as well. Has 6 youth who completed, 8 youth in family counseling and 2 youth referred to Youth Build. Assisted a family with shelter. 20 plus families assisted with electric bill and housing program. Do outreach twice a month to inform families of their services.

Family Crisis – Tyrone Hunter reported 1 youth in the shelter who goes to court next week.

JJC – Courtney Thomas reported that JJC sent letter regarding the 2023 funding. County submitted response and received smaller amount due to the lack of community engagement. Will have meeting August 1st.

Director Ramos asked for meeting to be scheduled with Courtne and Judge Degnan. Based on correspondence that he reviewed the County did not have the required number of meetings with County Counsel. Would like a better understanding of the meeting. LaQuanda Williams asked for a report on the lack of community engagement by the County.

Summer Youth Employment Program – Apryl Caldwell reported that the program is going great and thanked any partners on the call for providing jobs to the youth. Offered employment to 250 and employed 220 youth. In the second week thus far. Also had a kickoff ceremony at the Donald M. Payne school. Also the manager of WIO services. RFPs released through County Portal.

Center for Family Services, Steeping Stones – Rebecca St. Louis reported that her program is new and geared towards youth who are 0-18 and provide individual and group family counseling for substance abuse and overdose patients. The family does not need insurance. Also go to the schools and community events. Offered to anyone in Essex County.

Director Ramos asked for a motion to adjourn. LaQuanda Williams moved and Apryl Caldwell second the motion.