



PROBATION DEPARTMENT



Kalisa Rochester
Chief Probation Officer

Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Commission Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2020
Meeting via ZOOM

Attending

1. Joe Hoffar, Chairperson
2. Kalisa Rochester, Chief Probation Officer
3. Heidi Szakala, Program Manager
4. Lori Minor, Commissioner
5. Sandra Stevens, Commissioner

Visiting

1. Joel Daffron, Program Manager
2. Jermaine Paster, Commissioner Candidate

Absent

1. Kelly Bentz, Commissioner
2. Patricia Anguiano, Commissioner
3. Mark Bacciarini, Judge for Merced County

Meeting called to order at 5:54 pm.

Welcome and introductions by Joe.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting on January 15, 2020 were individually reviewed. Lori moved to approve the minutes. Sandra seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Applicant Jermaine Paster

Jermaine Paster submitted his application to become a Commissioner which was sent out previously for your review. Joe asked Jermaine to explain why he wanted to become a Commissioner. Jermaine gave both his professional and personal reasons expressing that he works with kids who are struggling. He wants to be part of a program that can make a difference with a group that can help the kids. He feels that sometimes kids need help to make good choices. Jermaine wants to be that person. Accessing help for the kids and their families is key, especially once the kids are turned around to a positive direction. He wants to be a part of something that is bigger than himself. His strong religious beliefs also encourage him to be the corner stone of something great. Jermaine's involvement with Students With Aspiring Goals (SWAG) helps him to achieve this goal. He is invested in changing kid's lives.

(Jermaine was asked to leave the meeting for a moment so discussion could take place regarding his approval.)

There was a round table discussion regarding Jermaine's qualifications. Sandra feels he will be a great asset to the team. She has seen him work in a special education program and he does a really good job. She has never heard anything bad about him. Lori met him at a baseball game and a couple of times at the Hall. She has never heard anything bad about him and she feels his heart absolutely is in the right place. He might be able to put us in the right direction as far as getting the right resources to the right people. He may be able to open some unknown doors for us that we need to get through. Joe knows him quite well and for a long time. He feels Jermaine's heart is most certainly in the right place. Joe also received an email from Judge Bacciarini giving his support of Jermaine. It was unanimous that Jermaine will be welcomed to the team. Kalisa will not swear him in as she feels that is within the Judge's jurisdiction.

(Jermaine was invited back into the meeting.)

Joe congratulated Jermaine telling him he is the guy we are looking for; he is the guy we need. Jermaine is now part of the team. Jermaine thanked every one and said this was important to him and his family. He thanked them for opening their hearts to him. He will continue to better himself and continue working with these kids. This was a goal and he appreciates the opportunity to be part of the team. Joe let him know that we will have a formal swearing in at a later date. Joe welcomed him to stay for the rest of the meeting.

Board of Supervisors (BOS)

Joe has met with all the Supervisors except Mr. Espinoza as he was unavailable at the time. Joe believes they are all on board with us. Supervisor Lee was especially excited and wants us to move forward. We were in the process of moving forward on different things and unfortunately the pandemic has halted the progress.

Reimbursement

Joe asked for reimbursement for the following thing he purchased:

- Tablecloth
- Brochures

He purchased these for the Parent Institute. He worked the event with Kelly and there was a pretty good turnout. It was a great networking process. Next time he would like to get the brochures printed in Spanish as well as English. There was a roundtable discussion. Sandra moved to approve the reimbursement of the tablecloth and brochures. Lori seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Parent Institute Update

Joe recapped that he felt it was very successful. There was great interaction with the parents. He was able to collect several brochures from other agencies. It was interesting to see what

services are available and know what agencies we can refer to for services. It was a very positive experience which he enjoyed very much.

By-Law Revisions

Joe has some ideas for by-law revisions and contacted some other Commissions. He didn't reach all 58 of the counties but some of the ones he did reach gave him examples. He put together a draft for consideration. The biggest issue he felt was Article 3, Section 2, Page 2 as far as who appoints whom. When he approached the Supervisors, they noted to him that they are not even in our by-laws and questioned why they were being approached. Upon checking, Joe noted they are correct; their participation is not in there. Currently, the Juvenile Judge has the authority to appoint five people as a Commissioner at Large. It's up to the Board of Supervisors to appoint two more to the Board and the goal is to have a total of fifteen. With Jermaine, we only have six. Lori wants to compare the new to the old. Maurina will send out the original set of by-laws. Joe started from scratch on his version with a different format. The biggest change is in Section 2. We will revisit this topic at the next meeting. There was a round table discussion.

Suggestions for Focus Area for the Commission

At the last meeting, Joe asked that each Commissioner bring one or two ideas for the group to focus on. Lori feels the need for a drop-in center for kids once they have been released. Sometimes, they just need questions answered and suggestions for various services. Perhaps the Boys and Girls Club would be a good partner. Jermaine suggested a pre-release program so the kids know exactly what the conditions and expectations are that need to be addressed. We also need to have follow up. This piece is critical. He also feels the need to have something for them to help keep them out of custody. A lot of these kids are lacking support. We need to help them with their education as well. SWAG and other programs are looking at what they can do to help these kids. Lori asked if they formalized case planning before they exit camp. Heidi stated they do have a transitional plan in place. There was a round table discussion concerning the Child Family Team (CFT) program and how it runs. Kalisa explained that we are struggling with BHRS as their clinician is out on maternity leave and we have had no alcohol and drug counselor for several months. Joe asked if we could somehow be connected to help with resources. Joel will have to let Elizabeth Garcia know that the Commission is interested in getting involved as she is the Officer connected to the CFT planning. This way they can be included in the invites. Kalisa is currently doing ZOOM meetings at the Juvenile Hall. They are heavily limiting who is entering the facility. We do not want to overwhelm the youth. Lori's thought was more along the lines, of helping once they are out; they see the PO assigned; they have questions. Her thought was not necessarily being involved with the CFT. Kalisa said it almost sounds like a version of CASA only better. Sometimes the kids have no one showing up for them in Court. Jermaine has shown up for the kids going through the Court process through the Prop 47 grant. He and Lara Olsen have shown up for kids that are getting violated. This means a lot to the kids. They need someone in their corner. Round table discussion. Jermaine really feels we could dial into assisting the kids with their needs prior to going to Court as well as after they are released. He explained about some of the things they are currently working on to get and keep kids off of probation. Lori reminded the team that we do not want to cross the line with the kids or the Probation staff.

Sandra feels we need a better understanding of responsibilities and what our role is for the Commission. Joe says we are advocates for the kids on probation as well as the kids that are at risk. We want to prevent the kids from getting into the system as well as helping those who are already in the system to get out. Lori is all for advocating for the youth but would like to see that happen prior to Court so that we are not trumping Probation. Joe feel it's important to get involved when the kids are getting ready to step out. Once again, we don't want to overwhelm the kids. Joe reminded us that we are not the Probation police. He gave a list of examples of things we can help them with once they get out. Sandra suggested that we fund raise but not in the form of monetary donations but for clothing from clothing stores so the kids have something to wear in Court. Kalisa shared we have a ton of dress shirts and ties at Juvenal Hall. She spoke with the Kiwanis in Atwater and they supplied 100 of each by the next day. Those service groups are all about helping the kids. Sandra asked about shoes. We have no connection for this item. Round table about how dressing up lifts the kid's spirits. Joe suggested that a couple of the Commissioners be present at the CFT if they get approval from the youth. The meetings are usually in the afternoon from 1:00 to 4:00 but they could be anytime. Lori and Jermaine volunteered to take part with Joe and Sandra as alternates. Joe suggested the four of them get together to create and formulate some strategies. Lori asked for a copy of a transitional plan. Heidi suggested that when things get back to normal, they plan events that the Commissioners will attend and get to know the kids. That way the kids are more comfortable having the Commissioners attend their CFT. Kalisa suggested that Beatriz write them into a plan so introductions can be made. It was agreed that this is a good way to set things in motion. Joel sees the introduction as critical. The youth are the driving force behind the CFT. The kids have to feel comfortable with the Commission being there. Kalisa reminded them the Commissioners can come to the Hall at anytime to interact with the kids. It was agreed that we have a plan.

Title 15 Report

Joe recapped that the report is completed and has been submitted. It has been mailed out to all involved. Joe is looking at alternate ways to do the inspection this year. He doesn't want to duplicate the State report. He wants to look at changing some of the specific areas. He has some examples from other areas. He reminded the team that we also have to inspect some of the jails that hold the kids and group homes. Sandra explained that we have kids in Short Term Residential Therapeutic Placement (STRTP) homes. These are not group homes and are very different. We have six or seven of the STRTP's. We have no group homes in this area. The Hall is still limiting who is coming into the Hall right now. Kalisa reminded us that they are:

- Taking temperatures.
- If attorney's want to meet the kids they must don full PPE.
- There are medical quarantines according to medical needs of the youth.
- We need to separate new kids from those that have been in for awhile to keep them medically safe.

Critical Incidents

Kalisa shared they have not had anyone sent to the hospital since March 12th and that was a dislocated pinkie from a basketball injury.

Grievances

Maurina did not bring as she wasn't sure about the forum and public possibly attending. Kalisa suggested she redact the kid's names and send them to Joe. He can review them and decide if there is anything that needs to be addressed. That way we can discuss them as a group if necessary. Joe explained the grievances to Jermaine. Kalisa reminded us that the Commission has the ability to assign someone or go in the facility and converse with the kids to make sure the grievance was resolved appropriately. There was a round table discussion.

Update from Kalisa

The Governor submitted the May budget revisions. He is closing the DJJ and he wants to send the kids back to the original County at the low cost of \$125 thousand per youth per year. We have estimated that it costs around \$350 thousand per youth per year. There is opposition from the Probation agencies. We don't feel that we are adequately prepared to receive those youth as the closure would occur January 1, 2021. Some youth pending transfer to CDCR will be sent to Chowchilla to prepare them to enter the prison system. All others would be returned to their original County. The administration is suggesting they create three county run "hubs" up and down the state. We will not be applying for the "hub" site. Fresno County has expressed interest. There are a lot of counties that are having discussions about closing their juvenile halls. She shared the incident with a Toulumne County Board meeting where they pulled a fast one on the new Chief to close his juvenile hall. The facility is only three years old. They have a certified sex offender program already in place. They also service Calaveras, Amador and Mariposa counties. They did approach Kalisa to contract with us. They have eleven kids that would need beds by July 1st. She quoted them \$350 per youth per day. Our hall cost \$9 million annually to run. This new Chief has no one to assist him in this new position. Kalisa offered to help him with his presentation. There was a round table discussion. Numerous people called in to try to stop this closure from happening. If the Governor is successful in closing DJJ, we have eleven kids there as this time. Joel will pull the files to take a look at how many will be going to CDCR. \$125 thousand per kid is reasonable if they do not have special circumstances like sex offenders and mental health needs. The thought is if we are sending a kid to DJJ, they have a higher level of service needs than we can provide. Our actual cost is about \$128 thousand per kid per year if there are no special needs. Kalisa has major concerns about receiving the kids back because they come with a high level of need and often risk. Kalisa will send the statics to the team.

Joe suggested the Commission could send a letter to the Governor. Kalisa is trying to reach Adam Grey on the next Judges Call so we can have further discussion and put a bug in his ear. The State is becoming more and more dependent on Probation agencies to pick up their high cost issues. She gave examples of some of these changes both past and present. They keep adding and adding more and more on to us. We do very good work but you can't send a bunch of high-level needs kids back to us without us being prepared. Monetarily we can't afford it and we don't have the resources. We cannot top the existing DJJ sex offender program. Some of those kids really need this program at DJJ. The same is true with the severely mentally ill youth at DJJ.

Kalisa also reported that we are being shorted \$1 million dollars on AB 109 funding. Kalisa explained where the AB 109 funding comes from and that it is for the PRCS clients coming out of the CDCR prison programs. We have \$13 million in our AB 109 account so we can use that but we can't keep doing this as it will affect the budgets in years to come. We are also getting back clients from CDCR and kids from DJJ back early. She gave an example of some of the disconnect between agencies.

Kalisa shared that everything else with budget is ok. The CEO did let her know that he may come knocking for some Juvenile Institution Officers positions. We do have nine of the JIO vacancies. The Court is holding 450 cases with 80 of those being felonies. All of these cases are in the last five weeks. Joe asked about the CEO's gauge on closing the Hall. He asked her about applying to be a "hub". She reassured him she is not applying to be a "hub". She explained about underfilling some of the position to help save money. We have two really good Peer Support Specialists right now doing a great job at the Hall. We have a new Program Specialist that is doing well also. Kalisa has one more meeting with another Peer Support Specialist. We are good in terms of running a camp and juvenile hall. We don't have a certified sex offender treatment program in Merced County. These kids are sent to Modesto. Lori asked if Jim understand the dynamics of the Hall. Kalisa shared with him the layout of the facility. She also shared with him that County Rules and Regulation severely handicap us. She gave the example of how on a 12-hour shift, the Juvenile Institutions Officer is in the breakroom for 1 hour and 45 minutes because of the regulations. He was surprised to hear this even though this has been the conversation for years. She reminded Jim that now is not the time to cut public safety.

- You have people getting out of prison early.
- You have kids getting out of DJJ early.
- You have DJJ closing.
- We are in a recession which also means more crime.
- More people are breaking in to homes.
- Medical quarantine units are necessary.

There was discussion on all of these factors and the effects on staff. Jim did say that he is very, very hesitant to cut public safety. He just wanted her to know he is considering the cuts but not moving forward right now. She will keep us posted. Joe asked if the Commission should send a letter to him. Kalisa suggested waiting to see what he is going to do. Jim was happy to hear about a potential contract with Toulumne as that would bring in about \$1 million in revenue. Kalisa reminded the team that the Juvenile Hall costs about \$9 million annually to operate. Juvenile Halls are being closed all the time. They are often being lost to the Sheriff's needing more bed space for jails. There was a round table discussion.

Kalisa went through the budget and there is \$1,000 budgeted to JJDP annually for mileage. Also, on the West Side is our modular that we utilized AB 109 funding for this facility. It will be a drop-in center. The name of the program is "Breaking Barriers". It will be Probation operated but Kalisa is keeping a low profile on this with no Probation marking on the building. WorkNet will be working out there to help with computer skills and employment skill building. Probation is using SB 678 funding for a Program Specialist and a Peer Support Specialist to orchestrate

programs. We want to treat the whole family and not just the client. Training rooms are available for other agencies to hold classes. The only other dedicated program so far is the WorkNet employee because we already fund that program. The lobby looks nothing like a Probation lobby. We want to show the clients and community that we are invested in them. It's a very inviting space. Lori suggested we have our next meeting there. Kalisa said we can and we can even social distance in there. We are very proud of this space and the objectives. We can take whoever we want and we are able to treat the client and the families. The funding is protected for this project. There are lots of ideas for future expansion.

The JJCPA money is also protected. Kalisa reported that we are working with MCOE on the "Rise Program". We will be purchasing a food truck. The camp kids are going to be able to:

- Participate in the culinary program.
- Work in food truck and get their food handlers card.
- DPO's will be involved as it is JJCPA funded.
- Businesses will be sought to agree to take the kids on for hire. Probation will pay their salary through the probation period and then hopefully the business will agree to hire them.

Round table discussion. The program will be modeled after the Phoenix Program. The truck will be self-sufficient. The thought is to be able to park the truck at MCOE campus across from MJC with some tables. The DPO will be there for supervision of the kids. All of the plans have to be approved by Risk Management. We are not anticipating any issues. There is a lot of excitement about it and we hope to move forward very soon. This project will most certainly invest in our kids. We have to get the community to invest in our kids. They need at least a chance. The Commission can certainly help in this piece by searching for potential employers. Round table discussion.

Closing

Joe suggested that the July meeting be Los Banos at the new facility. Kalisa said the modular has WIFY if need.

Lori asked about the youth we are housing from Toulumne. Kalisa explained that he can't go back. As a courtesy, they are housing one of ours and we are housing one of theirs.

Joe will draft a letter to the Governor regarding the closure of the DJJ. Kalisa recapped why a letter will be a good idea.

Thank yous and congratulations given!

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 5:30.

Minutes by Maurina Erickson, Secretary III