



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
PROBATION COMMISSION**  
9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY – DOWNEY – CALIFORNIA 90242  
**(562) 940-2754**



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 12, 2018**

The regular meeting of the County of Los Angeles Probation Commission was held on Thursday, April 12, 2018 at the Kenneth Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Seventh Floor, Room 743, Los Angeles, California 90012.

I. Commission President Joe Gardner called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. President Gardner asked that all identify prior to making any statements.

The following Commissioners were present:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Jan Levine  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Daniel Seaver  
Commissioner Meredith  
Commissioner Martinez  
Commissioner Yamashiro  
Commissioner Caster  
Commissioner Mitchell  
Commissioner Shutan  
Commissioner Butler  
Commissioner Herbon  
Commissioner Quintana

The following Commissioners were not present:

Commissioner Kaplan  
Commissioner Hoover  
Commissioner Saab

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**Commissioners**

Joe Gardner-President,  
Hon. Jan Levine (Ret.)-1st Vice President, Daniel Seaver – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President,  
Donald Meredith-Sergeant at Arms, Azael Martinez-Sonoqui, Cyn Yamashiro, Esq.,  
Jacqueline Caster, Esq, Jo Kaplan Esq, Olivia E. Mitchell, Peter Shutan,  
Zachary Hoover, Hon. Betsy Butler (Ret.), Hon. Alex Saab, Esq., Randy Herbon, Jessica Quintana

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The following staff were present:

Chief Deputy, Sheila Mitchell  
Deputy Director, Dave Mitchell  
Acting Deputy Director, Luis Dominguez  
Jack Sims  
Daniel Aceves  
Patricia Rodriguez  
Genesis Cervantes

The following individuals were present:

Tyson Nelson  
Maureen Pacheco  
Michelle Sendrey  
Michelle Newell  
Dana Garcetti  
Celeste Fremon  
Robert Quintana

## **II. LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE**

### **Monthly Update on the Progress of Training Juvenile Hall Staff in De-escalation Techniques and Trauma Informed Practices.**

Chief Deputy Sheila Mitchell mentioned the Department is working with Dr. Monique Marrow, an expert in trauma, to conduct an assessment on what type of training is necessary for staff at the juvenile halls.

Acting Deputy Director, Luis Dominguez presented the proposed Trauma Informed Care Training plan and calendar for the line staff in the Detention Services Bureau scheduled to have all staff trained by September 30, 2018. Acting Deputy Director Dominguez stated that 500 out of 1,400 of the current staff are already trained. The DSB Consultant will track and report a weekly progress. A training schedule and progress update will be provided to the Commission. Training classes are scheduled to begin May 16, 2018 and classes will take place every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of the month. Tuesday classes will be conducted at Los Padrinos from 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. On Wednesday, classes will be conducted at Central Juvenile Hall from 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and every Thursday, classes will be conducted at Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall from 6:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. All Commissioners are welcome to attend any class schedule.

Deputy Director Dave Mitchell stated they currently have a twelve-month contract with Dr. Marrow and will be working on providing the necessary training for each specific camp and will work on matching what is being done at the juvenile halls to the camps. Training dates for all camp sites have not been scheduled but will be available to the Commission as soon as a schedule is confirmed.

Acting Deputy Director, Luis Dominguez clarified that there will be training for the juvenile halls but they must first identify how much time will be needed for each individual site since each juvenile hall and camp is unique. Chief Deputy Mitchell indicated several factors they are taking into consideration to prepare a timeline. The Department is currently working on a comprehensive approach to determine what kind of training is needed at each facility. Chief Deputy Mitchell mentioned east camps will also be receiving training.

Commissioner Levine would like specialized training for the staff working with youth suffering from depression and other mental health issues to be taken into consideration. Commissioner Levine requested the new curriculum to be sent to the Commission.

Commissioner Yamashiro expressed his concerns regarding the lack of a 12-step program or any substance abuse program for the rehabilitation of youth in custody. Commissioner Yamashiro asked the Department if there was a policy prohibiting Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and that such programs can be fundamental to the success of rehabilitating youth. Acting Deputy Director Dominguez stated there was no policy in place prohibiting substance abuse programs and that he was not aware of what programs did exist in the Department. He stated that he will follow-up on the matter.

Commissioner Caster requested the rollout schedule as to when the new training will be applied in the facilities – such as when the youth will actually start moving into the other Kilpatrick units.

Commissioner Butler mentioned her concerns about female staff, she would like to ensure female staff are as equally trained as the male staff.

#### Progress Report on Distribution of Daily Population Reports in the Juvenile Halls

Commissioner Caster mentioned that a Probation Officers' E-Gram distributed by their union was forwarded to all the Commissioners. It stated that youth in custody today are more dangerous than ever before and that staff are justified in feeling fear and having access to pepper spray. Commissioner Caster inquired whether such fear (which might be totally justifiable) could make it too difficult for staff to be receptive to a trauma-based approach, and asked for Chief Deputy Mitchell's assessment of the situation. Chief Deputy Mitchell agreed that the youth in custody in our County are far more criminogenic and have seen more trauma than before, probably because the less violent youth are instead being treated in the community. Chief Deputy Mitchell said numbers of youth in custody are down by 75% and stated "We know the kids are different now", and that that's why it's important staff be well-trained for the assignment.

The Department is considering what can be done to assist youth who have been in custody 3-5 years versus the youth that have been in the camps 12-15 months.

Commissioner Yamashiro requested data and exact numbers to back up Chief Deputy Mitchell's claim of youth currently in custody being more criminogenic today than in the past. Commissioner Yamashiro did not believe the claim and has not seen any data to support it. The lower populations are a result of filings across the board are down, so it's not necessarily because more kids are treated in the community. The rates of sexual abuse and neglect markers are no different than before.

Commissioner Meredith discussed his concerns regarding new recruits and how they might not be prepared to deal with today's clientele which may be the reason new recruits tend to resign after two weeks. Chief Deputy Mitchell offered a response to the issue and the Department will work on pairing new staff with experience staff to serve as mentors.

Commissioner Herbon requested the head of Human Resources attend a meeting to discuss the retention of new recruits and what percentage of these new recruits are leaving after the first six months. Commissioner Herbon would like to know if any exit interviews are conducted, and what are the results of the interviews? Commissioner Herbon also requested statistics of recruits' retention; are we losing more than we are gaining? Commissioner Herbon shared concern on staff safety and would like the head of Human Resources to address the issue.

Commissioner Martinez discussed the importance of programs in which youths are educated on how life in custody is really like by other youth. Commissioner Martinez shared his visit to Los Padrinos juvenile hall and informed there were no such programs being offered and requested that these programs receive consideration as action to juvenile diversion.

#### Progress Report on Distribution of Pepper Spray Usage and Incident Reports

Chief Deputy Mitchell mentioned the Department has conducted an assessment on pepper spray usage. Chief Deputy Mitchell stated the legislation says one must document the pepper spray usage. It is important staff understand the usage of pepper spray and should only be used as last resort. Chief Deputy Mitchell mentioned it is important that staff are given the tools and proper training necessary to feel safe while conducting their job.

Commissioner Quintana discussed the importance in assisting youth in transition back into the community with career and social skills development. Commissioner Quintana would like the Department to find an alternative to pepper spray and to adapt a policy where there is trauma-informed infused into the curriculum of the staff's training.

Chief Deputy Mitchell stated the report of pepper spray usage has not been finalized. The Department currently does not have a data system to provide exact numbers but the Department is working on obtaining an automated system.

### Pest Control at Central Juvenile Hall Update

Director Daniel Aceves, of Management Service Bureau, reported on the pest control inspection with Public Health at Central juvenile hall. Director Aceves informed the Commission of rodents being found in the facility. An interior and exterior inspection was conducted on the facility and will have a full report regarding the condition of the facility at the next meeting.

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Michelle Sendrey, mother of a youth currently at Los Padrinos juvenile hall, expressed her concern on the awarding behavior at Los Padrinos juvenile hall. Ms. Sendrey shared her son has been in custody since February 2018 and has only been awarded incentives from the Al Jones program for good behavior twice, later to find out the Al Jones program is to be rewarding youth with good behavior on a weekly basis. Ms. Sendrey was not pleased that one of those two occasions her son was given expired chips. Ms. Sendrey stated the dog weekend program provided to the youth was cancelled without any reasonable explanation. Ms. Sendrey expressed her frustration on the issue as it is something that the youth look forward to. Despite leaving messages, her concerns have not been addressed. Ms. Sendrey requested prompt answers. Commissioner Caster asked Ms. Sendrey whether an independent grievance system would be helpful to her. Ms. Sendrey responded, "Yeah definitely. I tried calling the Ombudsman number, several times... nothing." Commissioner Seaver thanked Ms. Sendrey for addressing her concerns. The Department will follow-up on the matter.

### **IV. OLD AND CONTINUED BUSINESS**

President Gardner reminded the Commission to sign-up for the 2018 annual inspections of the juvenile halls and camps. President Gardner informed the Commission that last year's inspection reports were completed and submitted to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC).

Deputy Director Mitchell reported the camps at Challenger that are currently open are the following; Camps McNair, Onizuka, Scobee and Jarvis. Camp Jarvis is schedule to close at the end of May 2018. Deputy Director Mitchell stated the dates are not official and are subject to change. Deputy Director Mitchell stated the goal is to close Challenger and have six camps remaining at the end of the consolidation plan. The camps that will remain open are camps Scott, Scudder, Afflerbaugh, Paige, Rockey and Campus Kilpatrick.

Chief Deputy Mitchell informed the Commission on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the Department will be reporting on the recruitment efforts to diversify the range of new hires and informed the Commission that on the next meeting the Probation Human Resources Director would be attending the meeting to discuss staff recruitment.

Commissioner Caster discussed the orientation booklets, for Probation Officer candidates, which lay out the 13 responsibilities. She pointed out that nothing is mentioned about rehabilitation, engaging, or counseling the youth directly until Item 8 on the list. Commissioner Caster said the list priorities focus instead essentially on management of the youth and the facility, but not on their mental health and the reasons which might have landed them behind bars. These latter tasks, she added, should be made into a higher priority in the hiring process.

Commissioner Meredith would like to discuss the hiring process of entry level positions of Group Supervisors and Detention Services Officers and would like the head of Human Resources to explain the promotion of Deputy Probation Officers to provide the Commission with an understanding on how the hiring process works.

Commissioner Levine requested an update on a follow-up presentation from the trainers that are currently training staff on the custody practice model. Chief Deputy Mitchell will work on coordinating a date with the trainers to attend a future meeting.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Levine requested a presentation on the treatment of pregnant, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ), and sex trafficked youth in custody for a future meeting.

Commissioner Shutan is requesting a presentation on the status of the reserve program as there are currently thirty to sixty reserves that are now being unsupervised. President Gardner will schedule the presentation in the month of June.

Commissioner Caster discussed her visit to Central juvenile hall on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. She was invited by the Liberty Hill Foundation to join a group of their larger donors on a tour of the facility. Commissioner Caster was invited to attend as the founder and president of the Everychild foundation to provide her perspective as a juvenile justice funder. While on the tour of a boys' unit, she observed the grievance forms on the wall as well as the phone number to the Ombudsman, but no visible phone for contacting the Ombudsman. Commissioner Caster was informed by staff that if the youth would like to place such a call, he would have to come into their office and they "would have to place the call for him". Commissioner Caster reported the matter to Chief Deputy Mitchell who confirmed it was not permissible for staff to prevent direct access to the Ombudsman line.

Commissioner Caster said that she was informed by either Chief McDonald or Chief Deputy Mitchell that the current Ombudsman (Ms. Gama) was removed from that assignment. Yet, Commissioner Caster said she has learned that was not the case and that she is still in the position. Chief Deputy Mitchell admitted that Ms. Gama continues to conduct her duties as the Ombudsman, but is currently being trained for a new assignment with the Department. In the meantime, the Department does not yet have a replacement lined up. Chief Deputy Mitchell stated there is only one person who covers the institutions and the group homes, making the job too massive for a single person.

Commissioner Caster said that she was informed by Chief Deputy Mitchell that the Supervisor at CJH reports that the youth state they have no difficulty reaching the Ombudsman. Yet, Commissioner Caster has spoken to many youths residing there who have told her the exact opposite and that none has ever received a return call. Chief Deputy Mitchell, herself, has calls into the Ombudsman to discuss, but none have been returned.

## **VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Gardner informed the Commission a new item regarding the Office of Probation Oversight Commission report was completed on Monday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018. President Gardner requested that the Commission review the information and will be discussing the report at the next meeting.

A poll was conducted by the Commission to rank a list of top 5 Commission priorities for 2018, the results are as follows:

1. How the Department is (re)allocating resources to post-detention services.
2. The need for additional dedicated Mental Health facilities.
3. A report from the Probation Department on its 5-year plan
4. Department reports on expanding the LA model.
5. A report from the Probation Department on how it tracks outcomes for youth under its supervision.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

President Gardner moved to adjourn the meeting. His motion was second by Commissioner Yamashiro. The motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.