



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION COMMISSION
9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY – DOWNEY – CALIFORNIA 90242
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MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 10, 2016

The regular meeting of the County of Los Angeles Probation Commission was held on Thursday, March 10, 2016, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, room 743, Los Angeles, California 90012

I. President Gardner called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

The following Commissioners were present:

1st Vice President Levine
2nd Vice President Hollopeter
3rd Vice President Seaver
Commissioner Martinez
Commissioner Kaplan
Commissioner Shutan
Commissioner Meredith
Commissioner Butler
Commissioner Mitchell
Commissioner Caster
Commissioner Holt
Commissioner Yamashiro
Commissioner Jones

The following Commissioners were excused:

Commissioner Bridge
Commissioner Hoover

The following staff and guests were present:

Luis Dominguez, Bureau Chief, Residential Treatment Bureau, Probation Department
Jessica Kaufman, Probation Department
Michelle Newell, 2nd Supervisorial District
Natasha Kamashian, Public Defender Office
Derrick Johnson, 2nd Supervisorial District
Sherry Gold, 3rd Supervisorial District
Jessica Gama, Ombudsman, Probation Department
Andrea Gordon, Local 721
Monica Garcia, Probation Department
Carol Claudroff, Probation Oversight Work Group
Cookie Lommel, Local 721
Patricia Rodriguez, Secretary, Probation Department

Commissioners

Joe Gardner-President,

Jan Levine-1st Vice President, Clayton Hollopeter-2nd Vice President, Daniel Seaver-3rd Vice President,
Donald Meredith-Sergeant at Arms, Azael Martinez-Sonoqui, Cyn Yamashiro, Esq.,
Fitzgerald Jones, Gabriella Holt, R.N. E.J.D. Jacqueline Caster, Esq, Jo Kaplan Esq,
Olivia E. Mitchell, Peter Shutan, Zachary Hoover, Elizabeth (Betsy) Butler

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Shutan moves approval of minutes for January 14, 2016. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Seaver. Minutes were approved.

The minutes of January 28, 2016 were not approved and are tabled until the next meeting.

III. LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Bureau Chief Dominguez reported due to suggestions by the youth councils and discussion at previous Probation Commission meetings the uniforms for youths will be changing to the following; Boys uniforms will consist of black pants with maroon polo shirt and girls will wear black pants with purple or pink polo shirts. Blue Jeans will also be provided to stage 4 youths as part of the Behavior Management program.

Bureau Chief Dominguez reported on the following; Brad Breach has been hired for the Escalation Training and will start on March 14, 2016. He will provide training to Directors, Supervisors and staff on March 15, 2016, staff will be training for eight days. Youth interviews are currently ongoing, the final report has not been issued. Bureau Chief Dominguez mentioned 15 youths graduated from Fire Camp at Camp Paige. The Department transition from the previous Forestry camp to Fire camp.

Jessica Gama, Ombudsman for the Los Angeles County Probation Department provided an overview of her operation. In the Mid 90's the Board of Supervisors approved recommendations from the civil grand jury establishing an Ombudsman office. Mrs. Gama stated as the Ombudsman her responsibility is to be independent, neutral and partial. Most calls being received are from youths, adults and staff.

Mrs. Gama stated youths populations are currently low. As a result Last month, five (5) calls for Detention Services Bureau were received and two (2) for Residential Treatment Bureau Services. In January 2016, no calls were received from Detention Services and only one (1) call for Residential Treatment Bureau Services. The complaints are for youth's currently waiting placement. The majority of calls received are from adult Probationers.

Additional cameras and surveillance cameras have been placed in the facilities. The establishment of the Child Abuse investigation unit was created 5 years ago. Complaints are submitted by mail, email, or telephone calls. Mrs. Gama works closely with the Internal Affairs Unit. The Ombudsman hot line is not a crisis line. On weekends and evenings calls go directly to voice mail. If Mrs. Gama or her Secretary are away from the office the calls go directly to voice mail. Youths have been informed to leave a detailed message.

Mrs. Gama mentioned the general trend; girls call more often than boys; the majority of calls are in the afternoon. The majority volume of calls are received in the months of April, August and September. Newly youths placed in group homes call frequently.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE (cont.)

Calls tend to increase when conducting onsite visits to group homes. Presentation are conducted once to twice a week in the group homes.

The categories of calls are case managements and living conditions. The majority of Adult complaints are AB-109, narcotics unit, and sex offenders. Mrs. Gama mentioned due to safety reasons the halls are not able to use bleach, Lysol or other harsh products to clean the facilities.

Commissioner Caster mentioned attempting to contact the Ombudsman hot line and has not been able to have someone answer the phone and always receiving a voicemail and has left multiple messages to obtain a return call and no one has attempted to return the call. Commissioner Caster inquired if there is a record of how many times a call is made to the phone number. Ms. Gama stated with the new phone system being placed in January calls are monitored.

Mrs. Gama would like to have additional staff but will need to provide justification for additional staff. She would like to have a grievance officer that would be able to handle institutions. Mrs. Gama stated when she attends other meetings or events it is only herself and her secretary. Ms. Gama is the only resource for the unit at this time.

Ms. Kauffman stated internal affairs cases are being directed to that unit with youths or parents allegations of misconduct. On the website there are complaint lines, assistant complaints as well as the (800) number.

Ms. Kauffman is the Senior Director of the Professional Standards Bureau, this includes Ombudsman, Internal Affairs, Performance Management, Background Unit, and County Policy of Equity. The County Policy of Equity and Internal Affairs unit provide all the investigations for the Department. Internal affairs unit is working on Child Abuse investigations and Internal Affairs cases. All issues regarding Institutions go through Child Abuse services, if the allegations are for misconduct or mistreatment of the youth. Once the investigation is reported the matter is handled immediately and someone is sent out to obtain photos, video, and medical documentation for the case. The Department conducts a thorough investigation of the allegation before it is sent to Internal Investigations. The documentation is sent to several reviewers, Office of Independence and County Counsel. The documentation is sent to all bureaus involved to ensure the accuracy of the documentation. If the case is warranted, appropriate disciplined and criminal filing is submitted to the District Attorney if the case is a serious abuse issue. There are several phone numbers as well as emails, to report an incident if someone would like to remain anonymous. It is very difficult to gather all the facts when someone reports an incident anonymously.

Commissioner Yamashiro would like Mrs. Gama to return in two weeks and provide what was originally contemplated by the Department for the Ombudsman's role and what type of staff is needed to provide assistance to her unit.

Ms. Kamashian reported several complaints from youths after visiting Camp Gonzales. She would like to obtain assistance from the Commission to sample the personal items the youth received at the camps. For example the shampoo, soap, and toothpaste. Ms. Kamashian will be testing the items to see if it is just the perception of Colgate versus Crest or if the products are deficient. She would like everyone to take the items for sampling and report back. She stated that perhaps the county can contract with a different vendor.

IV. PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE OVERSIGHT LETTER

Commissioner Yamashiro mentioned forwarding the draft to all Commissioner via-email. President Gardner thanked all Commissioners who assisted in providing their input in creating the letter. President Gardner wanted to have a compressive document to provide to the Justice Deputies and the working group that was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review the various Commissions. He would like all Commissioners to review the draft and if they would like to include any additions to the draft to please provide them via email to President Gardner.

Commissioner Holt introduced Carol Claudroff of the Oversight Committee. Ms. Claudroff mentioned she is looking forward to working with the Probation Commission. Commissioner Holt mentioned the committee is working on hiring a consultant to view Probation's how it works, the governments, and including everything that affects the Department nationally and internationally. The consultant will be attending the CAR meetings that meet on Wednesday's and the viewing on separating the Department into juvenile and Adult.

Commissioner Seaver recommended one of the ways to enhance the responses from the Department is for the Commission to provide a list once a year of recommendations. One example is to hire the Chief of Probation this will indicate to the Board of Supervisors the responsiveness and leadership. This would be a significant way to get the Departments attention in a way it has not been before. He does not want to get Chief Remington responsiveness to attend the meetings and have it disappear with the new Chief's arrival.

Commissioner Caster indicated agreeing as it makes the Commission more relevant. She would like to present the recommendations in person versus sending the document via email.

President Gardner stated adding the history of the Probation Commission will provide an overview to the Board of Supervisors and those who will be reviewing the document. President Gardner stated placing a need for resources is very important to advocate for. The resources will assist with Inspection reports, responses from the Department and other relevant documents.

President Gardner obtained information from Orange County Criminal Justice Commission and was surprised on all the resources they currently have. They obtain funding through the court system. They currently have the following staff, Analyst, paralegal staff and are a body of 15 Commissioners.

PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE OVERSIGHT LETTER (cont.)

The Commission is inquiring on obtaining a Program Analyst II, and legal processing specialist. President Gardner requested for all Commissioners to review the document.

Commissioner Yamashiro moved for any Commissioner who has any recommendations or edits to the current draft to submit them directly to President Gardner. He will take executive power to approve or deny any additions. President Gardner will draft the memo in its final form for the Commission to vote on the next meeting. Commissioner Seaver second the motion. Motion was approved.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Seaver inquire information regarding inspections. He would like to know how the Commission would address the non-specific Title 15 violations as they are the Commission's concern. Bureau Chief Dominguez stated that is a question for the Commission as to what they want their responses on the report. Bureau Chief Dominguez will respond to any question submitted. In regards to the management of the facility and hiring overtime. The Department has a responsibility to maintain and secure the facilities. The bureau needs to keep track of ratios, deliver the quality of programs for youth and establish a secure environment for the youth.

Commissioner Kaplan stated the resolution for solitary confinement motion. President Gardner would like all Commissioners to review the resolution and if any changes or discussions to please address it before the next meeting.

VI. FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION REPORTS-30 DAYS

Bureau Chief Dominguez provided the response to the progress reports updates provided by Commissioner Hollopeter. The following was reported:

Camp Munz

- Steam Kettle; replaced and installed on September 23, 2015
- Replacement of grill; a request to purchase a new grill was submitted to procurement in October 2015, the grill is on hold pending the re-opening of the camp.
- The need for a safety railing for the laundry dock; the safety railing has been installed in the back laundry dock on September 17, 2015.

Camp Munz/Mendenhall

- Athletic Courts were in need of resurfaced; the courts for both camps were completed on December 10, 2015.

Challenger Memorial Youth Center

- Challenger still on portable water; Challenger is no longer on a water well system with the exception of the fire suppression system and irrigation system. Water is now connected to the City of Lancaster.
- Therefore the water is in full compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency water quality Standards; completed January 28, 2015.

Camp Gonzales

- Benches needed to be replaced; new food carts were ordered and are in the service at the camp; completed February 8, 2016
- Food Carts needed to be replaced; new carts were ordered and are in the service at the camp; completed February 12, 2016.
- Blacktop recreation area needed to be resurfaced; Athletic Court is pending scope development by ISD and funding; funding pending.
- High School graduate jobs program; the program is called "Youth Probation Work Program." The program is being offered at Paige, DKC, Gonzales, Scott, Scudder and CMYC. The program provides support services to 16-18 year olds related to vocational training work experience and job placement; completed March 8, 2015.

All Camps

- Youth Councils; the youth councils have been established at all camps; will be meeting on a monthly bases. Changes have been incorporated as a result of their suggestions; on shoes, painting of the facilities, as well as new uniforms for the youths.
- Town Hall meetings; The Town Hall meetings are held at various days and times depending on the monthly activities of the camp schedules; they are held once a month; completed March 1, 2016.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Gardner mentioned the graduation ceremony for the New Probation Officers is March 31, 2016 at the Probation training center in Carson.

President Gardner stated the annual report has been completed by Commissioner Meredith. President Gardner would like all Commissioners to submit their monthly recap as soon as possible.

VIII. ADJOURMENT

Commissioner Seaver moved to adjourn the meeting. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Holt the motion was approved and the meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m.