



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



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF November 10, 2016**

The regular meeting of the County of Los Angeles Probation Commission was held on Thursday, November 10, 2016 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Room 140, Los Angeles, California 90012

I. President Gardner welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

He informed the Commissioners and all present that the meeting was being recorded. He asked that all identify themselves prior to any statements.

The following Commissioners were present:

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Hollopeter  
3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Seaver  
Commissioner Butler  
Commissioner Caster  
Commissioner Meredith  
Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Yamashiro  
Commissioner Mitchell  
Commissioner Holt  
Commissioner Shutan  
Commissioner Martinez

The following Commissioners were not present:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Levine  
Commissioner Hoover  
Commissioner Kaplan

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**Commissioners**

Joe Gardner-President,  
Jan Levine-1st Vice President, Clayton Hollopeter-2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Daniel Seaver-3<sup>rd</sup> 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, Betsy Butler

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The following staff were present:

Jennifer Owen, Director  
Patricia Rodriguez, Secretary  
Monica Garcia, Special Projects

The following individuals were present:

Carrie Clarke  
Natasha Khamashta

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

An update was provided by **Director Jennifer Owen** from **Residential Treatment Services Bureau** on behalf of Acting Deputy Chief Dave Mitchell and Acting Bureau Chief Sean Porter. She provided an update with respect to **training plan** for the Hope Center policy for camps. The Bureau has a grant under the reducing isolation in juvenile facilities program sponsored by OJJDP and the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators which has been ongoing since February, 2016. Prior to this process, the Special Housing Unit (SHU) policy was under review and has been through several iterations over this time period. After the Board motion in May, 2016 it was under review again with additions. It has also been reviewed by the Union. Under this grant, the Department had technical assistance of a consultant. This process has resulted in a draft Directive and a set of policies and procedures that go into more detail about what to do and what not to do. We have included prevention and intervention practices. We have incorporated the de-escalation training that staff has received and put the highlights of steps of the de-escalation process and provided guidance for what to do afterwards; emphasizing the role of the 2 hour window and that youth would have exercises during that time to help them process the behaviors.

We are now at the stage where we have a group of line staff and others in the work that serve as a steering committee or working group (DPO I, DPO II Supervisor and Directors) to review the Draft Directive line by line before the final review of the document. The goal is to have complete staff input and have discussions about questions and concerns. It is important to have all staff feel like they have had a voice in the development. If needed, Acting Deputy Chief Mitchell will ask the Union to review before finalizing.

The next phase of the meetings is to develop the training plan and determine how to translate the Directive to staff. There have been many quality conversations in the working group about how to communicate the history, the motivation for change and the how detrimental isolation is for youth; to talk about the changes that have already be taken on and show national data on the subject. The concept currently is to have 3 or 4 representatives from the working group at every training. They are planning for 40 training sessions, with 30 to 50 individuals in each, including staff of LA County Office of Education, Juvenile Courts Health Services and Department of Mental Health. We are hoping to replicate the model that has been used at Scott, Scudder and McNair where training has occurred including other agencies such as Juvenile Court Health Services, LA County Office of Education and Dept. of Mental Health. Having them in the room helps create synergy and understanding that allows for people to work well together. The group feels there is a lot of value in having everyone together in the room and going line by line together.

This is a major effort. Residential Treatment Services Bureau has about 1,000 people that need training; with partner agencies maybe between to 1200-1400 individuals that will receive the training. We will start in December. We will do a few trainings and check if the plan is working. We want to make adjustments where needed. We plan to spend a lot of time on what to do in a particular situation and have staff work through scenarios. We want them to really understand how these changes will have impacts on the way they do their work. We want staff to have time to talk about some issues that they may not always have time to work through and discuss. We expect to be very busy during the first quarter of next year doing those potential 40 sessions.

Commissioner Shutan is pleased that the Department of Mental Health is engaged and on board with the joint trainings and collaboration.

Director Owen reminds all that Mental Health has been a partner in Dialectical Behavior Therapy and de-escalation training which are both grounded in general mental health principles. In a crisis, it is vital that the principles around Dialectical Behavior Therapy and de-escalation have already been learned. This training changes the response to any crisis. Emotions have to be controlled before anyone can process behavior and feelings. We all learn that behavior may need work but the emotions are real and are valid.

Commissioner Seaver asks if the consultant is the same for the grant and the Dialectical Behavior Therapy training. Director Owen explains that the agency reviews and provides feedback from a best practice on a national level and the Dialectical Behavior Therapy trainer is Brad Beech who also supported the de-escalation training.

Commissioner Seaver expresses an ongoing concern that youth will get different services based on which camps they attend and what staff has had training. He wonders about the alignment and lack of alignment the training on the Hope Center Directive has with the Dialectical Behavior Therapy training. Director Owen states that the trainings do complement each other and it is a challenge to organize the multiple needs of training. Director Owen confirms that the Department expects a significant impact of this training on the relationship between staff and youth at the camps. All staff have had de-escalation training that has occurred March through July with some make up. One of the elements that is different in the current practice is that line staff has helped create the training. They have gone through the exercise of thinking out the impact of the policy on the behavior of staff in the camp and discussion about what support is needed. This is key to helping staff feel safe enough to engage fully with the youth and other staff. The big change is that staff does not go to isolation practices or HOPE Center first as a response. This new perspective is that something very serious had to have happened for there to be a decision that a youth needs to be placed in a locked room. Our goal is that at every session, staff will engage and play out the steps and response in their minds, have discussion with trainers and groups and understand the shift in practice. We do expect that this training will continue to reinforce the corrective experience and healthier behaviors.

Commissioner Seaver asks if the trainers are internal staff and explores the need to develop capacity in house. Our working group is our internal expertise. We want to continue to strengthen strategies for developing expertise in our staff and allow them to

learn the material and then support implementation and continue to engage with outside experts as well. Commissioner Seaver expressed a view that this training is of paramount importance to the culture change work. He and Commissioner Caster observed a fully trained Deputy Probation Officer on Dialectical Behavior Therapy and the skills were obvious in the ability to productively interact with a minor. The need to engage every partner in the work at a camp is urgent as LA County Office of Education often struggles with the rotation of substitutes throughout the camps as well. The lack of consistency among adults that engage in youth very much impacts the youth's ability to benefit from any treatment model or program.

Commissioner Jones expressed interest in understanding the process in place for evaluation of the success in the implementation of the trainings and any plans for incentive or commendations for staff that is modeling the desired changes and succeeding?

Director Owen shared that the staff celebration and support work is part of the Reducing Isolation grant. Some of this was in place, but the grant has helped us strengthen and formalize the process. We have learned from other jurisdictions and best practices. Some of the things that have discussed are: monthly and quarterly meetings and reviews between managers and line staff to re-enforce understanding and troubleshoot issues; staff recognitions and monthly recognitions at each camp; monthly support self-care and long term care (understanding that staff are traumatized by the institutional setting as well) and staff can talk and de brief with support from Mental Health.

Commissioner Jones recommends a parking spot for employee of the month as a celebration of performance and recommends that a formal evaluation accompany the process.

Commissioner Butler asked if an evaluation or evaluator is already part of the training effort, from the beginning. Director Owen shares that the LA Model has a built in evaluation system but she is unclear if the overall training effort is being supported by the Probation Research Unit or not; she is not aware of an evaluation component. The grant has a component that collects data in April and October for national standards review. The Department is providing data and participating in this review for data snapshots.

Commissioner Butler asks for information on the plans to return to training and examine how the implementation is going. Director Owen shares that the working group has discussed 6 month booster sessions which are two hour blocks, including the training in the academy for new staff and doing a full annual review. Commissioner Butler asked if training and wellness was being considered holistically. She shares that a Supervisor at camp expressed a desire to conduct yoga classes with youth and staff and that another Supervisor commented that of this ten staff, he knew three or four needed additional and intensive training. She encourages a personalized training for staff that can respond to individual needs. Director Owen recognized the need for differentiation. She shared that for the de-escalation training, a session was offered where camps were able to designate who attended. This kind of opportunity is being sought again. Director Owen confirms that all camp staff has been trained in de-escalation. Some camps have Dialectical Behavior Therapy. There is a desire to expand this training however, the funding mechanism is not in place yet. The pilot sites for the training were

Scott and McNair which were selected by the Board Motion. The whole Hope Center staff was trained at Challenger. About 250 staff were trained, including partner agencies.

Commissioner Seaver strongly encourages data collection to support the documentation of change in behavior that would help support the demand for additional resources to continue this important work. Additionally, he wants to underscore the importance of staff internalizing the work and building skills and support to be vulnerable and experience their own growth and development as a way to allow for youth to experience their own growth and development. He supports investing in the capacity of staff to empower their learning and engagement in culture change. Director Owen agrees that all the research on culture change underscores that this is change that will be seen over time and that all the support that is provided will translate into greater understanding among all uses and most favorable outcomes. It is important to stay the course and support the process.

Commissioner Martinez asks Director Owen to expand on the concept of self-care for the Deputies and staff. The recognition of their own history. The Think Trauma trainer used the “ACE score – Adverse Childhood Experiences”; a higher ACE score is linked to greater risks. The staff is asked to take the quiz and identify their own experiences. She takes staff through the experiences and they connect past experiences and behaviors. She models how to take care of self while providing support to another. She uses video and vignettes to explore life perspective that relates to job performance. She encourages awareness of attitudes, behaviors and responses. She provokes thoughts about how are people taking care of themselves in order to provide high quality services.

Commissioner Jones expresses the recognition of stress of the job on the lives of staff.

Commissioner Butler expresses that many staff may have had trauma and indeed have different levels of self- understanding. She also shared that there is growing advocacy and interest in understanding experience of people in custody to truly understand what has happened to them.

Commissioner Caster adds that there is research that confirms the impact of trauma on the brain and development. She wondered if this information was included in the training. Director Owen confirms that one section of the training on trauma includes development and the impact of trauma.

Commissioner Mitchell wants to express that many people overcome adversity in childhood and various traumas. Human beings are resilient and with appropriate support and investment, people do find health and find their path to productive lives.

Director Owen shared that the next module of training reframes response to trauma as coping skills and focus on future choices and how more adaptive coping skills can take their place.

Commissioner Hollopeter expresses recognition of the exciting work being done in training. He cautions that the facilities have not been discussed. He shares his experience that he visits a hall with nice space in the Hope Center but no youth are

there and the living units are in horrible condition. Director Owen restricts her comments to the Bureau she works in. She recognizes that indeed the work to improve Hope Center has created an improved facility where practices are restricting youth from using that space. In Residential Treatment Services Bureau, the conversation has been about how can the “comfort rooms” be created outside of the Hope Center? How does scents and room color impact self-soothing and the cooling off process? The Board motion initiated the facility re-design but now the bureau is discussing how the practices and the facility can support desired outcomes.

Commissioner Martinez inquires if the Hope Center are staffed as needed? Director Owen states that although she is not part of the staffing team, she knows that the camps because of their layout have more “cool down” space. She knows that at Challenger, the cool down periods have taken place in the dayroom because of space. Commissioner Martinez expresses concern that an unanticipated consequence of the Hope Center, is that there is an increase in group punishments and alternatives. Director Owen confirms that there is a need for “balance” and for staff to make decisions about early intervention and averting a crisis. If the only thing that is being measured is time in the Hope Center then that will not be the full picture of how staff is implementing the new policy.

Commissioner Seaver expresses a desire to learn more about how the Halls are dealing with these changes in policy and practices. He would like to know how they are supporting staff and what impacts they are struggling with. He would like to see the data from halls and the practices that are benefiting youth. He expressed understanding for the challenges of scheduling but would very much like to hear from a representative from Detention Services Bureau. He concludes stating that the result of all of this training is the increase of compassion.

Director Owen confirms that juvenile hall staff was present for some of the Dialectical Behavioral Therapy and trauma classes.

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

President Gardner reminds all that he has been working with Lisa Southwell to bring a training to Los Angeles. The Board of State and Community Corrections will be holding a special training in Southern California regarding the Inspection Process of facilities. He asks all to consider attending and to please RSVP to Patricia or Monica.

Opportunities for all Commissioners are as follow:

Session 1 – Monday, November 28, 2016, 9:00 -12:00 in San Bernardino

Session 2 – Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 9:00-12:00 in Los Angeles

Session 3 – Wednesday, November 30, 2016, 1:00 -4:00 in Los Angeles

President Gardner will attend Session 2.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

President Gardner reminded all to submit activity for the Monthly Recap report. It is very valuable to hear from every Commissioner. It helps build the annual report due to the Supervisors.

Commissioner Caster returned to her request for information on the New Direction program. She expressed frustration that this request has been outstanding since February of this year. Monica Garcia acknowledged that Bureau Chief Sharon Harada communicated that she was unable to attend the meeting of Nov. 10 or to provide a written update at this time but she was willing to come at a future meeting. President Gardner confirmed that the item stays on the pending report list.

#### **V.COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORTS**

Commissioner Jones expressed a desire to include who is present when inspection reports are presented in the Monthly Recap.

#### **VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Jones moved to accept minutes of Oct. 27, 2016 for. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Butler and minutes were approved.

#### **VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Gardner reminded all that the Commission would elect officers during the meeting of December 8, 2016. Commissioners discussed impact of the incoming Supervisors.

Commissioner Seaver moves to nominate Joe Gardner for a second term. Commissioner Shutan seconded that motion. Commissioner Gardner expressed willingness to serve for a second term. Nominations will remain open until the next meeting on December 8, 2016.

Meeting of November 24, 2016 has been cancelled due to the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Commissioner Martinez shared his pride and satisfaction to have the opportunity to build the Second Chance Program inside of Probation with partners at LAPD and La Vida program from LA Sherriff. Today, he will honor three distinguished partners: Supervising Deputy LeCour Harrison, Div. Director 3 Jack Sims, and Asst. Superintendent James Phelps. He expressed gratitude for the people who have helped create an opportunity for youth from the community to come inside the facility and hear firsthand from youth that are detained. The kids from the neighborhood are in a 12 week Diversion Program, through PALs (Police Activities League). The experience is intense and makes an impact. The program has been both at Los Padrinos and Central. They program is done 2 or 3 times a year for 20 youth at a time. Commissioner Martinez is confident that youth are responsive to the program because he sees youth and interacts with them.

In addition, through Second Chance, Commissioner Martinez and his partners, bring games, toys, puzzles and sports equipment to the camps and halls. He brings these tokens to the youth with powerful communication that people care about them and believe they can turn their lives around.

Commissioner Meredith recommended connecting with Carrie Webb to put a positive spotlight on the leaders being recognized.

Commissioner Caster affirms that these items were being requested during their last visit at Gonzales.

Commissioner Martinez ends by stating that he makes it a point to remind the youth that they are the only ones that decide when change comes to their life. They have the power to accept the services and make a choice about their own transformation.

Commissioner Yamashiro restates need to set a date for the follow up presentation regarding the WIC 236 expenditures. Commissioner Holt agrees that this is very important to the Probation Commission. Many are concerned as this WIC 236 effort as it came up a lot during the Probation Working group. Commissioner Caster adds that this concern continues to come up for the New Direction Project as well that is funded through the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act. The absence of clear communication signals absence of transparency from the Department.

Commissioner Seaver requested that the Final Oversight Report & Recommendation be forwarded to President Gardner so that it is distributed to all Commissioners.

President Commissioner assures the Commissioners that he will continue to make requests from the pending items list.

Commissioner Mitchell expressed support for the election of Joe Gardner as President for 2017. She will not be present at the next meeting and is unable to vote by proxy.

### **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioners Shutan moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Seaver seconded the motion and meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.