



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



**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 8, 2017**

The regular meeting of the County of Los Angeles Probation Commission was held on Thursday, June 8, 2017 at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, First Floor, Room 140A, Los Angeles, California 90012

I. Commission President Joe Gardner welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 10:05 A. M. He informed the Commissioners and all present that meeting was being recorded. He asked that all identify themselves prior to making any statements and asked Commissioners to hold questions until presentations are completed.

The following Commissioners were present:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Jan Levine  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Seaver  
Commissioner Butler  
Commissioner Caster  
Commissioner Lowenthal  
Commissioner Mitchell  
Commissioner Saab  
Commissioner Hoover

The following Commissioners were not present:

Commissioner Martinez  
Commissioner Kaplan  
Commissioner Meredith  
Commissioner Shutan  
Commissioner Richardson  
Commissioner Yamashiro

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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. Bonnie Lowenthal (Ret.) Hon. Rex Richardson, Hon. Alex Saab, Esq.

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The following staff were present:

Terri McDonald, Chief Probation Officer  
Sheila Mitchell, Asst. Chief Probation Officer  
Felicia Cotton, Deputy Chief  
Dave Mitchell, Acting Deputy Chief Probation Officer  
Luis Dominguez, Bureau Chief  
Pamela Pease  
Andrew Hurley, County Counsel  
Vince Yung  
Patricia Rodriguez  
Monica Garcia

The following individuals were present:

Natasha Khamashta  
Maureen Pacheco

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

Assistant Chief Sheila Michelle introduced Bureau Chief Luis Dominguez and Pamala Pease who will present the Continuum of Care Reform. This is a significant change in how the Department engages with group homes. This legislation, AB 403(Stone) began implementation on January 1, 2017. It is an effort that goes back to January 2015 where a CDSS presented a report was presented to the legislature with the intention of changing group home and setting expectations. Leadership is shifting focus towards home based care. Many youths were spending two to five years in group homes.

What is the focus of CCR? Basically, reducing the length of time that youth are in group homes and reducing the length of time to achieve permanency. One of the changes in this work is the pay structure for group homes. Each group home is paid \$12, 036 per child per month for all levels 12-14. All group homes have until December 31, 2017 to comply with new requirements. If any agency needs more time, they can make that request to the State through the Probation Department.

Group homes are now required to obtain a contract from the County, be nationally accredited and submit a program statement to the County that then will be reviewed and sent to the State. There are 60 current providers that can embrace the changes in policy and practice and become short term residential treatment centers. The Probation Department has received 26 program statements to date out of those 60 contracts that exist. Out of the 26 program statements received, 7 have been approved and routed to the State. 25 additional program statements have been received from Foster Family Agencies (FFA). The submission of these program statements indicates that these group

homes are moving into short term residential treatment placements which means 6 months. Any case requiring over 6 months of program will require a second level approval by the Chief Probation Officer or her designee. There are currently 610 children under a suitable placement group home order and another 200 youth on a placement order with a relative or non-relative placement order.

Chief Mitchell informed the Commission that this shift in practice and policy was in part a result of a case where a child in LA County was in a group home for most of her life and did not have a successful outcome and there were many more children not experiencing successful outcomes. The reality is that many providers may not be able to continue to operate since they now need to be certified as to their ability provide mental health services and be nationally accredited. Bureau Chief Dominguez indicated that the County is providing some technical assistance but that some small nonprofits will close and others will merge with larger organization because of the new requirements.

The Department's goal is to successfully transition from short term care to placement with a family whenever possible. The focus is for the youth to be with families and build their health in their own ecology. There will be exceptions, particularly with cases of substance abuse or sexual abuse where treatment programs are longer than 6 months.

All youth being placed will have their case reviewed by an interagency placement committee, composed of representatives from Probation, Mental Health, Juvenile Court Health Services, and some community based organization. Prior to placement, there is a requirement for a Child-Family Team Meeting within 60 days of the placement order. This is like the Multidisciplinary Team strategy that Probation manages within Residential Treatment Services Bureau. In addition to the LAARC, which is the current assessment being used, there are two assessments that must be used as approved by the State which are the Child Adolescents Strengths (CAS) and the Treatment Outcome Package (TOPS). These are both being piloted in LA County. The Department is also providing other resources for families and using media to recruit more families.

Now, every group home must provide a standard level of services. Every Short Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) facility must be aligned with the theory of 'first placement, best placement' and then allow for a move to a step down. The rate of compensation has been set across the board so that the basic standard of care is of high quality to support the stabilization for the young person in the shortest time possible. This effort is a significant change for all and requires great collaboration between Probation, Mental Health and the Dept. of Children and Family Service.

Bureau Chief Dominguez informed that the relative placement process has changed. There is training available for families as well as psychosocial assessments for families which is a new requirement. There is also increased

funding for the training and the aftercare component. There are several pieces of the work that continue in transition but the changes have begun in important ways.

Commissioner Mitchell expressed concern around recruitment and support for the Mental Health providers in this model since there is great demand for these professionals in the work to address homeless populations and other high need populations.

Commissioner Lowenthal expressed gratitude for the work to design different settings and opportunities for stabilization and permanency for Probation youth. She also asked for a sample day in the life of a young person at this kind of facility. Bureau Chief Dominguez explained that every facility would provide the list of activities in their program statement such as education, enrichment, individual therapy, family therapy and other personalized services. To provide services today, the agency must be involved in the process to become accredited.

Assistant Chief Mitchell summarized that the basis for the change in law and requirements is that the way congregate care was being offered did not work for young people. Ms. Pease explained that any extension is a possibility as there are only 3 entities accrediting programs as part of CCR which has added tremendous strain to the process. If an agency would earn an extension, it is because all the requirements have been met at the County level. Large organizations such as the Optimist and Phoenix House have already been accredited.

Commissioner Caster inquired if youth in placement are being processed in cross over court and urged great attention to coordination of services. Ms. Pease shared that this transition has caused new protocols to be developed and one of the issues being addressed is representation for crossover youth. She stressed that representation that exists today is still available and that all efforts to coordinate services are meant to benefit young people.

Discussion continued around the importance of having adequate assessments, preserving the rights and privacy of youth while working to better understand mental health needs of youth. Assistant Chief Mitchell concluded this discussion by stating that there is agreement that the LAARC assessment needs to be updated. There is great awareness about the tension of 'labeling' a youngster and providing adequate care. The changes in group homes are meant to support youth who are not high risk to themselves or others. There is no interest in short term placements that do not meet needs of youth. It is important to distinguish from youth who need support and youth who are a risk to public safety.

Assistant Chief Mitchell shared that any assessment post disposition would be used for the purposes of assisting the youth and establishing appropriateness of services.

**Commissioner Lowenthal moved that all assessments be used in the advantage of the youth, that the Department ensure that all safeguards are in place to protect the privacy of youth during the process of establishing a suitable placement. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion was passed with one abstention by Commissioner Hoover.**

**Chief McDonald** stopped in to join the meeting. Chief McDonald responded to a question about the report from the State on the conditions of facilities. She stated that while she is not concerned about any facility being shut down by the State and declared unsuitable. She has concerns overall and most urgently about Central Juvenile Hall. Mr. Johnson from MSB, proposed an \$11 million-dollar plan to Central Juvenile Hall and a request to the Board of Supervisors for increased funding for more staff at Central Juvenile Hall to support the work. She also shared that there is an effort to create an audit team to self-audit, self-correct and self-evaluate. The fiscal challenges are real and require a funding allocation for supervisor to be awake during graveyard. The policy changes are not difficult but the funding challenges are serious and difficult.

Commissioner Seaver encouraged Chief McDonald and leadership to make public plans about closing facilities. During his visit to Camp Gonzales, he heard several adults express concern over rumors that Camp Gonzales will close. Chief McDonald appreciated that angst experienced by employees and committed to share a plan once it was appropriate to do so. She shared that like all agencies, information that is made public unofficially does impact employees and adds to the levels of anxiety to those impacted. While she believes, consolidation is necessary and will strengthen services for youth and families, she is also sensitive that employees and their families are rightfully anxious. She underscored the point that once there is an approval from the Board to share a plan, Chief Mitchell will do so.

Chief McDonald express gratitude to the Commission for their work and invited all to join the Grand Opening of Campus Kilpatrick on June 30, 2017.

Deputy Chief Felicia Cotton introduced **the Parks After Dark (PAD)** partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The Parks After Dark Model is a proven model that provides a community based framework for prevention and intervention. This year the program is being expanded and is an example of a non-traditional approach to engage with youth and families.

The Program offers extended summer evening hours at parks in disadvantaged communities with high rates of crime, obesity prevalence and system involved youth. It is an 8-week program that offers services from Thursday through Saturday from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm. This is a deliberate response to higher rates of crime over the summer.

**Tina Magakyan, Department of Parks and Recreation and Kelly Fischer, Department of Public Health** thanked the Probation Department for the partnership that has allowed this program to serve more youth and families. This effort works to promote positive relationships with people, agencies and services through mutual benefits and overall increased wellbeing. The location of community parks is strategic as people are not being asked to walk into government buildings. This collaboration includes the Board of Supervisors, Chief Executive Officer, Public Health, Sheriff, Probation and local organizations.

Activities include recreational and entertainment/ cultural programming, education and career programming, Deputy Sheriff's patrol and participate in Parks After Dark activities. Resource fairs will happen at 23 parks involved in the initiative. The program began in 3 parks in 2010; grew to 6 parks in 2012; 9 parks in 2015 and expanded to 21 in 2016 and grows to 23 parks in 2017. All participating parks are in unincorporated parts of the County.

Kelly Fischer shared outcomes of the evaluation of the program in 2016. Most of the PAD attendees in 2016 were ages 22 and older (66%), female (66%), Latino/a (71%); 52% had incomes less than \$20,000 and 75% were insured. Most people who attended PAD expressed increased social cohesion and family bonding. 97% of participants felt safe at PAD and 95% agreed that PAD improved relationship with deputies.

Ms. Fischer also shared that Parks After Dark parks are in communities with high numbers of Probation and Department of Children and Families Services youth. In 2016, there were more than 175,000 visits, 94% of participants would recommend to others or participate again. Lastly, the Parks After Dark Model builds cross sector collaboration where agencies benefit from this setting to reach target populations and for Probation, it is an investment in prevention.

The budgeted costs for 2016 for the Parks After Dark program was \$2,301,000. The total cost avoided was projected at \$6,376,000 which was made up of \$510,000 from estimated chronic disease costs avoided and \$5,866,000 from estimated criminal justice costs avoided.

Commissioners discussed the importance of the various agencies working together to find ways to engage with clients. Chief Mitchell shared that she was very pleased with the continued collaboration with this initiative. Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) funds are used well in supporting this effort.

For more information Ms. Magakyan, PAD Coordinator can be reached at [Tmagakyan@parks.lacounty.gov](mailto:Tmagakyan@parks.lacounty.gov) and Ms. Fischer, Staff Analyst from Department of Public Health can be reached at [Kfischer@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:Kfischer@ph.lacounty.gov).

### **III. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no discussion under New Business.

### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

President Gardner shared that there would be no report from the Mental Health Committee and called on Commissioner Levine to present the update of the New Directions letter of concern committee.

Commissioner Levine introduced the draft letter to Chief McDonald regarding a JJCPA funds and concerns on the process. She noted that the letter is focused on the JJCPA funds and the allocation of these monies. She also indicates that the letter acknowledges that the concern identified in this process existed prior to the current leadership being in place. She notes that since Chief McDonald and Chief Mitchell have taken their posts, there has been greater levels of oversight and controls on these funds.

The request of the letter is to 1) update the Probation Commission every two months on the status and timeline of the Resources Development Associates Study, 2) consideration be given to creating a seat for at least one Probation Commissioner on the Community Advisory Committee and 3) that a thorough investigation be initiated to understand how \$8 million dollars of JJCPA funds allocated to the New Direction program designed to serve 240 youth over three years has yet to serve a single youth. Commissioner Levine also identified the Commission has sought a response from Bureau Chief Harada to understand the expenditures without success.

Commissioner Caster reiterated the great concern of the delayed response from the Department and the lack of satisfactory information presented when a response was received. She continues to seek an explanation to the per child expenditure for the New Direction Program. She added that there is great frustration with the process and the response. Commissioner Caster also noted that this issue pre-dates Chief McDonald and Chief Mitchell.

President Gardner explained that the ongoing issue has resulted in a written communication about the concern. He accepts Chief Mitchell's word that the issue will be addressed and welcomes the response.

Chief Mitchell acknowledged that she has understood there is a clear concern with the JJCPA funds from the perspective of the Commission. She agreed to provide the update that is requested. She shared that the Community Advisory Committee was formed in March. These are public meetings and she will make sure that the Commissioners are added to the distribution list and that those interested can absolutely attend. Lastly, Chief Mitchell informed the Commission

that Bureau Chief Harada asked if she should be present at today's meeting. Chief Mitchell excused here from being present as Chief Mitchell was aware of the letter and will accept responsibility to respond.

President Gardner and other Commissioners thanked Chief Mitchell for her willingness to provide the Commission with a response.

**Commissioner Lowenthal made motion to explore a change in bylaws to allow for the Commission to meet once a month.** She asked County Counsel to provide the Commission with steps necessary to change the frequency of the meeting. Andrew Hurley accepted the charge to return with the information. The motion will be added to the agenda at a future meeting.

Commissioner Seaver stressed the need to consider a longer meeting if the frequency of the meeting changed. Commissioner Levine thought it would be difficult to manage the amount of information and activity by meeting once a month. Commissioner Caster expressed the need to be kept up-to-date and preferred meeting twice a month. Commissioner Butler shared that the timing of the change in the frequency of the meeting should be considered.

Commissioner Lowenthal also shared that the Commission can consider a change in structure to support the work of the Commission. She thanked all for their perspectives.

President Gardner shared that he is comfortable with the two meetings per month. He is open to any solution that reduces barriers to participation. He expects County Counsel will provide guidance in a few weeks.

## **V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Mitchell moved approval of the minutes of **May 11, 2017**. Commissioner Levine seconded and minutes were approved.

## **VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Kilpatrick Grand Opening ceremony will be on June, 30, 2017
- California Probation, Parole, & Correctional Association 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Conference, 9-12-17, Queen Mary, Long Beach
- Reminder to email activities for Quarterly Recap Submissions. The 2<sup>nd</sup> report will include information through June 30, 2017.



- Commission Mitchell has shared with all a Community Resource Guide for Immigrant Angelenos. It is available in Spanish and English on the website.
- Commissioner Hoover publicly appreciated Chief Mitchell's participation at a community justice forum with many community partners.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioners Seaver moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lowenthal seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:59 A.M.