



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PROBATION COMMISSION  
KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION, ROOM 140A  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CA 90012**



**Thursday, May 23, 2019**

**10:00 AM**

Present: Commission President Joe Gardner, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Jan Levine, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Betsy Butler, Commissioner Donald Meredith, Commissioner Daniel Seaver, Commissioner Azael Martinez-Sonoqui, Commissioner Jacqueline Caster, Commissioner Randy Herbon, Commissioner Gale Swartz

**Attachment:** [Audio Transcript](#)

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Commission President Joe Gardner welcomed all and called the meeting to order. President Gardner informed the Commissioners and all present that the meeting was being recorded and asked that all identify themselves prior to making any statements.

1. Excused Absences:
2. Roll Call:

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. N/A

**III. PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

4. **Request to the Probation Department to provide training manual and information on number of master trainers at the Department.**

The Probation Department provided a very large amount of documentation. It will take some time to go through all documents received. Chief Probation Officer Terri McDonald has requested funding to staff a policy/procedure unit. At first glance the Commission noted the following concerns:

- Many typos observed throughout the policy manuals and directives provided;
- The SCM policy is very lengthy;
- Policy for taking staff offline is vague with no specific guidelines;
- The list of allowable personal items for youth is outdated;
- Many antiquated policies.

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**Commissioners**

Joe Gardner-President,

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

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A motion was raised and unanimously approved to create a subcommittee to review the Probation Department's policies and procedures. The subcommittee will include Commissioners Donald Meredith, Betsy Butler, Gail Swartz, and Jan Levine. The newly created subcommittee will be an agenda item for the Probation Commission meeting scheduled for June 24, 2019.

**Speaker(s):** N/A

**Action Item(s):** Add policies and procedures subcommittee to agenda for June 24, 2019 meeting.

**5. Response from the Probation Department to the following documents from Commissioner Herbon:**

- "Questions, Suggestions etc. for Probation HR"
- "Monthly/Quarterly Reports for Probation"

The information requested has not been provided and the Probation Department's HR representative was not present to speak on this matter. Item tabled for future meeting.

**6. Report back from the Probation Department concerning staffing levels and what is being done about it. Questions include:**

- How many on FMLA
- Administrative suspension pending investigation
- Data on other absenteeism.

Only a portion of the requested information was received and no Probation Department representative was present to speak regarding this matter. Item tabled for future meeting.

**7. Response and report from the Probation Department on training, including the number of new hires going through or graduating from training in 2018 compared with the number of those staff still on the job as of April 2019.**

- Request also includes break down of numbers by academy class.

The information requested has not been provided and no Probation Department representative was present to speak regarding this matter. Item tabled for future meeting.

**8. Additional follow-up report from the Probation Department regarding programming in Central Juvenile Hall, including activity for Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.**

Director Jocelyn Roman provided the requested information regarding programming. An updated programs list, which included updated contacts, phone numbers, and email addresses was provided to the Commission. Director Roman provided Central Juvenile Hall's program calendar for May 29<sup>th</sup> and encouraged the Commission to come and view the programming for the day. Director Roman also updated the commission on two grievances previous.

**Speaker(s):** Bernardo Nieto, Senior Probation Director  
Jocelyn Roman, Probation Director

**Action Item(s):** The Commission asked the Probation Department to explore providing more stimulating academic curriculum for youth who have graduated and are waiting for the new cycle of college courses to begin.

**The Commission will conduct routine inquiries and discussion on the topics listed above, and will take action, as necessary, such as receiving reports and other materials.**

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

No new business.

**Action Item(s):** No action items requested.

#### **V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND UPDATES**

Commissioner Azael Martinez-Sonoqui reported on his recent Sunday visit to Central Juvenile Hall. He was escorted around by Director Bacon. There were 62-line staff on duty (49 full duty and 13 work hardening) and 272 youth present. Commissioner Martinez observed the staff engaged with the youth. Youth that were not receiving a visit with family were engaged with staff playing cards and other games. He spoke with several youth and no one voiced any complaints.

The Commission sent a letter to Chief Probation Officer, Terri McDonald, with a copy to the Justice Deputies. The letter expressed concerns the Commission has regarding staff and complaints the Commission has fielded from line staff. As of this date no response has been received from the Chief.

The Commission is hearing from Community Based Organizations that the environment in juvenile facilities is unstable and is stoking fear among members. The Commission voiced concern that there is not enough gang intervention going on.

**Action Item(s):** No action items requested.

#### **VI. BUSINESS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

##### **9. Create list of top priorities for the Probation Oversight Commission**

The Commission discussed the below listed top priorities and will compile a top ten list which will be circulated for review before the next meeting.

- Advocate for funding so that the Department can staff a Policy and Procedure Unit
- Request the Probation Department to open a dedicated juvenile mental health treatment facility
- Independent Counsel
- Subpoena power

- Funding to support a data collection system/record management with real time data inquiry capabilities
- Recruitment and training of Probation staff
- Independent grievance system
- Robust programming for incarcerated youth
- 24/7 mental health services at every juvenile facility
- An appropriate budget for the Commission to be effective
- Require a Probation Department representative at every Probation Commission Meeting
- Provide an annual scorecard on the Probation Chief's performance
- Additional suggestions should be sent to Commissioner Herbon.

**Action Item(s):** Top ten list of priorities to be finalized and distributed by Commissioner Herbon.

## **VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

- 10. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest within the subject matter of the Commission. Three (3) minutes are allowed, per person, on each agenda and non-agenda item with a total of 15 minutes for public comments unless the Commission sets alternative limits or other allocations of time.**

In response the Commissions concern regarding the lack of a consistent Probation Department representation, Probation Director Jack Sims informed the Commission that he attends the meetings on behalf of the Department. The Commission advised Director Sims that he should be seated at the front table when attending future meetings instead of sitting in the general audience.

Jim Schoengarth voiced concerns about officer safety and spoke of his recent visit to a San Diego juvenile incarceration facility. He provided the names and contact information of two gang activity experts, Supervising Deputy Probation Officers Eduardo Cordero and Daniel Ramirez, and encouraged the Commission to invite them to come and speak.

**Speaker(s):** Jack Sims, Probation Director  
Jim Schoengarth, Local 721 – SEIU President

**Action Item(s):** Jim Schoengarth will provide the Commission with the information he received during his visit to San Diego juvenile incarceration facility and provide his overall perspective on their program.

## **VIII. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 13, 2019**

- 11. See details below**

The Commission announced all routine business for the next meeting scheduled for June

13, 2019, will be tabled to accommodate a visit from the Probation Reform and Implementation Team.

**IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**12. The Probation Commission will table its routine business to accommodate a visit from the Probation Reform and Implementation Team and interested members of the public. The details regarding location and time for this collaborative meeting will be announced in the coming days. Watch for a future update.**

- The Commission announced the meeting with the Probation Reform and Implementation Team, will be held at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 374A, on June 13, 2019, at 10:00 AM.
- The Commission encouraged all to attend the Juvenile Court and Community Schools and Special Education Programs graduation for high school diplomas. The graduation will be held at the Walt Disney Concert Hall on June 20, 2019, at 4:00 PM. An informational flyer was distributed.
- The Commission shared information about the upcoming Government in Motion Leadership Conference. The conference will include representatives from the Board of Supervisors (BOS), Internal Services Department (ISD), the Los Angeles County Library, and The Department of Human Resources. Those interested in attending the conference on June 5, 2019, should contact Commissioner Gardner.

**X. ADJOURNED**

The meeting was adjourned.