



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



Thursday, April 25, 2019

10:00 AM

Present: Commission President Gardner, 1st Vice President Levine, 2nd Vice President Commissioner Butler, Commissioner Herbon, Commissioner Swartz, Commissioner Seaver, Commissioner Caster, Commissioner Shutan, Commissioner Kaplan, Chief Deputy Sheila Mitchell, Deputy Director Luis Dominguez, Bureau Chief Dalila Alcantara

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. Commission approved the meeting minutes for February 28, 2019

III. PROBATION DEPARTMENT

4. **Probation Department response to staffing issues at Camp Paige.**

Chief Deputy Sheila Mitchell addressed the conditions and concerns staff may have in the juvenile halls and camps. The Probation Department (Probation or Department) will hold a townhall meeting Thursday May 2, 2019 to address concerns and fears regarding staff losing their jobs.

Probation discussed the usage of certain tools such as mechanical restraints and Oleoresin capsicum (OC spray). Employees will not be fired if actions fall within policy guidelines.

Probation discussed the closure of Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall on July 31, 2019; staff and minors will be relocated to Barry J. Nidorf and Central juvenile halls. The Department is working with labor unions and staff to address hardships created by closures at these facilities.

Commissioners

Joe Gardner-President,

Hon. Jan Levine (Ret.)-1st Vice President, Hon. Betsy Butler (Ret.), – 2nd 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

Assaults are down from 2017 to 2018 and the Department strives to collaborate with staff and juveniles to improve safety for both parties.

Probation emphasized the great work that staff and the Commissioners do in collaborating with the Department to resolve issues. Probation encourages staff/youth in the halls to strengthen relationships with the Commission. The Board of Supervisors directed Probation to phase out OC spray; which has created a critical low staffing pattern that has become challenging. The Department plans to continue to collaborate with the Commission.

Deputy Director Dominguez discussed concerns at Camp Paige regarding low staff attendance due to Family Medical Leave Act, industrial accidents, and medical investigation.

Speaker(s): Sheila Mitchell, Probation Chief Deputy;
Luis Dominguez, Deputy Director

Action Item(s): Commissioner Meredith to provide detailed report his observations.

5. Progress report regarding the Probation Department's response regarding Nidorf inspection conducted by Commissioner Levine.

Commissioner Levine thanked Chief Deputy Mitchell for her aspirational comments and commitment to improve the needs of the Department.

The Commission visited Central juvenile hall with a member of the media and made note of Superintendent Alex Nieto's openness and transparency.

The Commission observed worsening conditions at Barry J. Nidorf while conducting an inspection. President Gardner observed destruction of the facility interior, graffiti on the walls, broken telephones, a broken window, ceiling tiles ripped down, and appeared to uninhabitable. Staff moved youth to another location within the facility for safety. The Commission expressed concerns about daily fights and safety challenges to staff/youth. Probation stated that staffing ratios are aligned with the allocated budget and right size ratios. Staff are concerned about being held over due to staffing shortages. Absenteeism causes staff to suffer a lack of rest and neglect of basic personal needs.

Probation informed the Commission that they are working closely with the labor unions when announcing the closure of a facility and will conduct accelerated job fairs to allow staff to apply for transfers.

The Commission expressed concerns about the lack of resolution of repetitive issues and the Departments failure to provide requested documentation.

The Department continues to take in youth at Los Padrinos instead of directing them

to Barry J or Central juvenile halls.

Commission inquired why no DSO training academies were scheduled and inquired what type of training staff are receiving to prepare them to handle incidents that occur within the halls/camps. The Department is working on reallocating staff overflow from closures and provide staff with trauma informed de-escalation training.

The Department is collaborating UCLA to conduct focus groups with stake holders and staff to develop ongoing trauma informed training programs.

The Commission inquired about the role the union is playing in assisting the Department with getting staff back to work. Union members are encouraged to return to work but refuse to return due to unsafe working conditions.

Deputy Chief Mitchell reiterated that staff will not be fired for doing their job; as long as they adhere to Department policy.

Speaker(s): Sheila Mitchell, Probation Chief Deputy
Luis Dominguez, Deputy Director
Hans Liang, President of Local 685,
Stacy Ford, Union Vice President

Action Item(s): President Gardner to forward a letter to Chief McDonald, the Board of Supervisors, the Commission, and the letter will be available to the public and posted on the Commission website.

The Commission requested a progress report on the Departments work with UCLA efforts to develop a trauma informed training every three months.

6 Report back from the Probation Department regarding programming in camps and halls.

The Department provided a list of programs that will include a description.

The programming report is inconclusive and will be revisit at the next meeting.

Speaker(s): Luis Dominguez, Probation Deputy Director

Action Item(s): Probation to provide an updated programming report to include time, date, frequency, duration of the program in each facility.

7. Probation Department response to Los Padrinos report by Commissioner Herbon

The Commission expressed concerns about hold overs and staff assaults.

Action Item(s): Commission requests a list of scheduled trainings, academies, and a visitation schedule for observation.

Probation to provide the Commission with a schedule of townhall meetings.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

8. Report of visit to Central Juvenile Hall by Commissioners Levine and Caster.

Commissioner Levine and Caster inquired why no grievances were filed when use of force is applied or youth are sent to the Hope Center. Deputy Director Dominguez explained the child safety assessment process prepared by an independent supervisor in which grievance concerns (if any) are address immediately. Deputy Director Dalila Alcantara stated that the grievances process is utilized when youth feel they have an unmet need/concern.

The Commission recommended procuring a third-party system to tracking grievances.

Speaker(s): Luis Dominguez, Probation Deputy Director
Dalila Alcantara, Probation Bureau Chief

Action Item(s): Probation to provide the Commission with excel spreadsheet containing grievance information.

V. COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND UPDATES

No items discussed.

Speaker(s): N/A

Action Item(s): No action items requested.

VI. BUSINESS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

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

Commissioner Gardner recommended forming a sub-committee (lead by Commissioner Herbon) to solicit the other Commissioners to provide top priorities and present to the full Commission for consideration within two weeks.

Action Item(s): Probation to provide Commission with policy on sexual harassment and assault on staff.

VII. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

10. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items in 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.

Various Probation staff addressed their concerns regarding:

- Safety
- Low staff attendance
- Request for townhall meetings
- Physical and sexual assaults
- Hostile work environment
- Stress
- Fear of termination
- Daily challenges
- Staff shortage
- Feelings of no support by the Department
- Lack of consequences for minors
- Looking for solutions to issues

Speaker(s): Various Probation staff

VIII. DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAY 9, 2019

11. **Response from the Probation Department for the following documents from Commissioner Herbon:**
- **“Questions, Suggestions etc. for Probation HR”**
 - **“Monthly/Quarterly Reports from Probation”**

Item tabled until next meeting.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

12. **May 9 Probation Commission Meeting will be held at the Hall of Administration, Room 374A**

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned.