

# **Monmouth County Youth Services Commission**

**Tuesday, August 6, 2024**

Minutes

## **Attendance:**

Trude Arnette, Tara Buckley, Stephanie Cello, Ellen Cohen, Carlton Cummings, Thomas Fichter, Laurie Gerhardt, Jennifer Hoffer, Chanta L. Jackson, Ivan Kaplan, Honorable Lourdes Lucas, Caitlin Mejia, Kathleen Peterson, Raymond Santiago, Lynn Seaward, Kaitlyn Silagyi, Christine Talbot, Kathleen Wardlow, Desiree Whyte, Elizabeth Williams.

## **I. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING'S ACT**

Desiree Whyte called the meeting to order and read the Open Public Meeting's Act Statement. A welcome and introductions were given. A motion was made, seconded, and carried (Arnette; Wardlow) to approve the Youth Services Commission minutes from the June 4, 2024, meeting.

Desiree Whyte welcomed Judge Lucas in her new assignment and invited her to share about her background. Judge Lucas stated that she had done a bit of everything and was a Prosecutor in Manhattan, was appointed to the bench in 2017 and started January 1, 2018, as a Judge serving in both Civil and Criminal, and now in Family. She stated that she served on CASA, and the Board of the Family Based Services Association at one point in time.

## **II. Division of Child and Youth Services**

Dustin Knoblauch reported that the next meeting of the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Hub was scheduled for September 13, 2024, all are welcome to attend. The PYD Hub is addressing cross cutting issues such as youth violence and gang awareness. Dustin reported that youth crisis cards have been developed for distribution that outline the appropriate resources to call for specific crisis situations. The Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services Child Family Crisis Clinicians; Mobile Response and Stabilization Services; the Family Crisis Intervention Unit, and the Division of Child Protection & Permanency and Monmouth ACTS Navigation System are included on the Youth 24 Hour Crisis Intervention cards that are in both English and Spanish. The Division can provide Youth Service Presentations in as little or as much time as agencies have

## **III. YSC Administrator's Update**

Ellen Cohen reported that the 2025 JDAI Innovations Funding Application was submitted to the Juvenile Justice Commission and authorized by the Board of County Commissioners at their July meeting to make the state's deadline for submission. The 2025 Youth Services Plan Update guidelines and application for the State Community Partnership Grant and Family Court Services funds are expected to be posted on the Office of the Attorney General's website (mid to late August) which is significantly later this year. Ellen Cohen thanked Dustin, Ivan, and Kathleen for the warm welcome back. She indicated that Kathleen Peterson was extremely helpful in setting up the 2024 monitoring dates for our funded programs. Kathleen Peterson described feedback received from an interview conducted with a youth and parent served. Ellen indicated that monitoring of the funded programs will take place throughout the month of August and thanked members of the monitoring team who will be participating in the process.

#### **IV. Education Update**

Dr. Richens and Dr. Ford were unable to attend this meeting.

#### **V. Prosecutor's Office**

Prosecutor Santiago stated that he had nothing to report. Tom Fichter shared that the National Night Out Against Crime due to the weather has turned into a National Night In. The heavy rain has moved some town's events inside and required a change in location or a re-scheduling of the event to another date. Tom shared the most up to date information he had available.

#### **VI. Court & Probation Updates**

Tara Buckley, Family Division Manager, welcomed Judge Lucas in her new role. Kathleen (Katie)Wardlow reported that the Vicinage has been in the process of recruiting staff to fill vacant positions. She is excited for the new chapter with Judge Lucas handling juvenile matters. Kathleen Wardlow stated a joint (e-mail) mailbox for Judge correspondence will be established. Katie emphasized the importance of the entire Family Division team, including Jennifer Montana, to receive the information from the key stakeholders.

Caitlin Mejia from probation reported that they recently held a graduation ceremony where twenty-seven (27) youth completed their term on probation. Caitlin indicated that parents spoke at the meaningful program. Caitlin Mejia stated that 50 to 60 youth was the average caseload size for the probation officers handling both deferred cases and juvenile supervision. The gun reduction initiative has served about 5 youth. Caitlin highlighted some of the successful cases, related to helping youth obtain jobs. Judge Lucas asked questions related to opportunities for vocational training for these youth. Caitlin indicated that yes there are opportunities.

#### **VII. Juvenile Justice Commission**

Jennifer Hoffer provided an update on various Juvenile Justice Commission activities and reported on the Training School and Hayes program. There is a big emphasis on entrepreneurial opportunities, and education including college level courses. Jennifer Hoffer indicated that now some youths can obtain a 4-year degree and learn trades such as HVAC, forklift operator, culinary arts and cosmetology. The Juvenile Justice Commission is interested in finding small businesses willing to hire youth and will help pay their salaries.

#### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

#### **X. PUBLIC COMMENT**

#### **XI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

**Upcoming YSC Meeting Dates- October 1, 2024, and December 3, 2024**