

Monmouth County Youth Services Commission
Tuesday, February 7, 2023
MINUTES

4:00 PM

Attendance:

YSC Members: Trude Arnette, Kathy Collins, Amy Fischer, Thomas Fichter, Laurie Gerhardt, Jennifer Hoffer, Chanta L. Jackson, Ivan Kaplan, Hon. Ellen Torregrossa-O'Connor, Geoffrey S. Perselay, Dr. Lester W. Richens, Lynn Seaward, Kaitlyn Silagyi, Yolanda Taylor and Desiree Whyte.

Staff:

Ellen Cohen

Guests:

Ashley Lobaddo, Sean Meehan, Caitlin Mejia, Sandra McDonnell

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

Hon. Ellen Torregrossa-O'Connor called the meeting to order and read the Open Public Meeting's Act statement. A welcome and introductions were given. She indicated that she values the collaboration, and our collective local efforts to address the various issues facing our youth and find solutions. A motion was made, seconded and approved (Fischer: Taylor) to approve the Youth Services Commission Minutes from our 12/6/22 Meeting.

II. YSC CO-CHAIR REPORT

Geoffrey S. Perselay reported that at the annual organization meeting of the Board of County Commissioners on January 5, 2023, the following individuals were appointed to the Monmouth County Youth Services Commission for a 3-year term ending on December 31, 2025: John "Doc" Amato, Honorable Ellen Torregrossa-O'Connor, Laurie Gerhardt, Shaun Golden, Raymond Santiago, Judith Green, Dr. Charles Ford, Lynn Seward, Kaitlyn Silagyi and himself.

Geoff Perselay reported that a New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development application for a Fiscal Year 2023 Summer Youth Employment Program Grant was executed at the 1/19/23 Board of County Commissioners Meeting. Yolanda Taylor is a contact on the Youth Services Commission who can provide additional information on this very successful program. The Fiscal Year 2023 Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act (WIOA), Summer Youth Employment Program will be used to provide in school and out of school youth and young adults ages 16-24 with valuable internships and help them successfully transition to the world of work within the

Monmouth County Workforce area. The Division of Workforce Development prepared the application request in the amount of \$700,000 for the period April 1, 2023, through October 31, 2023.

Geoff Perselay stated that the Division of Behavioral Health, within the Department of Human Services renewed their addiction services contracts for the period January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. Lynn Seaward or Kaitlyn Silagy are contacts on the Youth Services Commission for additional information on the renewals, which include services for adolescents.

He also indicated that at the 12/13/22 meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, the youth services contract with the Mental Health Association of Monmouth County, Inc. to provide a Family Navigator-Partners with Families Program was authorized for \$55,000 in 2023 JDAI Innovation Funds. This contract has two one-year renewal options.

III. YSC ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

Ellen Cohen reported on the 2022 Level of Service Report. She indicated that based upon the reports submitted by the Youth Services Commission funded programs, cumulatively there were 4,089 youth/families served in 2022. Cumulatively, there were over 14,054 direct service hours provided in 2022. Of the programs reporting their indirect service hours, there were 8,964 provided in 2022. This does not include 62.75 residential alcoholism and drug treatment bed days provided at New Hope Integrated Behavioral Health Care or dedicated staff time for the STEADY program. Ellen provided both programmatic and fiscal information on the various grants and indicated that some programs exceeded their level of service or were on target and some were under their level of service due to various reasons such as staffing, referrals and scheduling.

Ellen Cohen shared that the June 6, 2023 Youth Services Commission meeting will be moved to the Human Services Building, First Floor Conference Room in lieu of the Agricultural Building for there is a special election taking place on that day and their room is not available.

IV. Education Update

Dr. Lester W. Richens stated review of the Department of Education district budgets is in progress. He stated that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) health is still a primary focus. Student behavior issues in some schools is a concern due to the lack of social skills resulting from the pandemic and students being isolated or skills lost due to remote learning. Dr. Richens reported that his office monitors compliance of the local school districts on various areas such as instructional content, school finances and personnel. Dr. Richens announced that the Monmouth County Schools Partnership for Wellness presents a Student, Parent & Educator Symposium on Mental Health & Wellness at Brookdale Community College on February 23, 2023. The symposium will feature a keynote by Ian Hockley of Dylan's Wings of Change. The keynote speaker lost his son Dylan at the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy and shares his message about his son and how

we can help children. Dr. Richens noted that he would be attending a forum at Monmouth University at 6:30 PM this evening on Safer Internet Day that will include speakers from the State Police, Prosecutor's Office, and Dept. of Criminal Justice.

V. Prosecutor's Office

Thomas Fichter reported on the 2022 Station House Adjustments. He indicated that in 2022, there were a total of 181 Station House Adjustments conducted by Monmouth County Law Enforcement that were reported to the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office. The top four police departments in Monmouth County with the highest number of Station House Adjustments in 2022 were: Holmdel Twp. (16), Long Branch (17), Middletown Twp. (16) and Neptune Twp. (25) The gender of the 181 Station House Adjustments reported in 2022 indicates: 140 (77.34 %) were male and 40 (23%) were female. The race/ethnicity of the 2022 SHA's indicates 111 (61.33%) as White; 38 (21%) as Black; 28 (15.47%) as Hispanic; 1 (0.55%) as Asian/Pacific Islander and 3 (1.65%) as Other. Of the 181 Station House Adjustments conducted in 2022 by Monmouth County Law Enforcement 114 (63 %) were successfully completed and 2 (1.1 %) committed a new offense or did not complete the terms of the stationhouse adjustment. Thomas Fichter indicated that there did not appear to be too much change in SHA's from 2021 but, different towns were listed among the ones with the highest number of SHA's. He stated that more kids are being handled more appropriately at a lower level.

Thomas Fichter stated as the Prosecutor gets settled in, there will be proactive involvement and partnership with the community. Plans for police training on strategies for youth offered through the Juvenile Justice Commission that was piloted in Ocean and Middlesex Counties will be brought to Monmouth. It focuses on adolescent brain development and trains police how juveniles think and exhibit poor impulse control. The four-day training will promote positive police encounters that de-escalates situations. There is also a strategy included to go into the schools to conduct juvenile jeopardy game with Middle School Students on interactions with police. This initiative will help educated both police and kids to have better encounters with each other.

VI. Court & Probation Updates

Amy Fischer referred to the 2022 Monmouth Vicinage- Court Processing Data. She encouraged Youth Services Commission members to read the overview provided on the juveniles, cases and offenses at three points in court processing (docketed, diverted and adjudicated delinquent). Amy Fischer stated that it was important to note that the cases do not include those already expunged. Amy highlighted the progress the Vicinage has made in reducing the backlog of cases defined as 90 days or more and referenced some point in time reports issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts on the various Vicinages backlog status. She credited Judge O'Connor and the Family Division staff for making significant improvements in reducing the backlog of cases.

Caitlin Mejia reported that in 2022, there were 112 juvenile cases monitored by the Probation Division Staff. Of those juveniles, 83 (74 %) were on probation supervision,

while 29 (26 %) were Deferred Dispositions. There was a total of 36 Violations of Probation filed during 2022. Of the 36 VOP's, 2 (5 %) involved violation of the standard conditions of probation only, 28 (78 %) were new offenses and 6 (17 %) were program violations. The average officer caseload in 2022 was 57. Caitlin Mejia stated Monmouth Vicinage Probation Division currently has 4 juvenile probation officers. She noted that it is an exciting time for probation for they have changed how they do business. The officers are working well as a team, and are enhancing their skills to create case plans that address the risk levels and needs of juveniles being supervised.

Kathy Collins indicated that she was glad to see that the VOP's for program violations have gone down. Judge O'Connor thanked probation and the CMO for the targeted interventions that are put into place for youth. She stated that each person is a youth, a child in need and that it is important to intervene in a meaningful way. She also gave a shout out to Ivan Kaplan and detention alternatives.

VII. Detention Alternatives and Detention Admissions

Ivan Kaplan reported on the 2022 Detention Alternatives. Ivan stated that he was pleased that the STEADY program was utilized in 2022 and all 9 youth were successful. He noted that it was a great collaboration with probation. He stated that in 2022, there were 18 participants on Home Detention /Electronic Monitoring, 4 admissions on Electronic Monitoring Expansion-Wireless/GPS, 3 admissions on House Arrest A, 0 admissions on House Arrest B, 2 admissions to the Juvenile Shelter and 9 admissions on the STEADY transition program. In 2022, Ivan Kaplan reported that a combined total of 36 youth admissions were under the Monmouth County Division of Juvenile Detention Alternatives supervision. The gender of the 36 youth indicates 30 (83 %) as male and 6 (17%) as female. The race/ethnicity of the 36 youth indicates 29 (80.5%) as African American, 5 (14%) as White, 2 (5.5%) as Hispanic and 0 (0%) as "Other". In 2022, there were a total of 36 (88%) successful completions and 5 (12%) non successful. *The departures include some youth carried over from the prior year.* In 2022, there were 5 unsuccessful termination (1 youth violated two programs) for all Monmouth's Detention Alternatives. Of the 4 youth, 2 were open with CMO and 1 with DCP&P at the time they violated.

Ivan Kaplan also reported on the 2022 Juvenile Detention Admissions received from Sebastian Trapani in his absence. He stated that there were 54 admissions of Monmouth County juveniles to the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention Center in 2022. This represents 17 additional Monmouth County juvenile admissions to secure juvenile detention than in 2021. The average length of stay in juvenile detention for Monmouth County juveniles in 2022 was 65.4 days, which represents a decrease of 19 days from 2021. The number of child-care days provided to Monmouth County juveniles at the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention Facility in 2022 was 3,534. This represents an increase of 410 child-care days from what was provided in 2021. Ivan stated he was unsure if this increase was skewed due to a youth on waiver that tend to stay long in detention. He would need to check with Sebastian to see if youth on waiver status were removed or not. The total average daily population of Monmouth County juveniles

detained at the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention facility in 2022 was 8.9 which, is the same as in 2021. The total number of Monmouth County Black juvenile admissions to the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention facility in 2022 was 39 which, represents an increase of 8 from 2021. The total number of Monmouth County White juvenile admissions to the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention facility in 2022 was 5 which, represents an increase of 4 admissions from 2021. The total number of Monmouth County Hispanic juvenile admissions to the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention Facility in 2022 was 10 which, represents an increase of 5 admissions from 2021. In 2022, the gender of the Monmouth County admissions to the juvenile detention indicates that 48 or 89% are male and 6 or 11% are female. There were 12 additional Monmouth County males admitted to juvenile detention in 2022 compared to 2021 and 5 additional female admissions. The municipalities with the highest number of admissions of Monmouth County juveniles to the Middlesex County Juvenile Detention Facility in 2022 were Keansburg (12); Asbury Park (10); and Long Branch (5).

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. YSC Planning Committee

Trude Arnette provided the YSC Planning Committee Report. Trude indicated that the YSC Planning Committee held the first meeting of the year on February 2nd. Monthly meetings have been set through July for the first Thursday of the Monmouth at 9:00 AM. The YSC Planning Committee began to review and discuss the 2022 Monmouth County Annual Reports and data collected. This year, we will be completing a new three-year, 2024-2026 Monmouth County Comprehensive Youth Services Plan. It is anticipated that the Juvenile Justice Commission will issue the guidelines for the plan towards the end of March or early April. The plan helps set our service priorities for the State Community Partnership Grant and Family Court Services Funds. Based on the service priorities established a competitive contract request for proposals will be issued. Trude stated that a lot of the data collected has thus far been shared with the Youth Services Commission membership. We are also identifying and reviewing other sources of information such as NJ Kids Count specific to Monmouth County and Children System of Care and Child Welfare information. A review of the NJ Department of Education School Performance Reports will take place once the new report cards are issued. Trude Arnette stated that the YSC Planning Committee helps spearhead everything else we do. We are looking to expand representation on the YSC Planning Committee and welcome new members.

B. Juvenile Justice System Improvement

Kathy Collins stated that the local Council on Juvenile Justice System Improvement also digs deep into the data and looks for areas of improvement. She stated that for the 2023 JDAI Innovations funds, there were no applicants for the School Based Respond with Restorative Practices Program previously implemented by KYDS. Kathy stated an innovations workgroup will meet soon to come up with some new ideas. Ellen shared she

spoke to Danielle Romano and Safiya Baker regarding the process to make modifications.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Ashley Lobaddo shared information on the Strengthening Families Program designed to strengthen the family unit. She was trained as a coach in strengthening families which, is an evidence-based program that works on fundamental skills for positive parent and child relationships. Integration of the Strengthening Families Program within the Family Navigator Program is being explored.

Kathy Collins shared information on the school homeless navigator position at MonmouthCARES, who will serve as a resource or consultant to the homeless liaisons at the school districts. She indicated it was a 2-year grant commitment from the Department of Education through Alan Ferraro's office.

X. OLD BUSINESS

Yolanda Taylor encouraged the membership to contact her regarding their very successful summer youth employment program. She outlined the number of youth served in 2022 as 170 and their hopes to expand the program in 2023 to 280 with increased funding applied for. Yolanda's phone number is (732) 683-8850 ext. 2211 and her e-mail is Yolanda.Taylor@dol.nj.gov

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT

XII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:54 PM. The next meeting of the Youth Services Commission is scheduled for April 4, 2023 at 4:00 PM through zoom.

Upcoming YSC Meeting Dates- April 4, 2023; June 6, 2023; August 1, 2023; October 3, 2023 and December 5, 2023.