

CADDO PARISH COMMISSION
505 TRAVIS STREET, GOVERNMENT PLAZA PUBLIC NOTICE
JUVENILE SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA
February 28, 2022
1:30 p.m.

The Caddo Parish Juvenile Services Committee met in legal session on the above date, at 1:30 p.m., in the Government Plaza Chambers, with Mrs. Gage-Watts, Chairperson, presiding, and the following members in attendance: Commissioners Atkins, Burrell, Gage-Watts, Jones, Johnson, Taliaferro, and Young (7). ABSENT: None (0).

Mr. Jones gave the invocation, and Mr. Young led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Update from the Juvenile Justice Citizens' Advisory Committee*

Mrs. Sheila Wimberly introduced the following committee members: K.C. Kilpatrick, Ken Krefft, Heather Courtney, Jim Kowalski, Ryan Williams, Doc Montgomery, MeGale Parsons, Candy Beard, Gisele Proby-Bryant, and Jessica Yeates. She said that they've six meetings, and are planning to meet this Wednesday. Ms. Wimberly also mentioned that they would like to schedule a meeting with some of the juveniles who are in the detention center, as well as meeting with some staff members to see how the facility is ran on a day to day basis.

Mrs. Gage-Watts thanked the Committee for all of their hard work thus far. She wanted to know if there have been any discussions regarding justice reform, the disparities in race and gender, or internal policies. Ms. Wimberly said that there have been discussions regarding additional pods. She also said that they have discussed briefly alternatives to adding pods.

Ms. Wimberly said that she would personally like to focus more on reform. In her line of work, she has seen children "fast tracked" in this type of environment, and often times, end up being repeat offenders. She also has seen children who do not belong in this environment.

Ms. Wimberly also suggested that the Committee "look beyond the walls of Shreveport" to see what other alternatives are being used.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know who was representing District 2. The Clerk of the Commission said that it is Doc Montgomery. Mr. Johnson thanked the Committee for all of their work thus far. He also mentioned that citizens' advisory committee disengages what goes on around the horseshoe. Mr. Johnson would like the committee to go around the state and see what other communities are doing with regards to juveniles.

Mr. Atkins also thanked the Committee for their work. He encouraged the Committee to keep an open mind and see what approaches might be available as alternatives.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know if it was permissible by law to have discussions with the incarcerated juveniles. Mr. Walker nodded his head yes.

Mr. Burrell is not sure of the budget for this committee, but he encouraged all committee members to research, whether by travel or "just going on the computer and Google".

Dr. Wilson pointed out that in 2010, there were about fifty juveniles per day in the detention center. Since then, the Parish took part in the Annie D. Casey Foundation, and now there are about twenty juveniles in the detention center per day.

Mr. Young said that there are currently juveniles in the adult prison, and some are mixed with the general population. He believes that this is a violation of their rights, and all of these children are innocent until proven guilty. Mr. Young hopes that the Committee will keep this in mind.

Mr. Johnson explained that there are some parishes that don't have a juvenile detention center, so those juveniles go to jail. He further stated that those juveniles are in the adult prison because they allegedly committed a violent crime. Mr. Johnson said it would not be appropriate to have those juveniles in the same detention center and influencing a twelve or thirteen year old who are in detention for a nonviolent crime. He also said that there is the space at CCC, and it could be an option to set up a separate space for the 17 year old to be housed.

Mr. Young mentioned that there is a space at CCC with sixteen beds. Since the last discussion regarding this, those children are now being held with the adult population and could very easily be influenced by the adult felons. This is the conundrum that we're in, Mr. Young said.

Mrs. Gage-Watts mentioned that the seventeen year olds that are being referenced are those who have committed serious offenses, such as murder, armed robbery, etc. She also said that those juveniles are being kept separate from the general population.

Mrs. Gage-Watts said that it is important that the group is not being swayed either way in their discussions regarding juvenile justice. She also said that it is important there are no individuals who are coming to the meetings with specific agendas. If so, she would like to be notified immediately.

Mr. Burrell said that these children, many times, are just troubled.

- *Update on wrist monitors*

Mr. Clay Walker, Director of Juvenile Services, said that they've received the product, and one of the probational students is wearing it today to test it out. He also mentioned that the watches will keep a charge for 30 days.

Mr. Atkins wanted to know the advantages of the watch versus the ankle monitor. Mr. Walker explained that the aesthetics of the watch versus the ankle monitor is an advantage. It doesn't look like you're walking around with an ankle monitor, he said. This will help with the potential of getting a job. Also, the watches keep a longer charge. The watches also tracks everywhere the individuals goes, and the person monitoring them can check a computer and review any span of time to see where that person has been. They can also do inclusion and exclusion zones on the watches, as well as curfew times. Mr. Walker said that the watches are easier to destroy than the ankle monitors, but they are also cheaper to replace than the ankle monitors.

Mr. Taliaferro asked about charging the ankle monitors. Mr. Walker explained that the individuals wearing the monitors are heavily supervised, so they know when it is time to charge the ankle monitors. Also, the children are reminded constantly to keep the ankle monitors charged. If they fail to do so, then there are penalties for it.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know if there is a way to locate the monitors once they've been cut off. Mr. Walker said that they are hopeful the watches will because they hold a charge for so long. He also said that is the issue with the ankle monitors' replacement problem. Mr. Walker also said that there is no alert when the monitors are cut.

Mr. Johnson said that the watches should have a feature that monitors a heartbeat/pulse. He said once the watch is cut, there will no longer be a heartbeat or pulse indicating that the watch is not on the person. Mr. Walker said that not all of the watches have that feature. He also said that some of them have the capability to tell you the blood alcohol content, but they are not purchasing that feature for the juveniles.

Mr. Johnson then wanted to know what took so long to get the watches in. Mr. Walker said that the first-generation watches were bulky, and the sales reps were not happy with them. About three weeks ago, they received a call from a company telling them about their next generation watches that have better technology. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if the Commission could see the watches. Mr. Walker said that he can try to have one at the next meeting.

Mr. Johnson also wanted to know if the funds have to be reallocated to roll over for this year. Mrs. Bryant said that the Commission might have to, but she will have to research it further.

Mr. Jones is interested in seeing if some of those other features, such as monitoring vitals, can be added without it becoming too expensive.

Mr. Young wanted to know if the Commissioners could visit the detention center to "get a feel for day to day operations". Mr. Walker said that they can. He also said that if the Commissioners or whomever come and visit with these children, they will realize that "they're just kids. They're funny; they can be polite—I mean they're normal kids, and then unfortunately you look at their charge list and realize their charges are very serious".

- *Discuss community healthcare solutions*

It was **moved by Mrs. Gage-Watts**, seconded by Mr. Atkins, *to remove this item from the agenda.* Motion carried by acclamation.

- *Discussion on issues related to Juvenile Services*

Mr. Burrell asked if Mr. Walker could give the Committee an overview of the shortages the detention center is facing. Mr. Walker said that juvenile probation is staffed, but they are working on a couple of positions. It is more of a budge issue, he said. Detention has a staffing problem, even before COVID. There are twenty-eight positions available, but only twelve of them filled. Mr. Walker further explained that the Juvenile Detention Center Standards went into effect July 1, 2013, which removed

weaponry from the staff to make the detention centers more rehabilitative. At the same time, it made the staff more at risk for getting hurt on the job. He said that they work regularly so the staff does not become jaded with the children. You're essentially a counselor and a pastor, and you have to have wrestling capabilities, he said.

Mr. Burrell wanted to know how they are balancing that workload. He also wanted to know if there are cross training opportunities. Mr. Walker said that they are currently having probation work one shift a month in detention. He also mentioned that even with the shift changes, probation work is still being done.

Mr. Walker explained that they have Safe Crisis Management training in detention where the staff is trained how to restrain without hurting, and it is not offensive. He also pointed out that the probation staff is not asked to do that level of work; they do bed checks to ensure the children are in their cells.

Dr. Wilson talked about the children in the general population at CCC. He explained that the Sheriff is also lacking manpower, especially when the juveniles are affiliated with rival gangs. He said that there have been several fights, so they had to be split up. Mr. Walker said that they are constantly dealing with that issue in the mental health observation rooms. He said that they had to keep those juveniles separate.

Mr. Johnson wanted to know the reason for such a high turnover at Juvenile Services. Mr. Walker said that it has somewhat to do with COVID and being in close quarters, but mostly to do with job being a tough job. Mr. Johnson wanted to know if they do job fairs to try and fill the gaps. Mr. Walker said that they do, and they've formed a recruit team who visits colleges.

Mr. Young understands that due to gang affiliations, some of the juveniles at CCC have been moved to the general population. He wanted to know what kind of services through Juvenile Services has been done to counteract the negative influence of gang affiliation in the first place. Mr. Walker agreed that the juveniles should not be at CCC, but there needs to be a large enough space to keep them separated from the other children who have not committed serious crimes. Mr. Walker also said that it is his goal that juvenile detention is rehabilitative and nurturing. We are trying to get these kids back on a youthful path and not be involved in delinquency, he said. Mr. Walker said that it would be ideal to separate the juvenile population by charged as a juvenile and charged as an adult.

Mr. Young wanted to know what is being done about gangs. Mr. Walker said that there are several programs available, such as gang desensitization, counseling, etc.

There being no more business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.


Assistant Commission Clerk