

Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2014

2:00 – 3:30

Community Court Conference Room, 80 Washington St., Hartford, CT

Commissioners present: Justice Lubbie Harper, Jr. (Chairperson), Hakima Bey-Coon (OVA), Ann-Marie DeGraffenreidt (DCF), Brian Austin Jr. (DCJ), Preston Tisdale (Governor appointee), Glenn Cassis (AAAC), Tracey Gove (Minority Leader of the House of Representatives appointee), Ronnell Higgins (Majority Leader of the Senate appointee), Kimberly Weir (DOC).

Others present: Deborah Fuller (Judicial), Subina Gordon (AAAC), Esther Harris (Judicial), Shawna Woodard (Judicial), Laura Stefon (OVA), Aileen Keays (Consultant – IMRP), Sandy Lomonico (Graduate Intern – IMRP)

I. Welcome

- a. Meeting commenced at approximately 2:05pm
- b. Commission members introduced themselves. New persons in attendance: Laura Stefon from the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA), Chief Ronnell Higgins (new appointee of the Majority Leader of the Senate), Sandy Lomonico (new intern at the IMRP, MSW UConn student).

II. Review and approve minutes from May 28th meeting

- a. Minutes approved by voice vote

III. Membership update

- a. *Follow-ups from last meeting:*
 - i. Ann Smith (AFCAMP) – still trying to get appointed
 - ii. Arlene Avery (APAAC) – still trying to get appointed
 - iii. Yale University Police Chief – successfully appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, Martin Looney

IV. Updates on other commissions, committees and task forces

- a. [Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee](#) (CJPAC) – Judicial
 - i. Deb missed their last meeting and minutes have not been posted. CJPAC had begun to focus on DV & added someone from Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) to its membership. CJPAC's next meeting is Sept. 25th.
- b. [Racial Profiling Prohibition Project](#) (RP3) – IMRP
 - i. Report will be released this Thursday. Ms. Gordon of AAAC attended a conference in Minnesota at which she received a series of compliments for CT's strategy for analysis. RP3 is looking to use driver population data for each town/city for analysis rather than census data, which has been used previously.

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

- c. [CT Sentencing Commission](#) (CSC) – IMRP
 - i. CSC hosted this year’s annual National Association of Sentencing Commissions (NASC) conference in August at Yale. Criminal justice professionals from all over the country, and several other countries, were in attendance. Commission received high praise for the event by attendees.
 - ii. IMRP’s primary staff person supporting the work of the CSC, Jason DePatie, has resigned to attend law school at Emory College in Georgia. The Institute is looking for a replacement.
 - iii. The CSC will soon conduct a search to hire an Executive Director, as well, for the CSC.

V. *The Color of Justice*

- a. Reviewed survey data shared by Mallory LaPierre of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (CTJJA)
- b. Sept. 30th, the Division of Criminal Justice (DCJ) will host a *The Color of Justice* forum for prosecutors. REDCJS Commissioner, Brian Austin, planned the event.

VI. **Formation of a working group to review and make recommendations regarding the Commission’s enabling legislation**

- a. The Commission is interested in reviewing its original authorizing statute to determine whether any recommendations could be made for modification that would reflect the current needs of the state on this issue. Justice Harper requested volunteers to participate on a temporary working group to review the statute and make recommendations. Members that volunteered included: Ann-Marie DeGraffenreidt, Tracey Gove, Brian Austin, Subira Gordon and Ronnell Higgins.

VII. **Community dialogues with the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA)**

- a. Laura Stefon discussed the Office’s interest in educating the community on victims’ rights and efforts it has made recently to increase awareness. The Office performed an internal review of people that reach-out to the Office. OVA discovered that the Office is not hearing from urban community as much as believe it should. Therefore, OVA created an informational guide and brochures to detail information on victims’ rights and would like to host community forums to share the information, as well.
- b. Justice Harper believes this is an important effort that the Commission could support. He spoke with the President of the New Haven Clergy Association whom is interested in assisting, as well.

Discussion

- Question posed by Commissioner: Could the limited outreach from the community to the Office be a result of poor relations between community and law enforcement?

Commission on Racial & Ethnic Disparity in the Criminal Justice System

Connecticut Judicial Branch

- Justice Harper believes the Commission should begin addressing this issue by assisting with the education of community members on victims' rights and then looking into community relations with law enforcement.
- Suggestion of guest: OVA could increase awareness by creating 2-min video shorts on each brochure topic.
 - OVA would need to accomplish this within existing funds. Ms. Keays mentioned that Central Connecticut State University offers filmmaking courses with faculty that tend to like to assign real-world projects. Possibly one class or student would be interested in creating the videos for the OVA to build their portfolio.
 - Ms. Keays will try to connect the OVA with faculty.

VIII. Other business

- a. Event announcement – The Black Panther Party of CT will host a panel discussion on September 29th at 6pm at the Faith Congregational Church at 2030 Main Street in Hartford.
- b. Follow-up – Commissioner asked what had happened with the implicit bias jury instruction the Commission recommended for approval by the Judicial Branch.
 - i. It had been rejected by Judicial committee but without satisfactory explanation for cause. REDCJS will resubmit the instruction and if it is again not approved than the Commission will request a detailed justification.
 - ii. At the next REDCJS meeting, the Commission will review the formerly proposed jury instruction language to determine if edits are necessary prior to resubmission.
- c. Film recommendation – The law firm that Attorney Tisdale works with hosts monthly events showcasing a film that is followed by dialogue. Last month's film was *Murder on a Sunday Morning*. Attorney Tisdale strongly recommended that Commissioners watch it. It can be accessed on YouTube. One of the comments made during the firm's event was that it should be mandatory viewing at all police academies. It is a documentary which makes it additionally stunning.
- d. Member update – Meeting reminder e-mail to Commissioner Jesenia Delgado was returned undeliverable. Tried to find her contact information but was unable. Commission was asked if members were aware of Ms. Delgado's status with the Department of Public Safety.
 - i. No member in attendance had knowledge of her status; REDCJS will reach-out to the Department to inquire.

IX. Meeting adjournment

- a. Meeting concluded at approximately 3:14pm