



## VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

### Meeting Minutes

#### **Advisory Group: Evaluating the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Virginia's Juvenile Detention Centers**

July 26, 2022, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Vinton Library

#### **Attending:**

Janet Areson, Katie Boyle, Marilyn Brown, J. Kevin Curling, Amy Floriano, Jennifer Newman, Senator Dave Marsden, Catie Robertson, Amy Walters, Kathleen Arnold, Keith Farmer, Bryan Henry, Senator David Suetterlein

#### **Attending Virtually:**

Diane Abato, Michael Favale, Samantha Hollins, Avi Hopkins, Greg Hopkins, Josh Humphries, Alison Powers, Renae Vandervelt

#### **Staff Attending:**

Amy Atkinson, Will Egen, Darren Ray, Elizabeth Spinney (virtually)

#### **I. Welcome and Introductions:**

*The Honorable Dave W. Marsden, Senator, Senate of Virginia*

Senator Marsden called the meeting of the advisory group to order and welcomed the advisory group and public to the meeting. Senator Marsden then had all members of the advisory group and public in attendance introduce themselves. Senator Marsden then gave an overview as to why the group was meeting. In this overview, Senator Marsden said that there was a decrease in the population of detention homes. However, Senator Marsden stressed that the problem is not the quality of the detention homes, but it is the cost of running 24 full-time detention homes. In other words, the purpose of the advisory group is to look at the efficiency.

#### **II. Juvenile Detention Center Survey Results:**

*Elizabeth Spinney, Policy Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth*

Ms. Spinney's presentation gave a summary of the perspectives of detention home directors from the VJDA meeting, which she attended. The directors referred to a few key points: the overestimates made by JLARC as to consolidation, issues with metrics used, the consequences of

consolidation, and the increased needs of the youth. Ms. Spinney also summarized the findings of the detention home director survey. In this survey, it was found that some facilities have a lower operational capacity than the overall capacity. However, the average daily population for these facilities was still lower. The survey additionally showed that detention home directors feel proud of the work they are doing and the fact that they are more focused on therapeutic programming and mental health needs. The directors stressed the importance of family engagement, but 58% of the respondents said that there is not a difference between family engagement based on distance to the facility (This is based on current distance of facilities). The survey also collected data regarding use of community-based groups, individual volunteers, and group volunteers. Transportation to and from detention homes was also surveyed. The survey found that some youth are placed in detention homes that could be better served in an alternative to detention. Ms. Spinney pointed to the following areas as areas in which additional data gathering and analysis was needed: transportation costs, more analysis of survey responses, youth home zip codes, and the best practices and lessons learned from other states.

Throughout the presentation and after it was concluded, members of the advisory group and public were invited to ask questions and offer comments on Ms. Spinney's presentation. This presentation can be accessed on the Commission's webpage under the meetings tab.

### **III. The Lampstand – A Panel Conversation**

*Keith Farmer, Founder and Director, Straight Street*

*Kathleen Arnold, Director and CAO, The Lampstand*

This panel discussion gave an overview of two organizations: Straight Street and The Lampstand. Straight Street is a student center for middle and high school youth. The Lampstand is a safe home for trafficking victims. Staff at The Lampstand are specifically trained to deal with these in-need youth. During the presentation, Ms. Arnold discussed a potential collaboration with the Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center to establish an assessment center at a wing of that JDC for sex trafficking victims.

Throughout the presentation and after it was concluded, members of the advisory group and public were invited to ask questions and offer comments on the panel discussion. This presentation can be accessed on the Commission's webpage under the meetings tab.

### **IV. Potential Opportunities for Repurposing – Current Laws and Regulations**

*Will Egen, Senior Policy Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth*

Mr. Egen gave a presentation on the current laws and regulations regarding detention centers and their potential repurposing. During this presentation, he did a brief overview of three documents: Relevant Laws and Regulations Related to Juvenile Detention Centers, Relevant Federal Laws and Regulations Related to Juvenile Detention, and Repurposing and other types of licensing examples. One of the key points of this presentation was the need for interdepartmental communication.

The documents presented during this presentation can be accessed on the Commission's webpage under the meetings tab.

## **V. Advisory Group Roundtable Discussion**

*The Honorable David W. Marsden, Senator, Senate of Virginia*

Senator Marsden opened the meeting to a roundtable discussion. Ms. Walters started by asking if the ultimate decision was withholding state dollars or is it a collaborative decision with the localities. Senator Marsden said that he foresees it as being very collaborative. Senator Marsden said that the goal of the panel was to provide facts to the administration. Senator Marsden further noted that something this big has to go through the Governor's Administration.

A member of the public asked if there has been discussion of contracting with an independent consulting group. Senator Marsden said that he anticipated the administration doing something similar. Ms. Brown noted that the Northern Virginia Detention Home has conducted a study. It was determined that it was a complicated issue.

Ms. Brown further noted that the system we have is so great because of the collaboration between the state and localities. She believes that we should continue this collaboration in whatever decision we come to.

Senator Marsden then noted that the overhead cost of operating a facility is an important concern.

Elizabeth Charity noted her organization's efforts to help youth in the community and asked if the panel was willing to help. Senator Marsden said that the Commission on Youth would take her information.

## **VI. Next Steps and Adjournment**

Senator Marsden gave advisory group members in attendance information about an optional tour of the Roanoke Valley Juvenile Detention Center. Ms. Atkinson noted that there was lunch for members of the advisory group and invited guests. Senator Marsden then adjourned the meeting of the advisory group at 12:00 Noon.