



VIRGINIA COMMISSION ON YOUTH

Meeting Minutes

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

May 19, 2022, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Tuckahoe Library

Attending:

Janet Areson, Judge Nicole Belote, Marilyn Brown, Gene Fishell, Amy Floriano, Elizabeth Hobbs, Samantha Hollins, Ed Holmes, Avi Hopkins, Rice Lilley, Dean Lynch, Senator Dave Marsden, Susan O'Prandy Fierro, Alisa Padden, Alison Powers, David Reynolds, Sophia Tan, Renae Vanderveldt, Tyler Williams

Attending Virtually:

Delegate Carrie Coyner, Kevin Curling, Catie Robertson

Staff Attending:

Amy Atkinson, Will Egen, Darren Ray, Elizabeth Spinney

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 introduced Michael Schnurman, Assistant to the County Manager of Henrico County. Mr. Schnurman welcomed the advisory group to the County of Henrico. Then, Senator Marsden had members the advisory group and members of the community attending the meeting introduce themselves. Finally, Senator Marsden gave an introduction of the study topic to the advisory committee. There has been a dramatic reduction in youth incarceration, so the mission of the advisory group is to see to what extent, if any, the consolidation of detention centers might free up state funds to go toward under-funded programs aimed at helping at-risk youth.

II. Overview of Juvenile Detention Centers Utilization:

Elizabeth Spinney, Policy Analyst, Virginia Commission on Youth

Ms. Spinney's presentation gave an overview of juvenile detention centers in Virginia as compared to nationwide. In this presentation, Ms. Spinney discussed the goal and plan for study by the Virginia Commission on Youth as well as recent studies, including the 2021 JLARC study. The presentation also covered trends in the use of juvenile detention centers, including the average daily population and costs. Ms. Spinney then gave an overview of what juvenile detention is, as well as the types of juvenile detention used in Virginia's juvenile detention centers. The trends that Ms. Spinney discussed showed that juvenile detention usage has dropped drastically in both Virginia and the United States as a whole, while the costs of these detention centers is not decreasing. Ms. Spinney illustrated this point by showing a variety of graphs and maps. Ms. Spinney then transitioned to talking about JLARC's report and policy options. Finally, Ms. Spinney finished the presentation by discussing what the advisory group still needs to ascertain in order to have a successful study.

Throughout the presentation, members of the advisory group asked questions relating to the material that Ms. Spinney was presenting, and about juvenile detention centers in general.

III. Juvenile Detention Center Directors Panel

Marilyn Brown, Superintendent, Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Center

Jason Houtz, Superintendent, Fairfax County Juvenile Detention Center

Carla White, Superintendent, Rappahannock Juvenile Detention Center

Senator Marsden introduced the three members of the detention center directors' panel. Ms. Brown started with two main points at the outset: (1) that she wants the change to be an organic, locally-driven movement and (2) that the JLARC policies were options, not recommendations. In her portion of the panel, Ms. Brown focused on the fact that there are a lot of different populations in the placement groups, even within individual placement groups such as pre-dispositional. Ms. Brown also discussed that juvenile detention centers have to comply with over 500 regulations and are deeply connected to partner agencies and localities.

Mr. Houtz then stressed the importance of measuring juvenile detention centers by other measures than simply counting the number of beds and kids, saying that this overlooks important considerations. He stressed that it was important to think about detention as space and how best to manage that space. Additionally, Mr. Houtz pointed to COVID-19 as an additional concern to keep in mind.

Ms. White then discussed the challenges associated with running juvenile detention centers. There were four categories for these challenges: (1) behavioral, (2) mental health, (3) educational, and (4) medical.

Mr. Houtz, speaking again, stressed that success should not be measured simply by recidivism, but the advisory group should look at other factors and measures of success. Finally, Mr. Houtz discussed why economic factors have increased the operating costs of detention centers.

IV. Advisory Group Roundtable Discussion

Senator Marsden then began the advisory group roundtable discussion. Senator Marsden stressed that quality is not the focus issue. Instead, the study is about continuing the quality of services, but in a more efficient manner.

Senator Marsden then opened it to the floor.

Mr. Houtz stressed the importance of being cautious about using data from the first two years of COVID.

Ms. Tan asked if there was going to be an opportunity for young people impacted by the study to get involved. Senator Marsden responded that it was the goal to talk to affected individuals during visits to detention centers.

V. Next Steps and Adjournment

Senator Marsden then turned the floor over to Ms. Atkinson, who discussed the logistics of the detention facility tours happening after the adjournment of the advisory group meeting. Additionally, Ms. Atkinson discussed the plan for future meetings and the ultimate plan of the Virginia Commission on Youth for the study.

Senator Marsden then adjourned the meeting a few minutes after 12:00 p.m.