

DELAWARE COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION BOARD OF MANAGERS
TUESDAY JANUARY 16TH, 2024
5:30 PM

HYBRID: DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM AND VIRTUAL

Board Members Present:

Kevin Madden, Chairman/Councilmember
Dr. Monica Taylor, Council Chair
Elaine Schaefer, Council Member
Rev. James Turner

Kelly Diaz
Chris Eiserman
Nathaniel Nichols
Chekemma Fulmore Townsend

Call Meeting to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:32PM.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment (Agenda Items Only): No public comment.

Approval of Minutes: The Meeting Minutes from Tuesday December 19, 2023, were approved.

Report:

- A. Monthly Detained Youth Report, Juvenile Court and Probation Services- There are currently two (2) youths being detained. Both youths are being housed at Abraxas Morgantown.
- B. Superintendent for Juvenile Justice Services, David Irizarry- Mr. Irizarry introduced Director of Public Works, Danielle Floyd, to provide an update.

Ms. Floyd stated that the final plans for demolition of the existing Lima Facility are currently in process and that a request for County Council's approval to amend the contract with Spiezle Architectural Group (SAG) was made at the 1/16/24 Council meeting. SAG's survey work, which includes environmental, electrical, mechanical, and architectural survey, thoroughly examined the existing building and its systems. Additionally, SAG retained licensed plumbers and electricians to provide follow up assessments in their respective fields. The surveys revealed that the kitchen portion of the facility was previously attached to the County's Emergency Services Center located next door to the Lima Facility. When constructed in the 1970's, the kitchen area was built into the Lima Facility. In light of this discovery, it was determined that it would be most cost effective to retain the kitchen portion of the existing facility and utilize that as additional storage space.

The survey also revealed that the structure's mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and fire protection systems in the kitchen are serviced by JDC. When the Lima facility is demolished, the Emergency Services building will need to retain those systems. A proposal has been submitted for additional service to ensure that those design documents include that information.

Mr. Irizarry began his presentation to the Board regarding census admission data on detained youth in Delaware County in 2023. Mr. Irizarry reported the following:

- The average weekly census for 2023 was roughly seven (7) youths, which was the same as the prior year (2022).
- The highest weekly census in 2023 was ten (10) detained youth on 8 August 2023, a seventeen percent (17%) decrease from the prior year (2022).
- Sixty-one (61%) of the weekly census has been juvenile direct-file cases, an increase of fifty-three (53%) from the prior year (2022).
- In 2023, the highest number of juvenile direct-file detained youth at once has been six (6), up one (1) from the prior year (2022).
- Additionally, the last two weeks of December 2023 saw zero (0) juvenile direct-file youth on the census. This has been the first time since the week of 21 January 2021 (approximately two years prior).

Chairman Madden asked if there was a statistical reason that might shed light on why the December direct file admissions were at zero.

Mr. Irizarry responded that without speculation, it could be a result of case resolutions. Mr. Irizarry additionally stated that prior data usually shows an increase in the month of September, and that he will closely monitor December trends.

Councilwoman Schaefer asked if there was data that was monitoring the number of youths that were in the system, but not detained due to a lack of available beds.

Mr. Irizarry stated that that data was also tracked.

Regarding Delaware County's Juvenile Detention admissions by gender, Mr. Irizarry reported the following:

- On average, the 2023 weekly censuses were sixty-one (61%) male and thirty-nine (39%) female, compared to sixty-six (66%) male and thirty-four (34%) females in 2022.
- The highest number of males detained at once in 2023 was eight (8), which was down from ten (10) the year prior (2022).
- The highest number of females detained at once in 2023 was four (4), which was identical to the year prior (2022).

Chairman Madden asked if it would be accurate to say that detention numbers among females have remained flat while males decreased by about one or two detainees.

Mr. Irizarry responded affirmatively. Additionally, Mr. Irizarry stated that one female is facing adult charges. As a result, the resolution of her case is taking longer than the juvenile courts would, thus making her a constant statistic in the data for females.

Regarding the need for secure beds, Mr. Irizarry reported the following:

- In 2023, there were twenty-five (25) weekly reports in which JPO reported incidents where youth were scored for detention, but secure beds were not available at the time.
- The average weekly Turn-Away incidents reported were two (2).
- The greatest number of incidents reported was eight (8), which was up from one (1) the prior year in (2022).
- The highest weekly need for beds in 2023 was fifteen (15), which was up from eleven (11) the year prior (2022).
- The average weekly need was eight (8) beds.

Mr. Irizarry additionally stated that he tracked the percentage of the total need that had been supplied by, and that that number was eighty-three percent (83%). Mr. Irizarry stated his intentions to supply the needs of the other seventeen percent (17%).

Board Member Turner asked if there were any strategic changes the Board should make regarding space and community partnerships now that the data has been tracked for a couple years.

Mr. Irizarry responded that he tracked this data weekly to make sure that the data supports the need for an eighteen (18) bed facility and that the needs of the County do not exceed the ability and space for housing more detained youths.

Chairman Madden added that when the facility is built if there was ever a circumstance wherein more beds are needed, the County can still utilize existing partnerships and agreements to house detained youths.

Councilwoman Shaefer asked for more clarity regarding the scoring system to determine whether youths will be detained and how those scores are measured for youths.

Mr. Irizarry responded that the probation department uses statewide standardized youth detention scoring system, Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI), that measure and assess the risk. Mr. Irizarry also stated that Danielle DiMatteo of Juvenile Court and Probation Services could provide further clarity on the scoring system.

Councilwoman Schaefer responded that from her vantage point, the youths that are being turned away from other facilities are the youths that have higher risk assessments.

Mr. Irizarry responded that is not necessarily the case, and that most youths in detention do have serious charges; however, that is not the reason why they may have been turned away from other facilities and that that is usually a result of spacing and staffing issues within those facilities.

Board Member Nichols commented that several months ago he had referenced some statistics regarding youth detention nationally. He implored Mr. Irizarry to keep that information in mind

and stay updated on those matters. Mr. Nichols additionally stated that pre-detention services must be thoroughly vetted to make sure they are as effective as possible for the community.

Mr. Irizarry thanked Mr. Nichols and stated that he has been meeting biweekly with Chief DiMatteo, Chief Public Defender Alyssa Poole, Chief DA Kathleen Magee, and Stoneleigh Fellow Annemarie Ambrose to address those issues and identify preventative measures.

Old Business: No old business.

New Business: Mr. Irizarry welcomed the County's new Executive Director, Barbara O'Malley.

Public Comment: No public comment.

Board Member Comment: No Board Member comment.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:57PM.

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