

DELAWARE COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION BOARD OF MANAGERS
TUESDAY MARCH 19TH, 2024
5:30 PM

HYBRID: DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM AND VIRTUAL

Board Members Present:

Kevin Madden, Chairman/Councilmember
Dr. Monica Taylor, Council Chair
Marie N. Williams, Vice Chair
Rev. James E. Turner

Kelly Diaz
Candice Linehan
Nathaniel Nichols

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, February 20th, 2024, were approved.

Report: A. Juvenile Court and Probation Services- Monthly Detained Youth Report, Kiersten Keenan- There are currently six (6) detained youth. One (1) youth is being housed at Abraxas Morgantown, one (1) at Bucks County Youth Center, and one (1) at George Junior Republic. One (1) of those cases is direct file. The remaining three (3) youths are direct file, two (2) are currently being housed at George Hill Correctional Facility and one (1) at State Correctional (SCI) Muncy.

Chairman Madden asked for clarification regarding the difference between Delaware County Prison, George Hill Facility, and George Junior Republic.

Ms. Keenan clarified that George Junior Republic is a separate, privately owned juvenile facility in Grove City, Mercer County, Pa.

Vice Chair Williams asked for clarification on the total number of detained youths.

Ms. Keenan clarified that there were six (6) total youths in detention. Of those six (6), four (4) are direct file, with three (3) of the direct file youths in adult facilities and one (1) in a juvenile detention center.

B. Report- Superintendent for Juvenile Justice Services, David Irizarry- Regarding the baseline study presented to the Board in November of 2023 by the Center for Children's Law and Policy (CCLP), Mr. Irizarry updated the Board on the partnership between Delaware County and introduced the National Assessment Center (NAC) and Empact Services (ES), two associates that assisted with the project. Mr. Irizarry stated that he would like the Board to consider continuing services with both agencies as the department strives to implement recommendations provided in the report. These initiatives include a programmatic mechanisms

model used by NAC that can quickly provide links to families and service providers and an outcome data-tracking dashboard service provided by ES. During the study, ES used data from 2020-2023 and a continuation of the partnership would provide dashboard training as well as continued data input.

On average, there are twenty-four (24) days between when a youth is arrested and when they are connected with services. During the baseline study, the NAC implemented a national model used to close that gap in time. Mr. Irizarry introduced Karli Keator, a representative of the NAC to present information on the NAC's model to the Board.

Ms. Keator began by stating that assessment centers have been in use for some time with around one hundred (100) being located around the country. The objective of assessment centers is to serve as a single point of contact and provide diversionary measures to youth who are engaging with at-risk behavior or struggling with issues such as mental health, substance abuse, trauma, poverty, etc. Assessment centers work as a funnel by assessing and identifying individual needs and routing them to services within the community with the added element of a case manager to help navigate processes and overcome obstacles that may hinder connecting with these services. The NAC's proposal to Delaware County is to develop an implementation strategy and provide necessary components and resources such as policies and procedures and other logistics concerning the set up and operation of an assessment center.

Mr. Irizarry added that a technical assistance partner would also be utilized to help build a comprehensive action plan on finding an operations facility and help present and engage the community with the project. Mr. Irizarry additionally stated that this is a service he would like to continue to provide to the community and asked for the Board's support on the matter.

Vice Chair Williams disclosed that she was previously a member of the board of the National Assessment Center. Ms. Williams additionally stated that the study revealed that youth were often not assessed for services until they were deeply entrenched with the juvenile justice system or until after their detention period. Juvenile Court Judges who are seeking services for young people are often resorting to detention as a way for those youths to be linked with services. Given the need for more diversionary programs and lack of juvenile detention beds, Ms. Williams opined that an assessment center would provide value to Delaware County.

Board Member Turner asked what the timeline would like for building and implementing an assessment center.

Ms. Keator responded that timelines are dependent on a few variables including the community. Open facility doors can take around a year to come to fruition. Implementation generally takes nine (9) to eighteen (18) months and so far, Delaware County has a solid foundation to lay for an assessment center.

Board Member Nichols asked how or if existing community resources were being brought into this project.

Ms. Keator responded that the assessment center would not be providing the services itself, rather serving as the bridge to existing community resources.

Mr. Irizarry added that the baseline study revealed five priority zip codes and that continuing a partnership with the NAC would entail emphasis on those zip codes. Many community members and organizations assisted with the study and their help would continue to be enlisted in the next iteration of the partnership with the NAC.

Board Member Linehan asked which department was leading this project.

Mr. Irizarry responded that while contractually some elements may be taken on by Juvenile Detention, this project is a collaborative effort of management between himself, Chief Danielle DiMatteo, Juvenile Deputy District Attorney Katie Magee, and Chief of the Juvenile Division of the Office of the Public Defender Alyssa Poole.

Chairman Madden asked for further insight as to when and how within the process youths would be connected with an assessment center.

Mr. Irizarry stated that there was some flexibility and room for creativity in that matter. Juveniles accused of lower-level offenses might get connected to an assessment center after arrest in lieu of detention, while other cases may vary. The goal is to use this center with the police and direct assessment center touch points upstream.

Chairman Madden asked if access would be at the mandate of Judge Krull.

Mr. Irizarry stated that while that is a possibility, the goal is to have access be at the discretion of the local police departments. Behaviors that may lead to police interaction may not have criminal root causes, and an assessment center could grant youth same day access to resources that can address those root issues.

Ms. Keator additionally stated that there are three prominent domains that an assessment center would work within. Those are Juvenile Justice (pre or post arrest), Child Welfare, and Preventative Functions working with schools and local law enforcement. The community drives the directive and purpose of an assessment Center based on what the needs of the community are.

Vice Chair Williams asked Ms. Keator for further insight on the single point of contact framework. Ms. Williams stated Delaware County has some unique issues that could pose risks if all community members went to a single, community-based location.

Ms. Keator responded that single point of contact refers to a concept rather than a physical location. Ms. Keator stated that there are many ways to structure the function of the Assessment center and that options such as satellite offices and mobile services could be employed. Ms. Keator additionally stated that the study provided comprehensive information on what some of those challenges are for residents and the NAC is prepared to tailor a single point

concept specifically for those five zip codes and how they will function together in Delaware County.

Mr. Irizarry added that the goal is to identify nonprofits in the community and add a programmatic element to it. In response to Chairman Madden's previous question, Mr. Irizarry stated that this single point of contact allows the community to have resources available to route youths and families to proper organizations whether that initial point of contact is through schools, local police, or the courts.

Chairman Madden asked for clarification on the funding source for the assessment center if established and for the contract in whole.

Mr. Irizarry stated that we (Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation Services) would work with Chief Garrison to have the NAC's services included in the needs-based budget. There is also a possibility to have it covered by the state at eighty (80%) percent with twenty (20%) at the county once programming is in effect.

Chairman Madden asked if the sixty thousand (\$60,000) total was correct and clarified that Mr. Irizarry was looking for the Board's support and to move to Council.

Mr. Irizarry responded affirmatively.

Board Member Diaz asked if any surrounding counties are using the NAC's model.

Vice Chair Williams responded that to her knowledge, they were not at this time. Ms. Williams additionally clarified that the NAC is a membership organization with a rigorous and robust framework, which is not to say that other Commonwealth jurisdictions have not adopted single contact point assessment center models. While assessment centers cooperate with the Juvenile Justice System, its goal is not to further entangle a young person in that system.

Mr. Irizarry stated that he could look into what other jurisdictions are using similar models and that he knew for certain that the City of Reading uses a similar model.

Vice Chair Williams asked Ms. Keator if she could provide an annual budget for the operating costs of an assessment center.

Ms. Keator stated that the range of costs vary based on how the assessment center is being operated and what the needs of the community are. This can range from several hundred thousand to several million in operational costs. Regarding financing, it is a service crafted into their technical support assistance and the programs are generally able to fund from insurances and Medicaid.

Board Member Turner asked for clarification on what single point of contact looks like and how spaces in the community would be utilized to do so.

Mr. Irizarry responded that once existing spaces are located within a community, they are able to branch out from there. Those spaces could have a couple of case workers that would navigate youth through services and instead of just giving out pamphlets, the case worker would continue to work with the youth until they are connected and receiving services.

Chairman Madden stated that as this is the Board's first time hearing all this information, he would like to give the Board time to digest the information presented today before officially voting on their support

Board Member Nichols stated that he would also like more time to study the information brought forth at this meeting before giving a definitive answer of yes or no.

Vice Chair Williams suggested setting a date to submit further questions by before the next meeting. Ms. Williams additionally stated that the NAC has an outstanding track record and that she believes Ms. Keator's one year time estimate is conservative if the board is concerned with the expediency of the project. Ms. Williams added that the NAC is a model that is being considered by OJJDP.

Chairman Madden agreed and added that the date could be the next Board of Managers meeting on Tuesday April 16th.

Board Member Fulmore-Townsend clarified that Vice Chair Williams was asking for a date before the next meeting to have the questions ready by so they could be answered at the next meeting to avoid a delay.

Chairman Madden agreed and further emphasized the need for the Board to have the opportunity to further review and question the project.

Mr. Irizarry agreed and stated that if the Board compiles a list of questions he can reconvene with the NAC and ES and create a virtual presentation to be added to next month's agenda.

Vice Chair Williams agreed that a virtual presentation would be comprehensive and answer questions the Board may have.

Mr. Irizarry responded that he would be happy to organize a meeting for the Board and that the Juvenile Court Judges Commission are in support of this single point of contact model.

Board Member Nichols stated his optimism that the Juvenile Court Judges Commission are in favor of this model.

Mr. Irizarry asked the Board if they would like a presentation from Empact Services as well on their database. The current database has data from 2020-2022 and the contract would allow for updated input.

Vice Chair Williams asked if the database is only accessible to workers within the system or is it a more public interface.

Chairman Madden asked for background information on Empact Services.

Mr. Irizarry stated that ES was another associate assisting with the baseline study that provided the database to access information from. The existing database ES has created only has data from 2020-2022 and continuing the contract would allow for more data to be added including a dataset that Judge Krull would like to be added. Mr. Irizarry stated that he would like a public side of the database to be available for organizations and agencies along with a

Board Member Turner asked if the price of the contract could change based on the changes made to fit County specific needs.

Mr. Irizarry stated that he did not think that price would be changed. Their role is more so to analyze and publish data given to them.

Chairman Madden requested a motion to approve the contract for Empact Services.

The motion, initiated by Board Member Nichols and seconded by Board Member Turner, passed unanimously.

Old Business: Board Member Linehan updated the Board on issues raised by community members from Lower Chichester at February's Board of Managers meeting. In response to reports of vandalism and other acts of delinquency, Ms. Linehan, Juvenile Deputy District Attorney Katie Magee, Chief Gaspari of Lower Chichester Police Department, and Sergeant Larry Moore of Lower Chichester Police Department met with residents of Lower Chichester to address these concerns and begin steps toward further action.

New Business: No new business.

Public Comment: No public comment

Board Member Comment: No Board Member comment.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 PM.

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