



**Board of Juvenile Justice
Thursday, February 25, 2021
Decatur, GA
Board Meeting Minutes
(Audio/Zoom Conference)**

Opening Remarks

On Thursday, February 25, 2021, Chair Sandra Taylor called the meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice to order at 10:00 AM. The meeting was held as an audio/Zoom conference.

DJJ Staff Present: Commissioner/Superintendent Tyrone Oliver, Deputy Superintendent Zane Shelfer, DJJ Executive Team Members, and various DJJ Staff Members.

Attendees included: Assistant Attorney General Amy Radley (Law Department), Melissa Moats (OPB), and public guests.

Invocation: Chaplain Danny Horne

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Dr. Thomas Coleman.

Roll Call: Members present were Chair Sandra Taylor, Vice-Chair Willie C. Bolton, Secretary Adam Kennedy, Danny Blackmon, Dick Yarbrough, Penny Penn, Dr. Thomas Coleman, Judge Lisa Colbert, Chief Gary Yandura, Angie Holt, and John Edwards. Judicial Advisory Member Judge Quintress Gilbert participated. Quorum was declared.

Agenda approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the February 25, 2021 agenda. The motion was made by Board Member Holt, seconded by Vice-Chair Bolton, and approved unanimously.

Minutes approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021 board meeting. The motion was made by Board Member Yarbrough, seconded by Board Member Coleman, and approved unanimously.

Commissioner's Report

COVID-19 Update

Commissioner Oliver updated the Board regarding the latest number of DJJ staff members and youth who had tested positive for COVID-19. He thanked the DJJ staff members for continuing to follow safety protocols to minimize exposure risks.

Legislative Update

Commissioner Oliver informed the Board that the amended FY'21 budget has passed the legislature. The amended budget includes a one-time \$1,000 salary supplement to all state employees who make less than \$80,000 annually and a 10 percent raise to all juvenile correctional officers.

He also mentioned that the bond package is still being considered. It will include the construction of a 56-bed housing unit at Muscogee YDC and at Augusta YDC. Body scanners will also be proposed to be utilized in all of the secure facilities throughout the state.

Governmental Affairs Director Zach Louis talked about House Bill 272, which changes the jurisdiction of the juvenile court to include children who are under 18 years of age.

Questions/Comments (HB272)

Secretary Kennedy asked if HB272 passed, whether DJJ will be able to handle the additional population.

Chair Taylor wanted to know if there is any data available regarding how violent the 17 year-old offenders are.

Special Recognitions

Commissioner Oliver recognized juvenile correctional officers Tamara Dingle, Lt. Taishimia Wiley, Cadet Stacy Shaw, and Jeremiah Lockett (former employee) at the Augusta RYDC for quickly responding to a youth who was engaging in self-harm. Commissioner Oliver and Chief Mark Mitchell went to the Augusta RYDC to personally thank the officers for their life-saving efforts and for their dedication to the agency.

Commissioner Oliver also recognized Marietta RYDC for passing the American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation audit.

He also thanked staff who participated in the 12th Annual Polar Plunge. Team DJJ raised over \$4000 for the Special Olympics.

Commissioner Oliver congratulated DJJ's Judicial Advisory Council Member Judge Quintress Gilbert on her senior judge status, effective on March 1st.

Division Reports

Director of Engineering and Construction Services Joan Quinn-Cannon presented on the need to possibly demolish the former Gwinnett RYDC facility. The proposed resolution would authorize the Commissioner and the State Properties Commission to take appropriate steps to demolish the facility if that would best serve the state's interests.

Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was made by Vice-Chair Bolton, seconded by Board Member Blackmon, and approved unanimously.

Re-Entry Services

Director of Re-Entry Services Dr. Keith Jones gave an overview of DJJ's Reentry Services. Assistant Director of Re-Entry Services Cathy Smith-Curry talked about the various community partnerships that help youth transition back into the community. DJJ Operational Task Force members currently include: 43 private organizations, 22 state government organizations, and two federal government organizations. Key partners include: Technical College System of GA (TCSG) (The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)), The Home Depot, Georgia Tech, and the Bibb County Mount Zion Church.

Ms. Smith-Curry introduced Xavier Jennings also with the Office of Re-Entry Services. He discussed how the "Georgia Youth Mentoring Program" helped him after being detained with DJJ. Mr. Jennings is currently in training to be a "Credible Messenger Mentor" for the youth.

Dr. Rashad Richey with the Office of Re-Entry Services talked about a couple of DJJ's key initiatives, which include "Operation C.O.R.E. (Community Opportunities in Resources and Education)" and "F.R.E.S.H. Start Youth Initiative (Focusing Resources Effectively to Sustain Hope)."

Questions/Comments (Re-Entry Services)

Secretary Kennedy asked how many re-entry staff members are there; and how are they deployed throughout the state? He also thanked the Re-entry Services team for their services.

Board Member Yarbrough suggested the Board should find a way to show its appreciation to the organizations for their involvement.

Chair Taylor thanked the Re-Entry Services team for their dedicated services.

Commissioner Oliver also thanked the Re-Entry Services team for their great presentation and hard work.

This concluded the Commissioner's Report.

Chair Taylor call for a motion to adjourn the regular DJJ Board Meeting and reconvene as the DJJ School Board. A motion was made by Board Member Yarbrough to adjourn the Board of Juvenile Justice and reconvene as the Board of Education. The motion was seconded by Board Member Edwards and approved unanimously.

Board of Education

Deputy Superintendent Zane Shelfer shared information about the education data dashboard, including the percentage of the student body with special education needs. DJJ is currently in the process of setting up interviews for vacant positions.

Georgia Preparatory Academy (GPA) Online

Deputy Superintendent Shelfer introduced DJJ's newest program, "Georgia Preparatory Academy Online." The purpose of the program is to allow high school seniors who leave DJJ and who are currently under DJJ supervision to complete the few credits (1 to 4 credits) that they need to earn a high school diploma. This opportunity is only available to students who do not live in the Education Transition Center (ETC) areas. The instruction/learning platform is provided by Edgenuity. The program is funded by the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CARES ACT).

The Deputy Superintendent thanked DJJ Project Manager, Niki Martinez, for keeping the project on track. He also thanked Education, Community Services, Legal, and IT for all of their hard work on making this project come together.

Question/Comments (BOE)

Board Member Yarbrough asked why wouldn't the students want to return to public schools generally? And what would motivate them to take classes online?

Board Member Coleman stated this program is a great idea because traditionally DJJ have had issues getting the youth back into public schools for different reasons.

This concluded the Deputy Superintendent's report.

Chair Taylor called for a motion to adjourn from the DJJ School Board and reconvene as the regular DJJ Board. A motion was made by Board Member Coleman to adjourn the Board of Education and to reconvene as the Board of Juvenile Justice. It was seconded by Secretary Kennedy and approved unanimously.

Comments: Chair Taylor announced that the Board is continuing to monitor COVID-19 conditions to determine when to return to in-person board meetings.

Old Business: No old business.

New Business: No new business.

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting will be March 25, 2021 at 10:00 AM via audio/Zoom conference.

The motion to adjourn was made by Board Member Yarbrough, seconded by Board Member Coleman, and approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:52 AM.

Sandra H. Taylor, Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Tyrone Oliver, Commissioner
Department of Juvenile Justice

Adam Kennedy, Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice