



OFFICE OF LEGAL SERVICES
Cindy Wang, General Counsel
3408 Covington Highway
Decatur, GA 30032
Telephone: 404-508-7243 Fax: 404-508-5108

**Board of Juvenile Justice &
Board of Education / Joint Board Meeting
Thursday, January 26, 2023
Board Meeting Minutes
Decatur, GA
Board Meeting Minutes
(Audio/Zoom Conference)**

Opening Remarks:

On Thursday, January 26, 2023, Chair Sandra Taylor called the joint board meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice and Board of Education to order at approximately 10:00 AM. The meeting was held in person and via audio/Zoom conference.

DJJ Staff Present: Interim Commissioner Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, DJJ Executive Team Members, and various DJJ Staff Members.

Other attendees included: Assistant Attorney General Meghan Davidson (Law Department)

Invocation: Chaplain Emily Kelly

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Secretary Adam Kennedy

Roll Call: (Conducted by Board Secretary Adam Kennedy) Members present were Chair Sandra Taylor, Vice-Chair Willie C. Bolton, Danny Blackmon, Thomas Coleman (Zoom), Quintress Gilbert, Joyette Holmes, Margaret Kaiser, Timothy McCulley (Zoom), Penny Penn, Fred Stephens, Garland Hunt, and Judge Lisa Colbert (Zoom, joined later). Quorum was declared.

Chair Taylor recognized the new board members: Senior Judge Quintress Gilbert who was previously in the Judicial Advisory Council position and is replacing former board member Angie Holt. The Board will be recognizing former Board Member Angie Holt and former Board Member Gary Yandura and former Commissioner Tyrone Oliver at the next board meeting. Other new members are Garland Hunt who is coming from Congressional District 7, and the re-appointment of Penny Penn who is replacing former Board Member Gary Yandura's position in the 6th District. Also Secretary Adam Kennedy was re-appointed.

Meeting Agenda Approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the agenda for today's meeting. Motion made by Board Member Gilbert to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Board member Blackmon and approved unanimously.

Meeting Minutes Approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2022 board meeting. The motion was by Board Member Blackmon. Motion was seconded by Board Member and approved unanimously.

Special Called Meeting Minutes Approval: Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 22, 2022 specially-called meeting. Board Member Fred Stephens moved to adopt the minutes. It was seconded by Board Member Kaiser and approved unanimously.

Interim Commissioner's Report: Interim Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. She recognized the former commissioner's work in changing the culture of the department and committed to continuing that work. Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb also gave kudos to each of the board members for all the work and support that they have provided to the agency.

Interim Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb also talked about the loss of the late Deputy Commissioner of Community Services Victor Roberts. He was a long time member of this agency. He worked hard and was such a wonderful person. His passing left a void within the DJJ community. Everyone's support is very much appreciated.

Interim Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb mentioned the graduation and a wonderful speech by Board member Colbert. She also talked about the Power of Peace event (Kit Cummings) where Deputy Commissioner of Secure Facilities Pamela Hill, Communications Director Glenn Allen and facility Director Keith Wynn attended at Eastman YDC. They joined Board member Holmes at this event and engaged with the group of individuals who attended. This was an opportunity to see two former DJJ being out in the community and doing good things. This is a testament not only with the work of Kit Cummings and his team, but as one young man eluded to - the work of the staff and the work they are doing with these kids to help build positive relationships with them so that they can do good positive things.

Interim Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb also talked about the legislative session. Deputy Commissioner of Treatment and Care Margaret Cawood is also serving as the Legislative Liaison. The team will be working on presenting on the budget requests. Communications Director Allen and team have been working on finalizing the Annual Report.

Interim Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb talked about the ongoing Employee Engagement efforts. She mentioned the exit surveys, but stated that the focus is on the engagement efforts to retain staff. She also talked about the school resource officers.

Deputy Commissioner of Investigations and Special Operations Matt Wolfe's last day with the Department will be at the end of January. He has accepted a position at the Department of Corrections with former Commissioner Tyrone Oliver. He will be missed, but he will be available if needed.

Recognition of Retiree:

Deputy Commissioner Hill recognized Coach Willie Tennyson who is the Recreational Director of Muscogee YDC for his 30 years of service at DJJ.

Education Update – Deputy Superintendent Zane Shelfer

Education Dashboard –December graduation was at Rockdale RYDC. There were nine high school graduates, 16 GED graduates, and nine students who earned technical certificates. Enrollment for the new semester is 156 students in middle school, 700 high school students, 91 GED graduates and 40 graduates. About 30% are special education.

There are 28 teacher vacancies across the state and one school counselor vacancy. There are 31 vacancies with support staff, paraprofessionals, and educational aides.

Full-time paraprofessionals come in everyday. If a teacher is absent, they are the substitute in the classroom. There are also part-time paraprofessional aides. Those are 29 hour per week positions. This allows the classrooms to be covered if someone is out. If it's a long-term absence, they can switch the students around or even the teachers.

Approval of 2023-2024 School Calendar

Chair Taylor called for a motion to approve the 2023-2024 school calendar. Motion made to approve by Vice Chair Bolton and seconded by Secretary Kennedy and approved unanimously.

Teacher of the Year

Dr. Letunya Walker presented the 2022-2023 DJJ Teacher of the Year, Ms. Malissa Brinson-Gordon. Ms. Brinson-Gordon is committed to educating students, colleagues, families and the community through establishing strong connections. Her philosophy is "simple yet powerful." She is a passionate educator who believes students can learn in an environment that is stimulating and appropriate to their unique needs and abilities.

Divisional Updates

Community Services

JPPS II Krista Leonard CSO - Juvenile Probation/Parole Specialist 2(Cherokee County) and JPPS II Afiya Askew CSO – Juvenile Probation/Parole Specialist 2 (Houston County) presented on "A Day in the Life of a Juvenile Probation/Parole Specialist."

Vice-Chair Bolton moved that whenever the opportunity presents itself that these two staff members provide that presentation. Motion was seconded by Board Member Gilbert and approved unanimously.

Communications – Director of Communications Glenn Allen.

Director Allen provided a brief overview of The 2022 Year in Review. Communications was charged with developing and distributing relevant material through print and digital outlets. Director Allen gave out a packet to the Board Members which contained the outline of the content of the tools used for communication.

Presenting their areas of responsibility were:

Lisa Harkness – Manager of Social Media who gave an overview of what they are doing across all platforms of social media.

Matthew Montgomery – Communication Specialist gave an overview of the DJJ Website and its performance.

Jessica Walker – Communication Specialist gave an overview of the Annual Report. Director Allen also gave an overview of the news coverage and video graphic and design.

Braeden Orr – Lead Videographer – gave an overview of the video production

Janssen Robinson – Lead Graphic Designer – created “DJ Justice” and the evolution of “DJ Justice” to look more mature.

What’s Next in Communications – Braeden Orr and Jessica Walker

- The DJJ Update

- The DJJ Review Newsletter

- The Culture Wheel Highlight

- Town Hall Meeting

- Working on a daily DJJ Q&A column

Human Resources Update – Director of Human Resources Katrina Patterson

Director Patterson updated on the recruitment efforts. They increased monthly job fairs and identified areas needing more recruitment efforts. She talked about the various campaigns for increasing recruitment.

Old Business

Motion to adopt the proposed bylaw amendment from the October meeting.

Motion to adopt bylaws made by Board Member Penn. The motion was seconded by Board Member Kaiser and adopted unanimously.

New Business

Board Member Gilbert identified areas that she wanted more information on. Board member Hunt asked about employee attrition.

Chair Comments:

Chair Taylor stated the next meeting will be February 23, 2023 at 10:00 AM and at that meeting the Board will be recognizing the former board members and former commissioner. She asked for all to attend that meeting. Chair Taylor also acknowledged the passing and loss of Victor Roberts.

Motion to adjourn by Secretary Kennedy and seconded by Board Member Gilbert. It was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Sandra H. Taylor, Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Interim Commissioner
Department of Juvenile Justice

Adam Kennedy, Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice