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| Seal2  **CHARLES D. BAKER**  Governor  **KARYN E. POLITO**  Lt. Governor | The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  Executive Office of Public Safety and Security  One Ashburton Place, Room 2133  Boston, Massachusetts 02108  Tel: (617) 727-7775  TTY Tel: (617) 727-6618  Fax: (617) 727-4764  www.mass.gov/eopss | **THOMAS A. TURCO, III**  Secretary |

**PANEL ON JUSTICE-INVOLVED WOMEN**

Date: May 17, 2021

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Virtual Meeting (WebEx)

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Hallett called the meeting to order at 11:02am once a quorum of members had been established. She read the charge of the Panel from the enabling statute.

**Meeting Minutes Review/Vote**

Senator Friedman moved to accept the March meeting minutes. Patty Murphy seconded the motion. A roll call vote was take and the motion carried. The minutes were approved.

Senator Friedman requested moving the agenda items she proposed to later in the agenda since she may have to step away from the virtual meeting and return a bit later.

**Improvements to Family Visitation Working Group Presentation**

[PRESENTATION AND MATRIX AVAILABLE ON ONEDRIVE]

Senator Friedman thanked the working group members and asked how many incarcerated women in Massachusetts had children. Patty responded that, on average, when looking across the state, about 68% of incarcerated women have children under the age of sixteen (including DOC) and this statistic has been long-standing for about the last 15 years.

Senator Friedman noted that the group has the responses to the Panel’s survey of what the rules and regulations are for DOC and HOCs but acknowledged that ultimately the Panel does not know how those things are implemented or being rolled out and the Panel needs to dive into that issue more deeply because we do not know the reality since it is self-reported. Patty said that she is also on the Panel’s tours at facilities working group and she and Andrea James (former member) looked at what type of questions they would like to ask and that is now on hold since she is the only person on that working group now. She said this is a place where we can observe those practices and ask those questions. Senator Friedman stated the importance of reaching out to recently incarcerated women and understanding the complexities on their end.

Senator Friedman stated she would argue that the DOC and HOCs have not implemented best practices and are not keeping up with the best data available.

Rebecca stated that she would not have the bandwidth to set up former and currently incarcerated women interviews/meetings and was hoping that staff at DOC and HOC could bridge that.

Chairwoman Hallett can connect Patty with the MCI Framingham Catholic Chaplain, who has connections with women transitioning to the community, so she can schedule interviews with women who have been released from custody. Sarah Ruiz stated that she felt a tour could be a bit voyeuristic and would like to know if there is a way to do it respectfully.

**Discussion on Seat Vacancy of a Formerly Incarcerated Woman on the Panel**

Senator Friedman stated that someone on this Panel needs to have the perspective of someone formerly incarcerated that can offer guidance on how to move forward with issues that have been discussed in this forum. Chairwoman Hallett indicated that she took the liberty of reaching out to the MCI Framingham Catholic Chaplain, Sister Maureen Clark, who runs an after-care program and invited her to listen in to today’s meeting to get a sense of the Panel’s purpose. Sister Maureen has someone in mind to become a Panel member who was previously incarcerated at MCI Framingham and has been successful in the community post release. She is in the process of reaching out to that person now to see if she would be willing to join the Panel. Chairwomen Hallett noted that the Panel did have another formerly incarcerated woman on the Panel who is no longer able to continue due to family obligations.

Patty has an inquiry out to two women who have been out for quite a while. One has an MSW and is working in the field as a clinical social worker. She is waiting to hear back. A second person is currently working in the greater Worcester area.

There was a larger discussion around having members support some level of diversity in terms of sexual orientation or racial diversity.

Senator Friedman stated that she recently conducted a tour of Framingham with the Senate President and looked at the mental health unit and asked the Superintendent how many women were there because of their mental illness or committed a crime due to their illness. She wanted to know why we are incarcerating women who meet this profile and what are we doing for them since they should not be in prison. She further stated that the Panel should be very focused on these women. Patty said that it speaks to increasing programming and funding to alternatives to incarceration and that we should look at those other alternatives.

Chairwoman Hallett stated that the court system ultimately is the one who sentences women to serve a term of incarceration, she does not have the expertise in what occurs prior to incarceration, we would need to rely on the Agencies that have this expertise.

Patty stated that we need to look at who is representing us from community-based service providers and one group who is not represented is the courts. She wondered if we could ask for an addendum to the legislation to allow for that. We have Probation represented but it may be helpful to have someone from the courts as we move forward. Corinn acknowledged that Probation does fall under the trial court but the court sets the probation conditions and Probation Officers enforce them. The trial court does not get too involved with the diversion process. The DA’s offices have a big component in diversion. Senator Friedman took issue that the trial court does not play a large part in diversion. Senator Friedman stated her concern over the issued RFPs and strategic plans moving forward. She further stated that there is a disconnect between the administration moving these projects along and this Panel.

**Discussion re Community-Based Alternatives to Incarceration**

Sarah Ruiz asked how we go about adding new working groups. Dr. Connolly stated that the Panel’s mission statement should have a loop to integrate us with others. She stated that folks would like to know where they stand (with respect to the Panel) with projects involving Justice Involved Women. Chairwoman Hallett supported the idea of amending the mission statement to add a mechanism to integrate the Panel with others working on initiatives for Justice Involved Women. Senator Friedman suggested the Panel look at our next agenda and prepare to have a discussion around what we see and how that needs to change and look at our mission statement and make sure we are dealing with diversion, how we are connected to others, and that we start the conversation at the next meeting with what we learned so we don’t start over from scratch. Senator Friedman made a motion to write to DCAMM requesting that they share information with the Panel when they are planning for any projects that affect women involved with the criminal justice system. A roll call vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

Patty Murphy announced that she is retiring in July 2021 after 48 years. There is conversation about whether she can represent the MSA on this panel and will let the group know as soon as possible. The decision may be made in the next two weeks. She hopes to stay on and continue the work.

**Public Comment**

Elijah Patterson said he is very optimistic about the work and all the points brought up today. He is very excited to see what is next.

**Adjourn**

There was a motion to adjourn at 1:04pm by Senator Friedman and seconded by Patty Murphy. All voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:04pm.