**Panel on Justice-Involved Women**

Date: September 21, 2020

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Place: Virtual Meeting (Webex)

Meeting number:

171 634 4289

Password:

EPS123

Chairwoman Hallett called the meeting to order at 11:05AM once a quorum had been established.

**Meeting Minutes Review/Vote**

There was a motion to approve the prior meeting minutes from Senator Friedman, seconded by Patty Murphy. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes were approved.

**Update on RFR from EOPSS/DOC**

Chairwoman Hallett stated that in August of 2020, an RFP was issued by DCAMM to House Doctor consultants for a strategic planning consultant team. House Doctor consultants are those that have already been reviewed and approved by the Designer Selection Board. These House Doctors have strong experience in corrections and strategic planning. Because these designers have already been selected publicly in the past, this process is not public. This has been done several times in the past. After that, the contracting process will continue throughout October 2020. By November of 2020, a contract should be finalized. The consultant team will work with DCAMM and DOC to gather, organize, and summarize data on incarcerated women. The consultants will also engage stakeholders which include public safety/probation/executive branch/interagency task forces/research institutions; and criminal justice reform advocates. A strategic plan is expected by the summer of 2021. After review of the planning study findings a building study will need to be done to develop the capital plan for the facility needs for women including the impact on MCI Framingham and Bay State Correctional facility before any possible relocation. Any possible relocation decision will not be made until calendar year 2022 at the earliest.

Andrea James asked what folks on the Panel think about this RFR. She stated she feels they are a duplication of the Panel and their efforts. Senator Friedman stated that it would be great get a copy of the response from Chairwoman Hallett on the current status. Patty stated that the architectural firms take a more active approach in understanding who they are creating these institutions for and getting information on the population so they can best design a building to serve the population as a whole. Her experience was that they meet with the staff and learn about the women and what their needs are and then use that to inform the design. Senator Friedman stated she feels there is a wall up between EOPSS and the DOC and this Panel and we have been empowered through the administration and does not feel like they are in charge and it is very upsetting. She stated there needs to be a bigger conversation at EOPSS and perhaps the Sheriffs on where they see this Panel. Hema stated she feels the need to re-evaluate what their role is and what everyone’s respective role is. Chairwoman Hallett stated there is a need for this new facility and EOPSS and DOC are trying to find a way to engage the Panel. Chairwoman Hallett indicated that Commissioner Mici would look forward to recommendations from the Panel on how to design Bay State so it is trauma-informed for the women. Andrea stated that she would not lend her voice to this and does not believe a trauma-informed prison can ever exist. Arielle stated she can ask EOPSS CFO Emi Joy to speak at the next meeting with more information.

**Update from Patty re MSA Meeting**

Patty stated she met with the MSA twice. She met with the superintendents who have women in their facilities as well as Middlesex that has an after-care program for women who are housed at Framingham but coming back to Middlesex. She spoke with them about creating an updated survey and they are in the process of doing that. She should have them by the end of the week and will submit to EOPSS for distribution. Each also updated their program descriptions which specify all the programs and they are currently offering and notes if programs have paused due to Covid-19 concerns. The numbers in every county were significantly reduced in the number of incarcerated women. There was some fluctuation but mostly everyone is down about 50%. Senator Friedman asked for the requirements in order to access certain programs and what the barriers in getting access to programs are. Patty clarified that if you maintain good behavior, you can continue to participate in a class. From the Sheriff’s perspective, there are few limitations to accessing programming. Andrea noted that the number of women being incarcerated are climbing once again. The low was in June – 443 women. Before Covid-19 in January, the high was 876. Now, we have a slow up-tick, the week of Sept. 19 is 575 women so she is concerned about the number creeping back up. Patty stated she has an agreement with Hampden PD and they no longer hold women in their lock-ups, instead they are held in the Sheriff’s facility and those numbers show up on her population counts every morning. Chairwoman Hallett spoke about the DOC’s Pathway Program and the female assessment tool that she can send around. They have a family services department that coordinates with DCF on visitation and a sex offender treatment program as well. She stated she can get the Compass Risk and Needs assessment tool for the Panel to look at. If you incur a disciplinary report, the goal is always to get you back into the program and reduce recidivism. Andrea stated that terms such as offender used on these types of documents are harmful. Allison stated that they have college programming to include an inside-out program with Framingham State University and a Boston University college program. She spoke about pre-release work opportunities. She stated that housing post release would be a good topic for the Panel to focus on. Housing is a major barrier faced by the women as they are often not financially stable and do not have a safe and sustainable place to live. Andrea stated we need to be looking at housing but not just after women are forced into prison. Patty said Erika Kates did 15 years of research on pre-trial and a variety of issues like bail, housing, etc. and we might want to access that information and make it vailable to Panelists to use as a foundation. Senator Friedman asked if we can have the speakers that were mentioned by Andrea James and Patty Murphy speak at a future meeting.

**Data Subcommittee Update from Chairwoman Hallett**

The first meeting was held on August 24th. It was a planning meeting and the group intends to have substantial work done in the future. Corinn was gathering pre-trial probation and post-commitment probation data. Patty has spoken about updated data from the Sheriffs. Chairwoman Hallett is working on getting updated data from Framingham and South Middlesex. Feedback during the meeting was to reserve some time for the subcommittee members to brainstorm what type of data has been collected thus far, what data has been requested and how to go about collecting it going forward. They will reserve time for public comment at the end of the next subcommittee meeting as well.

**Public Comment**

Mallory Hanora stated the Panel’s 2019 status report spoke specifically about decarceration and wanted to discuss meaningful pathways to release. The list should include that and clemency as well as medical parole to address the lifers and long-timers in the 2020 report being issued. Senator Friedman responded that medical parole is a big issue among her colleagues and needs to be followed by this Panel to see what we can do. She offered to speak to Senator Jehlen about coming to speak at a Panel meeting about these issues. Hema asked that we include clemency.

Elijah Patterson said the house doctors and other architects have access to information that commission members are not getting.

**Adjourn**

Chairwoman Hallett adjourned the meeting at 12:27PM.