



Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission
Tuesday, April 12, 2022
10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Virtual via Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees:

Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian from Middlesex Sheriff's Office, Danna Mauch from Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Senator Cindy Friedman from Office of Senator Cindy Friedman, Ken Gordon from Office of Representative Ken Gordon, Scott Taberner from Executive Office for Health and Human Services, Lydia Conley from Association for Behavioral Healthcare, Nancy Connolly from Department of Mental Health, Deirdre Calvert from Bureau of Substance Addiction Services, Timothy Burton from National Alliance on Mental Illness of Massachusetts, Abigail Kim from Association for Behavioral Healthcare, David Ryan from Middlesex Sheriff's Office, Fiona Bruce-Baiden from Office of Representative Ken Gordon, Marisa Hebble from Massachusetts Trial Court, Liz Berman from Office of Senator Cindy Friedman, Brian Kiwanuka from Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Tamika Jeune from Commonwealth Medicine, Katharine London from Commonwealth Medicine, Catia Sharp from Commonwealth Medicine, Debra Williams from Commonwealth Medicine.

10:30 AM: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Danna Mauch and Sheriff Koutoujian welcomed attendees and opened the meeting.

10:35 AM: LEGISLATIVE AND BUDGET UPDATE

Senator Friedman shared an update on her office's efforts to draft budget language which includes funding for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 and updated line-item language for the next phase of the Restoration Center pilot program and the Commission's role in overseeing this work. This language is being submitted to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. The changes focus on the oversight of the implementation and changes to membership of the Commission, including the addition of a representative of the funding and philanthropic community.

Representative Gordon mentioned that the House Ways and Means budget will be reviewed this week, and that he has language from Senator Friedman that he will submit as an amendment if the House budget does not include the Governor's recommended line item for the Restoration Center.

He also asked if the Commission would replace Chief Bongiorno's position on the Commission with another police chief now that Chief Bongiorno has retired.

Senator Friedman recommended that the Commission seek a new police chief representative after the new budget language is considered by the Senate and budget conference committee.

Lydia Conley asked whether the Senator is reviewing the appropriateness of including a provider organization on the Commission given the updated Commission role she is considering.

Senator Friedman said that she is reflecting on this question as part of the drafting process.

10:40 AM: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

Sheriff Koutoujian accepted a motion made by Senator Friedman and seconded by Scott Taberner to approve minutes from the last meeting held virtually on Thursday, February 2, 2022, via Zoom. Sheriff Koutoujian conducted a roll call vote. Sheriff Koutoujian, Danna Mauch, Senator Friedman, Scott Taberner, Lydia Conley, and Tim Burton voted to approve. Representative Gordon, Nancy Connolly, and Deirdre Calvert abstained from voting due to missing the meeting in question. The minutes from the last meeting are approved.

10:45 AM: YEAR FOUR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Catia Sharp reviewed the contents of the Year Four Findings and Recommendations for the Commission.

Senator Friedman asked whether the report would come from Commonwealth Medicine, University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School or whether the report will come from the Commission.

Catia answered that the report has been compiled by Commonwealth Medicine on behalf of the Commission and is formatted as such with reference to this relationship. She shared a draft cover letter coming from the co-chairs and legislative members of the Commission for review and signature as was done in prior years when the bulk of the report was written on behalf of the Commission by a vendor.

Danna Mauch thanked the Commonwealth Medicine team for their efforts with drafting the Request for Proposals, the Commission report, and all work to date.

11:00 AM: STATUTE DISCUSSION

Senator Friedman referred to her earlier comments about drafting updated statutory language for the Commission's second phase as part of the annual legislative budgeting process. She mentioned proposed changes to Commission membership and clarification of the Commission's role going forward. She will share the exact language with the Commission at the next meeting in May 2022.

11:50 AM: PROCUREMENT AND WORK PLAN UPDATE

Catia Sharp shared a work plan update with the Commission. Many items on the work plan have been completed since September 2021 to date. There are outstanding items around intergovernmental contracting to direct various funding streams to Commonwealth Medicine and the procurement process. Commonwealth Medicine seeks to secure a vendor for the pilot program this fiscal year. The tentative start date for the selected contractor will be January 1, 2023.

Scott Taberner asked whether the Year Four Findings and Recommendations requires a vote from the Commission to reflect the report in the Commission's formal record.

Senator Friedman and Sheriff Koutoujian suggested that a vote to concur with the report be scheduled for the May 2022 Commission meeting.

Danna Mauch and Representative Gordon provided their consent to sign the cover letter. Senator Friedman and Sheriff Koutoujian will provide consent later in the day after reviewing the draft.

11:05 AM: FINANCING UPDATE

Sheriff Koutoujian shared that he and Danna Mauch met with the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans (MAHP) and the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association (MHA) to explore funding sources for the Middlesex County Restoration Center pilot program.

The Commission engaged in a discussion on the current state of the emergency room (ED) boarding issue in behavioral health care. There are several exciting initiatives happening in the community that may relieve this problem. MAHP and MHA are very aware of this issue and may be willing to fund alternatives to ED boarding.

11:15 AM: NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, 2022, via Zoom.

Sheriff Koutoujian accepted a motion from Senator Friedman and a second from Lydia Conley to adjourn the meeting. The Sheriff conducted a roll call vote to adjourn; Sheriff Koutoujian, Danna Mauch, Senator Friedman, Representative Gordon, Scott Taberner, Lydia Conley, Nancy Connolly, and Tim Burton voted in the affirmative. No members voted in the negative. The meeting was adjourned.