



**Middlesex County Restoration Center
Thursday, September 19, 2019
State House Room 222
Boston, MA**

MINUTES

Attendees: Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian, co-chair; Danna Mauch, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, co-chair; Senator Cindy Friedman; Representative Kenneth Gordon; Scott Taberner, MassHealth; Nancy Connolly, Department of Mental Health; Marisa Hebble, MA Trial Court; Elizabeth Berman, Office of Senator Cindy Friedman; David Ryan, Middlesex Sheriff's Office; Michael Blatus, Middlesex Sheriff's Office; Catia Sharp, Middlesex Sheriff's Office; Rachel Bishop, MassHealth; June Binney, Health and Justice Strategies.

10:00 AM: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Danna Mauch called the meeting to order. Danna asked for Commission members and community members in the room to introduce themselves. The Commission welcomed Elizabeth Berman from Senator Friedman's office to her first Commission meeting.

10:05 AM: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Friedman noted that the state fiscal year 2020 budget included \$250,000 in funding for the Commission. Senator Friedman and Representative Gordon had no other updates on pending legislation to share with the Commission.

Danna Mauch thanked the Commission and staff members for their work on the Commission Findings and Recommendations, which were filed with the legislature in June. She noted the strong effort that Catia Sharp provided the Commission in preparing, reviewing, and promulgating the year one report.

10:10 AM: APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM YEAR ONE

Danna Mauch noted that minutes from the first year of the Commission were prepared for approval by the body. However, Scott Taberner noted that the Commission failed to have a quorum, and therefore would not be able to approve the minutes at the current meeting. The item was tabled for a future meeting when a quorum of Commission members would be present.

10:15 AM: REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YEAR ONE

Commission members received copies of the recommendations, plan for year two, and executive summary from the Commission Findings and Recommendations report.

Senator Friedman noted that this is the roadmap for the Commission, so the items requiring legislative support to accomplish ought to be identified for a future meeting. Additionally, Senator Friedman observed that there are short, medium, and long-term items on the list, so the Commission should separate the work into streams.

Danna Mauch used this as an opportunity to transition to a discussion about the work plan. She asked Catia Sharp to hand out copies of the work plan and to walk Commission members through it.

10:25 AM: PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE AND WORK PLAN

Catia Sharp outlined the three types of recommendations that were included in the Commission Findings and Recommendations: (1) findings related to the operation of a restoration center; (2) additional research on gaps and target population needed after year one; and (3) recommendations for improvements to existing services or programs that are outside of the scope of a restoration center, but would support the mission of the restoration center, including diversion of individuals with behavioral health conditions. The first set of recommendations would be the subject of a planning grant to a service provider who would help the Commission finalize plans for a restoration center, including securing a location and developing a staffing plan. The second set of recommendations would be accomplished through a survey of police departments, data matching between the Middlesex Sheriff's Office (MSO) and MassHealth, and seeking out a specific police department and emergency room that has high-quality data for a more in-depth analysis. The final set of recommendations could, in part, be the subject of a response to the Request for Information expected to be released by the Executive Office for Health and Human Services on redesigning the delivery of ambulatory behavioral healthcare, to be discussed later in the meeting.

Danna Mauch added that the data matching between MSO and MassHealth could build upon similar work already being done by those two agencies.

Sheriff Koutoujian agreed, further elaborating on the MassHealth-funded reentry initiative he is working on and his Data-Driven Justice Initiative, discussed in previous Commission meetings.

Senator Friedman asked how this work plan would identify those individuals who never had any behavioral health services.

Danna Mauch responded that it would attempt to do so, and that it would also be helpful to look at how many individuals become disaffected and drop out of the treatment system as well.

Sheriff Koutoujian agreed, citing the high number of individuals who become detained or incarcerated who don't have a behavioral health diagnosis at the time of their arrival, but are identified for the mental health caseload in the facility.

Senator Friedman thought this was interesting, and it might be helpful to look at common diagnoses as well.

Senator Friedman added that police departments often do not collect this information, so she wanted to make sure that information is being collected from them in the least intrusive possible way.

Sheriff Koutoujian suggested that Sonya Khan, Data-Driven Justice Manager in his office, would be helpful in the police data collection efforts.

Representative Gordon suggested that information from police represent a variety of community types, including both urban and rural.

Catia Sharp responded that this is the goal, but that unfortunately larger, more urban departments tend to have more resources devoted to data collection and maintenance.

Danna Mauch added that this is why the Sheriff's Data-Driven Justice Initiative is so needed, because it will bring this capability to departments with fewer resources.

Senator Friedman sought to ensure that an overall financial plan, including a variety of revenue sources, is included as part of the work plan.

Danna Mauch noted that the comprehensiveness of the Commission's Findings and Recommendations from its first year would be a strong supporting document for fundraising from non-state revenue sources.

Sheriff Koutoujian offered Kashif Siddiqi in his office to assist in grant proposals and fundraising.

Scott Taberner pointed out that fiscal sustainability would be key for a restoration center, so fundraising should account for how to optimize the use of one-time vs sustainable resources. He recommended the inclusion of commercial payers in the funding plan.

Danna Mauch agreed that commercial payers need to be part of the conversation.

Nancy Connolly asked staff to delineate the work streams where help is needed from Commission members.

Danna Mauch agreed, and added that the need for Commission members and other stakeholders can be added to the work plan.

Danna Mauch noted the large amount of work planned for year two, and thanked the Sheriff's office staff and others for their work. She noted the assistance of Dave Ryan, Michael Blatus, and Bridget Cook specifically.

Sheriff Koutoujian raised the prospect of making a third out-of-state site visit to Miami or Tucson, as had been discussed previously.

Danna Mauch shared that she had seen Judge Leifman (who is in charge of the development of a Miami restoration center) and Dr. Margie Balfour (who runs the Tucson restoration center) at a convening the week before, and each was happy to host Commission members. She shared that the Miami center is still under construction, and that there wouldn't be anything to see until at least February. She recommended visiting the Tucson center because it is a good example of the police drop-off process and good clinical management.

Sheriff Koutoujian added that he knows the Tucson police chief and sheriff, and could reach out to solicit meetings with them as well. He suggested that the Commission make a trip to Tucson in the fall.

Scott Taberner agreed, adding that the site visits last year were valuable to crystallize what drive up capacity looks like, what staffing models are used, and how officer transfers can work. He added that Michigan has a robust Medicaid program, and Bexar County was an eye opener due to the use of Medicaid funds for restoration center funding despite Texas not being an expansion state.

Danna responded that Arizona is not an expansion state, but they have a robust Medicaid funding stream that channels \$165 million to behavioral health emergency response. She offered to share a slide from a behavioral health crisis services conference she had recently attended on the subject. Danna noted that Massachusetts, while having a robust Medicaid program, has a disadvantage in terms of the complexity of the Medicaid delivery system in terms of funding a restoration center.

Commission members present reached consensus to plan a third site visit to Tucson in the fall.

10:55 AM: PLANNING GRANT PROCUREMENT

Sheriff Koutoujian asked his Director of Purchasing, Michael Blatus, to present on the procurement of a planning grantee.

Michael Blatus shared with Commission members that staff were working on a Request for Responses (RFR) to procure a planning grantee to help the Commission plan staffing levels, select a location for a restoration center, and generally prepare to launch services in fiscal year 2022. He noted that the staff conversations to date have assumed that this procurement would only include planning grant services, because a decision has not been made about which state agency would hold the contract for the implementation of services in FY 2022. Therefore, the state agency who is designated to manage the contract for implementation of services would need to hold its own procurement for a service provider to implement a restoration center.

Scott Taberner suggested that it may be valuable to solicit input from the provider community on the open planning questions before releasing the RFR document, because once the document is published, there are strict rules forbidding conversations with potential bidders.

Danna Mauch listed the reviewed opportunities for soliciting planning assistance from the provider community: a Request for Information, an RFR, or a combination of the two. She added that input had been sought from some providers last year through site visits to the Behavioral Health Network and Community Healthlink, while other providers presented directly to the Commission. Danna expressed concern over the compressed time frame that the Commission has to use these tools before their year two report is due to the legislature in April, and funding must be secured in the state budget for year three. Danna proposed that the Association for Behavioral Healthcare (ABH) and the state agencies represented on the Commission might identify additional providers that they would like to solicit input from, and convene a meeting.

Scott Taberner responded that the Commission ought to access provider expertise in a meaningful way.

Nancy Connolly suggested that this could be done with a number of providers with direct expertise in diversion and re-entry services.

Danna Mauch asked Michael Blatus how the Commission might do this without undercutting the procurement.

Sheriff Koutoujian suggested that it would be important to get the right providers in the room to get helpful and reliable information.

Nancy Connolly suggested delaying posting the RFR a couple of weeks to accommodate a meeting with providers.

Michael Blatus suggested that an RFI could also solicit this type of information.

Dave Ryan said that the procurement could be postponed a couple of weeks to solicit more information from the provider community.

Nancy Connolly asked what the timeline for procurement and contracting is.

Catia Sharp responded that the response window was drafted for three weeks' time to accommodate the submission of high-quality responses, putting an anticipated contract start date around November 1. This would give a short amount of time to work with the selected bidder to develop an implementation plan for a restoration center in time to include the plan in a submission of year two findings and recommendations to the legislature on April 13. She noted that it would be more difficult to submit the report late this year, given the need for a more complex budget request and the timing of the state budget process.

Marisa Hebble asked if the meeting would be kept to only Middlesex County providers, or providers statewide.

Danna Mauch thought the meeting would include statewide providers.

Consensus of the Commission members present was to set up a meeting as soon as possible, before an RFR is published, with the help of ABH, in its role as a member of the Commission.

Dave Ryan added that the procurement for planning services would need to be separated from a procurement in the next fiscal year for implementation of a restoration center given that the Commission may decide that Sheriff's office might not be the ultimate entity to manage the contract for a restoration center.

Sheriff Koutoujian thanked his staff, adding that a lot of work had gone into preparing for this discussion.

11:25 AM: EOHHS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION COMMISSION RESPONSE

Danna Mauch asked Scott Taberner to explain the EOHHS behavioral health ambulatory care redesign process and timeline.

Scott explained that Commissioners of departments across human services agencies have held eight or nine listening sessions across the state to solicit input of a diverse array of stakeholders – from consumers to family members to providers to advocates – on the state of behavioral health services and how to improve them. EOHHS will then release an RFI to solicit written responses on this subject. Scott asked Rachel Bishop from his office, who works more directly on this project, for additional comments.

Rachel Bishop said that staff at EOHHS are still poring through the results of the listening sessions and working on the RFI, but expect to release the RFI in mid- to late-October. They are seeking input on the availability and accessibility of services ranging from outpatient treatment to urgent and crisis care. Rachel noted that from responses reviewed so far, it is clear that walk-in and urgent behavioral health care access is clearly needed.

The Commission members present reached a consensus to respond to the RFI when it is released.

Danna Mauch asked if any of the community members present had any additional comments.

Marisa Hebble shared an initiative at the Trial Court to develop standards on clients with substance use and mental health conditions. They will spend the next year gathering input from a wide range of stakeholders, and invite feedback from Commission members and others.

11:35 AM: NEXT STEPS

Danna Mauch asked Catia Sharp to describe the next steps for the Commission.

Catia Sharp noted that a schedule for meetings for the rest of the calendar year would be forthcoming, which after the current discussion will include a site visit to Tucson. She also listed initiatives that would be opportunities for Commission member involvement, including reviewing respondents for the planning grant award, data sharing projects, the Commission response to the EOHHS RFI, and a meeting with community-based providers prior to release of the planning grant RFR.

11:40 AM: CLOSING

Sheriff Koutoujian and Danna Mauch adjourned the meeting.