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**MEETING MINUTES**  
**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Date:** March 8, 2022

**Time:** 11:00AM-1:00PM

**Microsoft Teams Virtual Location:** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Or call in (audio only)** [857-327-9245](tel:857-327-9245) **Phone Conference ID:** 340 146 417#

**Agenda Items:**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Andrew Peck at 11:04am.

		Video/Call	Absent	Meeting Minutes
1	Chair-Andrew Peck	X		Yes
2	Scott Taberner	X		Yes
3	Rep. Sean Garballey	X		Yes
4	Sen. James Eldridge	X		Yes
5	DA Marian Ryan (New MDAA designee)	X		Yes
6	Allison S. Cartwright*	X		Abstain
7	Lorna Spencer		X	Absent
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan		X	Absent
9	Diane Coffey	X		Yes
10	Jennifer Kakley	X		Yes
11	Judge Rosemary Minehan		X	Absent
12	Kara Hayes	X		Yes
13	Carolyn Boyes-Watson	X		Abstain
14	Erin Freeborn	X		Yes
15	Dennis D. Everett Jr.**	X		Yes

<b>1</b> <b>6</b>	Susan Jeghelian	X		Yes
<b>1</b> <b>7</b>	Strong Oak Lefebvre	X		Yes

\*Present until 12:00PM

\*\*Joined at 11:20AM

**EOPSS Staff:** Arielle Mullaney and Anjeza Xhemollari

**Others in attendance:** Over 10 members of the public attend the open meeting.

## 2. Welcome

Chairman Andrew Peck welcomed all committee members and attendance was taken. Chairman Peck introduced new MDAA Designee District Attorney Marian Ryan to the Committee.

### 1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 8, 2022

Kara Hayes made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, the motion was second by Scott Taberner. Strong Oak had one edit regarding funding numbers. Roll call was taken to approve the draft meeting minutes. Allison S. Cartwright and Carolyn Boyes-Watson abstained.

### 2. Establish guidelines and guided questions for circle process

Chairman Pek-Asked Strong Oak and Kara to set up the guidelines for the circle process and start the conversation. There were some concerns regarding ethics conflict. Last month EOPSS legal indicated that there wasn't an ethics conflict, but it seems to be that conflict is more internal with the committee.

Strong Oak-I would like to defer to Kara as she was the Chair of the Questionnaire Subcommittee. I'm more than happy to provide some context.

Kara- I wasn't prepared to do that, but I will speak through my own training lineage and wanted to defer to Strong Oak about the nature of this circle process. Despite my lack of preparation, I will speak a little bit about my experience as a circle keeper and I turn to Erin and Carolyn as they two are keepers. Some of the guidelines of my practice is to accept other worldviews. To actively be present. To be open minded. To look forward and respect everyone in their backgrounds. To realize that everyone in the conversation should look for those shared commonalities and not just the things that divide us. We should be sensitive, vulnerable, and courageous. There are no safe spaces and honesty matters. So does sincerity and understanding and humility and authenticity, which can be hard to bring into meetings generally. Everyone who speaks today, we grant each other the dignity. We try to hold the confidentiality of the space which is performed in open meeting. That we leave from our humanity and compassion into this space today that we operate with grace and integrity and try to be generous. Those are the kind of the values of where I practice. There are many circle keepers in this space, but I will turn to Strong Oak and those other circle keepers to see what we need to add or change.

Strong Oak-From my perspective, that was an excellent rendition. I would add that, for indigenes communities, the circle itself its seen as the important piece. 90% of the time you're listening and not talking. You're not judging. When people speak, you don't interrupt. When people speak, the circle goes clockwise for a reason, because that's like the manifestation. Being here on my mother Earth and manifesting all intentions as we move through the world, and it goes away with the sun. So those were what I would add.

Kara-Looking to Susan, to Erin, to Carolyn in the committee if there's anything to add to our process of setting guidelines and opening for the rest of the committee.

Carolyn-I don't need to add anything. I appreciate what has been said. There is a gift in this moment. There's a conflict in this committee. Something we should talk from our hearts. From my perspective Restorative Justice

is very challenging and we are trying to do something very differently. Things in our society, in our institutions and our processes, so it is challenging all the time in many ways, and I think to some extent, that's part of what we need to talk about. I want to remind everyone we've been meeting for number of years and early on we shared an article called "Conflict as Property" and it talks about conflict as opportunity through which we come together and try to understand each other better. I think that that's the kind of spirit in which I personally am coming to this conversation, and I appreciate us being willing to use circle as we had before to have this conversation. That's all I wanted to say.

Senator Eldridge- What is the sphere or contours of the conflict that were discussing and how is that done during the restorative justice circle? It's kind of a broad question, but just trying to understand what we're going to be discussing.

Chairman Peck- Strong Oak you might be the best person to answer that question.

Strong Oak-The nature of the conflict is within a member of this committee. For three years we've been sitting in this committee and two years back, I approached Erin about her program expanding across the state and she asked that I not bring it up until she brought it up herself. I honored that request until we found out that her program received funding and earmark through the budget. How can we have transparency? Other programs are under representant. I raised the issue about one program proliferating across 32 different police departments and the ethical issue.

Senator Eldridge- I work closely with DOC and incarcerated people that are trying to expand restorative justice programs. Is there a sense that's a conflict as well? I certainly hope that's not a conflict, but I do want to mention that there's been significant growth across the state by incarcerated people expanding restorative justice programs. Thank you.

Kara-I'm aware of that Senator. The grid is hard to navigate. I have seen you in those places and appreciate your support of the work that's not usually seen. My recollection of the issues that came up last month when we didn't have all the parties at the table and as its mentioned in the meeting minutes, restorative justice is something that our system, with your advocacy and the advocacy of others can be a healing modality for people trapped in our cycle. I think we have discussed from our earliest iteration on Susan and Carolyn's memo that we look to lift the work of community centered processes. There is a moderate for some community centric process that also encompasses mutual aid and transformational justice.

String Oak-Some of the programs don't really connect with the system at all.

Kara- We need to have a bigger conversation about this and what would be the asking of these community programs. It's important to ground this in some of our earliest conversations that come out of Susan and Carolyn's memo in which we benefit from the system. All of us voted on a sentence that we needed to lift all boats and recognizing that much of the best of this work happens outside of systems process.

Carolyn- We must work a little better to understand one another. I think that for me, when we say conflict, we're really saying it's an opportunity for us to better understand where we're all coming from. I would urge us to use this time to have the circle as planned. I think we've had numerous ones over the three years, and we've grown quite a lot on our shared understandings about this work. I think this is a wonderful moment. In which to do standing together because we are different, we are coming from a lot of different perspectives. Community and systems are always very, very different points of view. It's necessary for us to listen better to each other.

Chairman Peck-Have we established the guidelines of how to move in this process? Are we comfortable? Who will manage the circle, Strong Oak?

Strong Oak-The circle keeper just gets it going and everyone agrees to speak without judgment or interactions. We understand that we are dealing with the conflicts that we outlined and if there's any changes to bring it up now.

Chairman Peck-This means that is done in context of public meeting.

Strong Oak-Does that mean that members of the public participate in the circle. Do we all agree to that?

Chairman Peck-Why not only committee members?

Strong Oak-Because they are here in circle and have a voice as members of community on how we conduct our business. They have been involved in the committee. Attend the meetings. Views will be represented, and we could take a vote.

Chairman Peck-The issue resides within the Committee, no?

Strong Oak-It depends on your prospective. Everyone that's in the room, needs to be part of the circle. We have done it in the past.

Susan-Strong Oak is correct. We have involved members of the public in the past and the conversation is very rich. I support in continuing that process.

### 3. RJAC Circle

Strong Oak made a motion to include members of the public to take part of the circle. Susan second the motion as members of the public have participated in the past. Roll call was taken. See below.

		YES	NO	Abstain	Absent
1	<b>Chair</b> -Andrew Peck		X		
2	Scott Taberner	X			
3	Rep. Sean Garballey	X			
4	Sen. James Eldridge	X			
5	DA Marian Ryan	X			
6	Allison S. Cartwright	X			
7	Lorna Spencer				X
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan				X
9	Diane Coffey	X			
10	Jennifer Kakley	X			
11	Judge Rosemary Minehan				X
12	Kara Hayes			X	
13	Carolyn Boyes-Watson	X			
14	Erin Freeborn			X	
15	Dennis D. Everett Jr.*	X			
16	Susan Jeghelian	X			
17	Strong Oak Lefebvre	X			

\*Yes, with edits. A part of me wants to say no because we haven't established values and guidelines deeply enough. My fear of having community members entering a public space, they are interactive with powers and I'm uncomfortable, but I would support the elders in place.

Kara- asking members of the public to mute their phones unless they are speaking and pass with compassion.

Strong Oak-That sounds like guidelines to make this a productive discussion. Maybe share one or two guidelines as we go around. Passes to Erin.

Erin-I don't have anything to add to what you and Kara talked about. I don't want to be the first one to speak. I would like to listen for the 90%.

Strong Oak-OK. That sounds good to me. I will be the last one speaking. I'm setting this in motion. There's so many in the call. Please pass to the next person. I will take notes. Susan-do you feel comfortable going first?

Susan- Yes. Thank you for asking. I really respect everybody on this committee and all the hard work we've been doing. I want to thank the members of the public for attending and supporting us. This is an opportunity to better understand one another and I'm really seeking to do myself today. I'm sorry for the conflict. There's been some misunderstandings that not everybody on the committee knew about or were involved with but now it's affecting the trust we all have for each other for the work we've been doing. I would support this circle and encourage these conversations until we can feel healed and able to move forward. I am really proud of the vision, mission and values we came up with.

Carolyn- It's very hard to do things differently as business as usual in our society. When we try to move against, try to be more equitable, we try to do things in a way that is upholding people who are not given the opportunity to engage with their own conflicts and their own issues in their community, it means we must be very intentional because business as usual will do things the same way over and over and over again. I think that's what we're struggling with and it's a difficult struggle for all of us. So, I want to speak to that, and I want to speak specifically about the role of the community and process of Restorative Justice.

I was there at the very beginning when the program at Concord started. I was present at my first circle training, Joan Turner and Jeanne Bell, two women from Concord who wanted to see something happen in their community. We did a presentation to the District Court, there was a panel in Concord to get it up and running. There was volunteer training, created programs for the community.

Told this beautiful story about how they had done all the work they had done ethically as police and there was still so much hurt in the community. My greatest heartfelt desire is to see other communities do the same to partner with their local police, to partner with their District Court, to partner with the system and to create the kind of programs that meet their needs. I think it's in the creation of that partnership. It's in the partnership that the trust is built between communities and systems.

I worry about wanting to preserve that possess. If we were to provide funds from the state, we need to be intentional, to provide the same opportunities in the Commonwealth to actively create the kind of partnerships that they deem are the right partnerships for them.

The big hope for me with this committee was that we were moving in the right direction. We moved methodically over three years, learning about all the different kinds of restorative justice, far beyond the legislation that's going on in this state. We moved to create a mission statement that's quite broad and supportive of defining what our role is.

It's that aspiration that I most care about I think that if we want to have equity and transparency, we want to be intentional about how to support all communities in this Commonwealth to build those partnerships with the system.

Allison- I was unaware of what was going underneath the surface. It became apparent to me when I was asked to make edit to the annual report, even though we all voted on. I'm glad that this is getting aired and it's being discussed. Having said that, I just want to learn more about what's going on and how we are going to react and deal with this. We must go a little deeper than that if we're going to need to trust one another.

Brenda- I'm profoundly grateful that this committee has come to a place where it can have difficult conversation and I'm just appreciative of every moment. I would like to echo something that Carolyn said about community and restorative justice. These practices are every supportive.

Diane-I feel uncomfortable, and I've felt uncomfortable for some time, and I still feel uncomfortable today. I like information and like Allison said, we don't really know all the things that happen and what brought us here today. I have respect for the work that Erin has done, and I've known Strong Oak almost my entire career. I work for the State, and I understand what Erin did, very strategic and very smart work. Then I realized not

everyone has the same access or information. I'm part of the system, part of the government, have white privilege but not everyone has access to that. I'm honored to be part of this committee and I'm hoping we could reach a better place.

Kara- I'm just going to be honest. I am certainly in my trauma and victimization today. This isn't about Erin doing what she needs to do for her programming or about my system benefiting from restorative practice. It's about something else completely that we need to move at the speed of trust. The Senator made an important point that he championed a lot of other spaces. I think we're trying to navigate how to champion a lot of other different spaces, even though our mandate is limited. How about the survivor of significant violence? How we think about restorative justice youth, about victims, whether that's when we use surrogates in this work or whether it's the profound instrumentalization of victims and survivors to the benefit of offenders, this work is victim centered space. It's always been victim centered space and that is true from the First Nations leaders who's taught me it's been true in my academic practice, and it's true in my own facilitation.

We also need to name victims in this space. That is my issue. We do not name victimization in the space. We only name the needs of returned citizens and people behind the wall. That does a profound disservice to the population of people who are naming themselves as survivors.

Dennis- I'm trying to wrap my head around this. There're so many layers to this. I just left circle in Middleton, and I feel like I'm ambassador for the lived experience people, that I'm trying to add to this space. I appreciate Strong Oak for holding this space and being an ambassador for all the people that are not here and that motivate us to be on this advisory committee. I love being a part of Suffolk because the framework they gave me to understand we're not experts. We're just keeping a space and figure out a solution together through this unsettling process. The interface is difficult because I've always had the guidelines. I feel like we're all extremely privileged and the people that we're trying to work for are not. I also must agree with Kara, people that have lost their loved ones, those seats are never coming back and there's people that have caused that harm. I think by this committee we have an obligation to raise the voice of Community members and to give them high level access to change policies and systems to be more inclusive.

Sam Williams-Thank you for welcoming me to this place. I am new to the conversation but not new to the energy. Not new to concept and struggles. I have been living in this earth for 55 years. Retraining to resynchronize my body, to resynchronize my nervous system, to resynchronize every aspect of who I am. I say that in the light of this work. That takes time because we're pushing up against language, pushing up against culture, or pushing up against social values within these values and all those things that shape our society. It seems that you have been together for three years and have done amazing work. Three years is a short time. We know that many of us have been on this planet for much longer period. Things that I heard was about access being an important thing. Process also being an important thing. Perception that this could be something that we're all saying is restorative justice if it doesn't have something equally funded. That is grassroots based, then it's not one side and that's to no fault.

Rep. Sean Garballey-Sam thank you for all the work you've done in the youth initiative. It has made a tremendous difference in so many young people's lives. I'm always a little quiet at these meetings. One I don't like it being remote. I love being with people and seeing faces, not just the little square boxes. I also don't come to this work as a practitioner. I am extremely privileged, and I recognize that. I'm so appreciative that we can come together and have an honest conversation. I will say that when I wrote the bill on the House side, and Senator Eldridge wrote the bill on the Senate side, we worked together. I never viewed that as the starting point for restorative justice, even though this was the first-time restorative justice was ever mentioned in mass general law, which is so important to me. It was never the foundation the foundation really is the decades and centuries of healing and work that Restorative Justice has done long before my time. It was just this moment where you could finally put restorative justice and mass general law and build upon that. I would say, what am I even doing here? I believe in Restorative Justice so much, and that's the reason I've filed this bill originally. I've worked so closely with Erin being from Arlington. That's C4RJ and we have thrived because of it and I'm so grateful for her work. But the reason I had filed this bill was because restorative justice was flourishing in Arlington but not in Springfield. It was flourishing in Winchester but not in Lowell. I have been a legislator

for over 15 years, I've always believed that people know the process and that anyone could file for an earmark. Now, I understand that there are folks that might not know the process. I think it's important that we try to a better job in educating people. When I met with Erin about the bill, it wasn't about C4RJ, it was about the mission of the Restorative Justice. It was never about the budget. It was about supporting the victims. We all come together and really move restorative justice forward statewide and we all learn from one another on how best to do that. I look forward to being part of this committee for a long time and thank you for hearing me.

DA Marian Ryan- I have sort of parachuted in here and I have to say that it does somewhat remind me of showing up at family dinner and trying to figure out what the issue is. I'm somebody who's been a prosecutor for a very long time, who became educated on restorative justice and I'm a great supporter of it. Many years after the bill was passed, having lobbying for that bill for so many years, that we have not been able to get restorative justice on everyone's hands. I just sort of following that the discussion is about the earmark that C4RJ received and other programs maybe not be getting an earmark like that. I think at this moment, the state is giving money for good work that we have probably ever had and probably will ever see in any of our lifetimes. We moved around our own discussion and lost the focus on getting some more of that money because to me the solution is not how much money went one place it's how much money can we get. The bill has not been implemented in other counties; in ways it should have been implemented. Part of lack of education and good programing being available. How do we lobby for more money? How do we get full access? I don't know what's going on here, but we should ask for more money in all these programs. I hope we don't lose sight of that opportunity. I don't know all the details here, but we should get our foot in the door and get more resources.

Jill-As a member of the public, as a person who is constantly learning from restorative justice and as someone who started grassroots organizations to try and spread the word of restorative justice in my community and connect communities with systems. I'm speechless. I can't believe, I'm seeing this in real time. I want to lift everyone's voice. It makes me emotional and hopeful. I will leave it at that.

Jo-Anne-I want to thank everyone from allowing us from the public to attend. This is the second time the public is part of the circle, first one was in Natick. I have attended many meetings and subcommittees. I know the history a bit. My issue with conflict of interest is-the survey didn't go to everyone. ABP has not been contacted regarding the survey. The schools have not been contacted. Its great that 32 police departments are involved. But this is not all about police.

Senator Eldridge- This has been a terrific discussion. I have learned a lot from this discussion in similar ways to what Rep Garballey talks about. I do hope we could move forward, and I really feel like this discussion is moving us forward. Last year we secured 80K to partner with Higher Education and I understand that's part of the agenda next. This bill initially had an office of Restorative Justice. At the time, politically it wasn't possible so and we had to compromise, but that's always something that we can look at if that's appropriate. I want to emphasize that I hope we can move forward and strategies to help everyone thrive, practice restorative justice. So great discussion. Thanks for including me in it.

Yael-I work for C4RJ. I'm taking all this in. I'm trying to understand the conversation and connect with that. Doing more of the listening. I'll pass and continue to listen.

Erin- Before I speak, I know there are some who haven't. Andy do you want to chime in? or any other members of the committee.

Chairman Peck- I'm coming from point of frustration. We are not an oversight body. We are not a regulatory body. We are an advisory committee. Our job is to support all forms of Restorative Justice. I don't think anyone owns the proprietary rights to Restorative Justice. Our job is really to amplify and promote change in the system. We should focus on progress. Sometimes I feel like we fail some of the people that we put forward to serve. I've been involved in almost three years now and our internal dynamics are greatly impacting our roles. I'm a bureaucrat. My performance as a bureaucrat is measured on outcome. I feel like every month it's just the same thing over and repeatedly. What's wrong with incremental change? Why is it everything have to be all or nothing, or one way or the highway? I have done my own kind of personal work outside of this committee and research. How we respond to crime? What works? What doesn't work, has changed significantly. What's

happening to Erin terribly unfair. I think it's being marginalized. Trying to reimagine and doing something different in the impact that she's had. We need to support. Pass back to you Erin-Thank you.

Erin-Scott and Jennifer?

Scott-Following up on what Andy was saying. How do we as a Commission try to recognize the work that's being done in various communities and ensure that we're promoting it. That should be our focus. How do we go about promoting and ensuring that bringing restorative justice opportunities to everyone? So, I'll seat back to you ever and I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Erin-Strong Oak, you are the keeper of this circle. You want to pass this to others?

Strong Oak-I would like a chance at the end. There's many left to speak. You want to go ahead, Erin and speak now?

Erin-Ok. Alright. I'll try to keep it brief. There is some misunderstanding in this group. A lot of systemic concerns have been raised, and I think sometimes they're raised in a way where it makes people wonder if that is how C4RJ operates. I want to have this space open for anybody who has questions about our process. We stay true to the principles and practices of restorative justice. I invite you to have conversation with me because, as I said in our last meeting, transparency and integrity are values that I hold dear. I'm more than happy to have a conversation. Some people have talked about C4RJ being a monopoly. When I presented to the group on January 8, 2019, we had partnered with 22 police departments. Now it is ~~32~~31, there are ~~is~~ 351 police departments across the state. So, we've added a few since then and the ways that we have added partners overtime is because of our ~~by~~ values of being a grassroots oriented. We have a lot of more work to do. Partner with the legal system to ~~and~~ take cases out of court. Everything we do is based on those values that Carolyn spoke about. I need to pass back to you Strong Oak.

Strong Oak- Would like to just refrain. Trust issues got raised. Community engagement and partnership have been raised. The issue of victim centered has been raised and the issue of funding has been raised. The dynamics themselves have kept us getting much work done. But we were concerned about conflict of interest, what does that mean? What is the ethics? Not many of the subcommittee issues where raised. I feel like trust issues are important. In my community is important that we don't have secrets and restorative justice needs to be in the community, not police. So personally, I feel that it would have really been more trusting if we had got more money as committee. That we would have gotten an Office of Restorative Justice and be transparent with each other when we were going after funding. I'm in circle all the time. When I come to a circle, I'm accountable for everything in my life. Every single thing, and so I'm disappointed. That when it comes to the big committee, I don't hear the concerns that I hear in the subcommittees. I choose how I spent my time.

I just want to inform you all that I'm officially resigning from this committee. I have no trust in you. Your view of Restorative Justice. It is something that comes from First Nations and everything that happens feels like violation to me, so I can no longer continue with you. So please accept my resignation. You could take a vote on it. I just want to resign.

Chairman Peck-I think that's unfortunate. You bring a prospective to this committee that I was not familiar with. I was not familiar with. Your perspective has been valuable. I would hate to see you go.

Kara- I would second Andy on that. I wouldn't impose my will on what you need to do to feel ok. The reason you leave, you have to take care of yourself. It will be a terrible loss. This place is hard for you as you have communicated. I would miss you personally.

Strong Oak- There has been shocking lack of courage. What people voice in subcommittee and what they voice here. I'm very disappointed about that. I've been forthcoming from the beginning. How can they be trust when people are afraid to speak? People said my voice will be neutralized. Now, I see that, and I will not participate. What I say has no consequence. I'm lifting conflict of interest, what does that mean? I'm lifting ethics, what does that mean? Putting ourselves in lobbyist position when crafting language. Abuse in the system. This is not personal. It's the system. Maybe things aren't working because there's no trust. Where is my voice valued and



how do I spend my time? I'm alarmed at what is Restorative Justice. This is just a diversion program. I have learned a lot here. Our community brought this here. I would like to leave now.

Kara-I respect you need to leave the meeting. I'm sad you are going.

Strong Oak- I wish I believed all that. You all are glad that I'm going.

Kara- Your voice is critical.

Carolyn- I want to say...Strong Oak has left.... their presence was intentionally challenging to all of us. In terms of what was raised. They have upheld that for us. We should take that seriously. Not getting things done. I have heard a lot of things that we could build up on incrementally. There are things that need to be discussed as to what we found. If its state money, it needs to be transparent. I supported the original bill and believed we could get there. This is the opportunity if we choose. We need to be intentional.

Sam Williams-Keeping the work that we do, we need to have someone to ground us. Maybe individually in our own spaces.

Dennis-It's really upset to what happen but leaving is a privilege. The brothers that do Restorative Justice behind the wall, oh how they want to leave. I will circle back on my own time and hopefully continue. I'm in agreement with Andy. This whole thing I'm not OK with.

Ms. Bonds-All circles begin with an opening and all circles end with a closing. So, whatever way we close this meeting and follow Restorative Justice even at this moment. We should end the circle with a closing on a positive note and begin are next circle. I call upon one of you to close it.

Chairman Peck-Who on the committee can close the circle?

Carolyn-We could do a closing. Sam, you offered a grounding.

Sam Williams-I could do that. We could do a two-minute breathing exercise. Inhaling and exhaling slowly. Continue to do that for 60 seconds. Come back to the space and thank you.

Chairman Peck-There's only 6 people left at the meeting. Thank you for the closing, Sam.

#### **4. RFP, funding, and next steps**

Not enough time to discuss. Moved to next month's agenda.

#### **5. Public Comment (10 minutes)**

Public members were part of the circle.

#### **6. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting**

N/A

#### **7. Adjourn**

Meeting ended at 1:20pm. Committee members and members of the public left the meeting when Strong Oak resigned from the board.