



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: September 12, 2023

Time: 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

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 11:05 a.m.

		Present	Absent	MM
1	Chair-Andrew Peck	X		X
2	Scott Taberner	X		X
3	Rep. Simon Cataldo*	X		
4	Sen. Robyn Kennedy		X	
5	DA Marian Ryan		X	
6	Allison S. Cartwright	X		Abstain
7	Lorna Spencer		X	
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan		X	
9	Stephanie McCarthy	X		X
10	Andrea Berte	X		X
11	Judge Peter Agnes	X		X
12	Kara Hayes	X		X
13	Vacant			
14	Vacant			
15	Dennis D. Evertt Jr.	X		X
16	Susan Jeghelian	X		X
17	Samuel Williams		X	

*Arrival after Roll Call and Approval of meeting minutes

EOPSS Staff: Anjeza Xhemollari, Amy Putvinskas, Arielle Mullaney

Public Members: over 20+ people

2. Welcome

Chairman Andrew Peck welcomed all Committee members and attendance was taken. Chairman Peck also introduced Representative Simon Cataldo as the new replacement for Representative Sean Garballey.

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 8, 2023

Scott Taberner made a motion to approve the draft meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Stephanie McCarthy. The meeting minutes were approved.

Representative Sean Garballey and Senator Jamie Eldridge announced their departures from the committee and thanked all for their support. They will continue to be champions of Restorative Justice and advocate on behalf of RJAC's goals and objectives.

4. Update on FY2024 EOPSS RJ Grant Funding and Process

Anjeza Xhemollari updated the Committee on the FY2024 RJ Grant application and process. OGR will post the application soon and the link will be forwarded for outreach purposes.

5. Introduction to proposed MA State Restorative Justice Office

RJAC Steps to Develop MA State RJ Office

1. Identified need for centralized state mechanism for administering and funding RJ programs
2. Researched RJ offices/initiatives from other states and models in MA; benchmarked against criteria
3. Drafted program design, statute, operating budget, funding request for MA RJ office
4. Posted for 30-day public comment period with online survey link and notified stakeholders
5. Held this meeting to collect public comments
6. Finalize and submit request for adoption and funding in upcoming budget process

MA State RJ Office - Drafts for Public Comment

Program Design:

- Integrates research and key components into a description of how the office will work.

Enabling Statute:

- Creates the office within state government, and states its public mandate, jurisdiction and authority.

MA State RJ Office – Mission

Healing and Accountability:

- Serve as knowledge-based resource that fosters healing and accountability for harm in the commonwealth

Capacity-building:

- Build RJ capacity/infrastructure and promoting effective RJ policy, practices, and programming within communities, schools, and public institutions

Collaboration:

- Collaborate with community members, practitioners, government agencies, and other stakeholders

MA State RJ Office – Key Components

- **Statutory**- established by statute for sustainability
- **Jurisdiction**- support 3 branches of government and community statewide
- **Location**- independent agency or natural place within government (e.g., ANF)
- **Funding**-state appropriation supplement by grants and other revenue sources
- **Purpose**- primary administrative and funding agency for public RJ initiative

MA State RJ Office – Key Components continued

- **Authority**-policymaking, grant-making, program development, training, public education, standard setting, research, fundraising, convening
- **Leadership**-advisory board of stakeholders: government and community representatives, including survivors and incarcerated individuals.
- **Programming**-community-based and court/agency-sponsored RJ initiatives
- **Staffing**-executive director, program, research, training, outreach, financial staff
- **Offices**-Boston and potentially Central and Western Mass

6. Public Comment - extended for collection of comments on office design and statute

Mya Brown - Enthusiastic to support restorative initiatives in Massachusetts. Listed key components to restorative justice, which are: 1. Rehabilitation over retribution 2. Community empowerment 3. Reduction and recidivism 4. Cost-effective 5. Social equity 6. Humanization of justice. Encourages all who are present to actively support and fund restorative justice programs throughout Massachusetts to create a more passionate and effective system.

Brenda Nolan - Emphasizes a need for training for everyone in the office and advisory committee as there is currently no requirement for training. There are 16 state members of the community and only 9 community members, so there is a lot of state control and worried it will turn people off.

Susan A. Maze Rothstein - Thanked the committee for all work for getting to this place today. An imbalance is going to reduce the effectiveness of the voice the committee wishes to establish. To have a structure that is set up that does not require training for members means there is no continuity. There are more system holders than community members and that structure is not going to change thinking between community and government. It has taken years to get community members to get a deeper understanding of RJAC practices. There should be equal numbers, if not majority for community members, and members are not on their own restorative justice journeys. Doesn't see that we have gotten to a place yet where everybody is required to do the work themselves, so what we are building is different and notes more of the same

Jill Fagerberg - Sits in restorative justice spaces with Brenda and Susan. Concerned about documents, definitions, words, and policies. So far away from what restorative justice is. Concern about lack of experiencing power and inner feelings that can happen when you are in a restorative justice circle. Concerned about people leaving as it has not been a fully safe space for quite some time. Trust has been broken; certain people are not held accountable. Restorative justice is listening and being there and hearing everyone. Unresolved issues are ones that can't be

heard until some people can experience restorative justice on a personal and spiritual level. Power imbalances have permeated into the advisory committee and documents discussed today. Nothing will change until people are willing to change themselves, be accountable, do the work, and not rush to put things together. There are places where things are strong in documents but places it could be so much better. A deeper understanding of experiential learning is what is needed to make this paperwork helpful rather than harmful. The office should be the hub of resources for collaboration and networking rather than a portal of control. Thank you for hearing me and seeing what changes happen next.

Anjeza - Thank you, everyone, any other comments from others?

Susan A. Maze-Rothstein – Also wanted to talk about funding issues, surprised we are not talking about justice reinvestment. There are 17 states deeply involved in justice reinvestment, looking at these models would be good going forward. Tiny grants on a reimbursement basis which small organizations cannot front the funds to do, and short implantation timeframes are not a good idea for restorative justice practices. Too much paperwork, and a small window to work, not going to allow people to feel they have arrived at a place of collaboration. Mentions how Colorado puts fees on those formerly incarcerated and they can never get out of a financial hole. The overly broad language in the statute needs to safeguard in excesses to the public. If we want to get to a space where people have a door they can come in for collaboration, the structures we are creating are not going to help us create this in the public. If our concept is we must get it done in 6 years, we are going to make mistakes. You need people who have learned and spent time with restorative justice to talk about creative ways for it to not feel like a governmental entity.

Anjeza: Thank you, Susan and Jill.

Brenda Nolan - Going through the survey, we would like to see justice obtained in the name of the office. The Massachusetts definition does not state it supports the community. We like Minnesota's definition a lot. Pay close attention to points about confidentiality. It is needed for the deep work of restorative justice. Extended to all participants, everyone in the community needs to have ironclad protection. The office and committee need to work together. The office should be in one of the executive offices and move to independent state agencies down the road when it is ready to become one. Jill and Susan spoke to it beautifully!

Anjeza: Thank you. Invites others to speak. Susan raises their hand to speak again.

Susan - It would be nice if we could make this more of a dialog. No one from the committee has responded.

Anjeza - In the public comment portion in the past, the committee has not spoken, and only takes feedback from members of the community.

Arielle Mullaney - Agrees, there is a lot to digest.

Susan: Thank you everyone for all the work on this. I just think we can do better.

Maria D'Addieco added to comments on the chat-Very excited to hear about this proposal. Thank you to the team who worked on this. My only comment would be that the design and staffing of this office should be very intentional to include the community as much as possible and remain closely aligned with RJ values. Having created an RJ program within a govt system, it can be a difficult balance to ensure that RJ within a system doesn't become co-opted by the system. Despite this, this is a worthy endeavor and I believe will move RJ in MA forward. I am hopeful and excited about the potential!

7. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting

Representative Simon Cataldo provided a brief introduction and mentioned he would be stepping in. Looking forward to learning and collaborating.

Susan Jeghelian- Thank you to those making comments, we appreciate the thoughtfulness and we will deeply consider it. Thoughtful feedback through the survey as well. Serious consideration to everything. We look forward to finding ways to collaborate effectively.

Kara Hayes-speak to the survey process. This work is a community process to me, have worked hard to bring voices to ongoing and developing conversations.

8. Adjourn

The meeting ended at 12:19 p.m.