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Executive Office of Public Safety and Security

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MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
State Office of Restorative Justice Subcommittee

Date: September 5, 2023

Time: 10:00AM-11:30AM

Microsoft Teams: [Click here to join the meeting](#) **ID:** 265 609 225 525 **Passcode:** wqWxeA

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Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 once a quorum was established.

		Present	Absent	MM
1	Chair -Susan Jeghelian	X		X
2	Scott Taberner	X		X
3	Samuel Williams	X		X
4	Dennis Everett	X		X
5	Kara Hayes	X		X
6	Judge Peter Agnes	X		X

EOPSS Staff: Amy Putvinskas and Arielle Mullaney

2. Welcome

The chair welcomed all members.

3. Review and Approval of Subcommittee Meeting Minutes from August 1, 2023

Kara motioned to approve Peter Seconds – minutes approved.

4. Update on outreach during the public comment period on state RJ Office drafts

- a. Karina shared a document that lays out the research on RJ initiatives which will be shared with the larger RJAC group possibly during the September meeting.
- b. Susan mentioned that not many public comments had come in through the online survey posted on 8/15 and that this could mean stakeholders were either not aware of this opportunity or that they were fine with the state RJ office drafts.
- c. Dennis said that he heard that people felt that standing back and letting the group doing work would be the best course of action.
- d. The following outreach was discussed:
 - i. Susan J. mentioned that DA Marian Ryan had sent the public comment opportunity notice to numerous RJ programs in schools and school resource officers.
 - ii. Peter sent the notice to the Trial Court and Supreme Judicial Court RJ advisory committee staffed by Meredith Shee.
 - iii. Scott sent the notice to the DYS Commissioner; and offered to send it to the County Sheriffs as well.
 - iv. Kara sent the notice to over 40 community-based RJ practitioners and will send a reminder as well about the 9/12 public meeting.
 - v. Dennis sent the notice to RJ programs in Boston and Brockton.
 - vi. Sam shared it with RJ folks working in corrections – sizeable email distribution list (about 75-80), includes formerly incarcerated people.
 - vii. Susan J. mentioned Stephanie from MOVA shared the notice with their contacts, including victim assistance groups, which Kara had received.
 - viii. Peter asked if bar associations were included in outreach and Susan asked Peter if he had contacts there to please feel free to reach out to them.
 - ix. Dennis mentioned that he would reach out to Kristen Graves of the Public Defenders Justice Group.

5. Plan for review of public comments received on state RJ Office drafts

- a. Susan J. said she and Karina will compile and theme all the public comments collected through the online survey and offered at the September 12th meeting and asked if the meeting should be recorded to help capture comments.
- b. Kara said she has concerns that there is public mistrust and recording the meeting might offer a safer space for the individual voice their concerns.

- c. Dennis suggested the RJAC offer the option to individuals of having their comments recorded if they wanted that.
- d. Sam said that given peoples' learning styles and attention spans, taking notes and recording the meeting would cover all bases and offer the best approach.
- e. Susan J. said she favored recording but did not want people to feel uncomfortable.
- f. Most Subcommittee members said they did not have a preference.
- g. Susan J. asked members of the public present if they had an opinion about this.
- h. Brenda said it is important to have a record of what people have said and that if they speak at a public meeting, they want to be heard.
- i. Amy checked with Arielle and learned that EOPSS typically does not record public comments at these types of meetings and relies on a team of notetakers instead to capture comments.
- j. The Subcommittee agreed to follow this approach.

6. Public Comment (10 minutes)

- a. The Subcommittee Chair included Public Comment early.
- b. Brenda – the difficulty of including outside voices in this discussion. There are a lot of RJAC that mention that involvement with the State may not be best. And argued that the involvement was to target funding for one organization. Wondering if this is the best time to start an Office of RJAC and it may be premature. Communities need to be involved. This work is important and if people don't understand or accept what RJAC is how can it be successful in the communities. When the funding stops there is no anchor to continue on the work.
- c. Susan J. asked that members of the public enter all their comments in the survey.
- d. Susan Maze-Rothstein said she is concerned whether individuals have had adequate information to give public comment and critic accurately. This Committee has done research on what other offices are doing which is tied back to governmental structures.
- e. Dennis – Going to different entities in the state each one is operating in their own specialty. We need to advocate by protection of the law in order to move forward effectively. Looking at Oakland and Vermont as models going forward. And if we look at the rate of gun violence that is happening this is a need that is going to need to be addressed and this can happen under the protections of a state office.

- f. Sam – this is a deeper conversation that includes complexity. Doesn't agree with everything that Dennis has said but agrees with what Susan M-R has said regarding adequate context. There is many dimensions and coordination that needs to happen. We should continue to have conversation – this work is larger than one persons opinion and experience.
- g. Kara – Appreciates what Sam has said – the protection of law is complicated in the RJAC space. There is time to get this right. I have seen survivors voice be silenced by some Practitioners there is time to make this efficient and effective. Before this hearing is there a way to share with some stakeholders how we involve with community and survivors. Stephanie at MOVA could assist with the wording for Survivors.
- h. Susan J. – we are trying to get this state RJ office established and funded in the State Budget and the programming of the office will continue to be developed.
- i. Peter –We have a constitution and laws adopted under it that create public expectations. The Criminal Justice Reform Law of 2018 created many public expectations one of which is that RJ would be a new alternative to the traditional process of adjudicating defendants and juveniles as guilty or innocent. It's been five years. The public has a right to see RJ operational in the court system and elsewhere. A Statewide Office of RJ will advance that goal and help to satisfy that public expectation. It's time to act.
- j. Susan Maze-Rothstein: I appreciate Dennis comment. I am suggesting that there is a distinction between protection of the law and controlled by the law. This is a complicated section of the law as it is enabling. We need to have a larger discussion on what the authority is in order to have protection. There doesn't need to be these many authorities. This isn't a process or a system this is a way of being. There is no training there are no requirements to join this office. Having members of the community join the executive board was a mistake we recognized in the RJAC and the members that are joining are not required to have trainings. Why are we replicating this process when we recognized it was not correct?
 - i. Dennis – to process these issues there need to be people that are hired. Having volunteers that have privileged are not creating the frame work for the people that need it most. We are trying to create an element where trust is not going to be needed. The harm that is being done in the community is work that needs to be done by a paid individual – we need the right people in these positions.

- ii. Susan J. – I don't see this office as authority its more of a guiding body. How do we give stakeholders a voice?
- k. Jo-Ann – will review the documents that have been sent.
- l. Susan Maze-Rothstein – The concept of confidentiality is important and especially for how it will be included in the statute. I would drop the language of best practices as there is no such thing and we should not pass judgement on peoples work. The creation of evaluation system is something that is difficult as it is a control method. What are we talking about especially when it is being created by people who do not practice. Regarding Justice Reinvestment that is not mentioned.
- m. Susan – Invites Susan M-R to enter her comment through the public comment survey or during the larger meeting. See this new RJ office as catalyst for continued discussions with stakeholders about policies and programming.
- n. Dennis –when drafting the language, it is important to place Representatives, Senators and system holders; we had to give them language that would be able to be pushed through and understood by them. But the people who are going to be doing this work need a budget for an annual salary.
- o. Kara – We are talking about our Governor understanding how important RJAC work is. She is hearing this through law enforcement. The stories are being told by EOPSS and not through the community holders and survivors. She may be open to hearing these stories but its through a law enforcement lens.

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

8. Adjourn

The meeting ended at 11:20