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Restrictive Housing Oversight Committee (RHOC) Meeting
Thursday, December 18, 2025
Via Microsoft Teams
DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

Undersecretary Peck called the meeting to order at 11:05 AM.

Restrictive Housing Oversight Committee - Attendance		
Name	Present	Absent
Undersecretary Andrew Peck, Chair	X	
Kevin Flanagan		X
Robert Fleischner, J.D.		X
Hon. Geraldine Hines (resigned)		X
Tatum A. Pritchard, Esq.	X	
Kyle Pelletier	X	
Dr. Joanne Tsakas Barros, PhD, LMHC, CCHP	X	
Bonita Tenneriello, Esq.	X	
Dr. Henry Henry, PhD, LICSW	X	
Sheriff Cocchi	X	
Hollie Matthews	X	

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING

Attorney Bonnie Tenneriello thanked Adrian for the detailed minutes. She had one edit on page four where she and Dr. Joanne Barros were mixed up in the subcommittee listing. The second bullet point should attribute the Rappaport program comment to Bonnie rather than Dr. Barros.

Under "Status of Site Visits" on page five, the minutes indicated Bonnie raised practical concerns about scheduling, but that was actually Tatum Pritchard. A motion was put forward by Hollie Matthews to approve the minutes with those changes. That motion was seconded by Dr.

Barros and unanimously approved with one abstention from Kyle Pelletier, who had to leave halfway through the last meeting.

III. REVIEW OF DRAFT AGENDA FOR FACILITY VISITS

Initial Discussion on Visit Scope

Kyle Pelletier noted the draft visit agenda appears to limit conversations to staff and individuals currently in Restrictive Housing units. She suggested it could be valuable to also talk to people not currently in those units who have understanding of why facilities have them, as previous visits found those perspectives helpful. She also noted an hour-long tour seems very optimistic for correctional settings.

Dr. Brandy Henry agreed about timing concerns, noting if one session runs long it pushes everything back and could create problems if facilities have arranged special staffing. She noted previous visits included helpful focus groups with people formerly in Restrictive Housing. She suggested they might be creative - potentially doing some staff focus groups via Zoom rather than on-site to save time during visits.

Bonnie Tenneriello emphasized they need to build in transition time because it takes a minimum of 15 minutes between activities and facilities always need time to reorganize due to staffing. She supports adding a focus group with people formerly in Restrictive Housing and thinks they should plan until 5:00 PM with a lunch break rather than ending at 1:30 PM. Last time they had two days per facility; with only one day this time, they should use the full day.

Undersecretary Peck recalled visits to Houses of Correction being about half a day, asking if his memory was mistaken. Bonnie stated that's different from her memory and added the group should work back from what they want to accomplish. Even just adding transition time and one focus group would require until 4:00 PM at least.

Undersecretary Peck noted Bob had also suggested eliminating many focus groups for efficiency. Dr. Henry suggested they could do virtual focus groups with staff, potentially even combining multiple facilities in one Zoom meeting for certain topics like mental health directors.

Hampden County Logistics - Sheriff Cocchi and Kevin Hall's Input

Undersecretary Peck asked about the tour timeframe (9:30-10:00 AM) for Restrictive Housing units - is half an hour sufficient?

Kevin Hall, Assistant Deputy Superintendent at Hampden who was unit manager when the Committee visited the Restrictive Housing unit years ago, explained the setup there. Hampden County has two mirrored Restrictive Housing units. There's a roll call room 15 feet from the units where they could bring people for interviews. Half an hour is plenty to tour the units since they're identical.

Mr. Hall explained during the prior visit they did individual meetings with people currently in Restrictive Housing (committee members split into pairs) and focus groups with people back in general population who had previously been in Restrictive Housing. Those individuals came to the roll call room unrestrained with no issues.

Sheriff Cocchi emphasized Hampden is very excited to host the Committee and will make whatever they need happen within five minutes. When the Committee asks for something, it will be a priority. Hampden will dedicate staff to the Committee all day and manage all logistics so the Committee never waits.

Undersecretary Peck asked about the environment for interviews and whether the roll call room would be suitable. Sheriff Cocchi explained they have tables on the unit, offices on the unit behind closed doors, a disciplinary hearing room behind the officer station, or the larger roll call room 15 feet off the unit. They'll accommodate whatever the Committee wants: in the unit, in a cell, or in a roll call room.

Bonnie Tenneriello stated the main concern is privacy, however the group thinks that can best be accommodated. She noted she's not sure they can do group conversations with people currently in Restrictive Housing, though she found focus groups extremely useful previously.

Sheriff Cocchi said they've done groups before. Some people can't be grouped together for safety reasons, but they could set up a few small groups. He noted groups might reduce individual personal sharing somewhat, but generate good conversation about similar experiences. He'll have Mr. Hall do classification to determine appropriate groupings. He doesn't recall from last time, but people would need to remain in restraints.

Kevin Hall confirmed that for people currently in Restrictive Housing they'd need to vet for conflicts, which he and the current unit manager could do easily. If needed they could figure out groupings on the day of the visit.

Tatum Pritchard noted what Mr. Hall and Sheriff Cocchi said sounded useful. She thinks there's value to individual meetings for people who may not be comfortable discussing disability or health issues in a group. She also noted that when there are multiple Restrictive Housing units, there is value in seeing all of them even if they seem identical, as variations can exist in physical layout or conditions.

Discussion on Rosters and Group Sizes

Undersecretary Peck recalled that previously they received rosters a day or two before visits showing length of time in segregation and mental health status, and the Committee hand-selected individuals to interview. He asked if they should do that again.

Bonnie agreed that's what they did, with rosters showing time and open mental health cases. Members tried to select a mix of experiences based on that information.

Undersecretary Peck asked about appropriate group size and the capacity at the facility. Kevin Hall explained capacity depends on location. In one room they could fit two people with a few Committee members, another room was larger and could accommodate up to seven people safely with good acoustics. They also have another large room on the other half of the building if they wanted to run two groups simultaneously.

Sheriff Cocchi emphasized they shouldn't let logistics constrain what the Committee wants to do. Hampden County staff will handle getting people from cells to interview rooms through secure hallways.

Dr. Brandy Henry stated while she shares the desire for efficiency, they'll need some flexibility. They'll get rosters beforehand, but in every facility they'll need to spend 10-15 minutes with administration reviewing rosters and finalizing logistics. It will be different at every place. If they can move some staff meetings to Zoom (like mental health staff), that could help.

Undersecretary Peck suggested building in 10-15 minutes at the outset to review rosters and work out interview logistics. He asked if 9:30-11:00 AM for the visit is enough time, noting the agenda has flexibility. Attorney Tenneriello suggested blocking time until 5:00 PM and taking it as it comes.

Dr. Henry asked whether it would help to schedule correctional staff interviews at a predictable time since facilities need to arrange coverage. She doesn't want staff waiting while the Committee runs over elsewhere. Sheriff Cocchi reiterated that Hampden operates 24/7 and the Committee can stay as long as needed. He'll provide meals if needed.

Kyle Pelletier requested that once they establish the schedule, the Committee stick to it as best they can. She has seen visits where they spend double the planned time in one area then rush through something else they all agreed was important. Being mindful of the schedule respects everyone's time.

Bonnie Tenneriello suggested for each facility, they should provide the elements in advance (an hour with people in Restrictive Housing, an hour with staff, mental health coverage either on-site or Zoom) and let facilities determine what order makes logistical sense.

Kevin Hall confirmed that's what they did last time: the facility got the Committee's requirements and made it work based on their operations. Rosters were provided the morning of the visit since population changes daily.

IV. DOCUMENTATION AND NOTE-TAKING PROTOCOLS

Bonnie Tenneriello raised outstanding questions from the last meeting about note-taking and storage. She thinks they determined notes would go into a SharePoint folder and members would submit notes separately to EOPSS for centralization, but wants to confirm the process.

Ryan stated their thinking was to have someone designated as primary note taker for each session (with members taking additional notes as desired). Members submit notes to Adrian and Ryan after visits, who will compile them into a single document and make both the compiled version and individual notes available through a shared file. This would all be subject to potential public records requests with appropriate redactions.

Dr. Brandy Henry stated that makes sense. She recalled discussing whether the primary note taker could bring a laptop or electronic device since everything being on paper creates complications for consolidation. If they could get notes in digital format initially, it would help given limited administrative capacity. Ryan stated they can reach out to facilities to see if that's possible.

Kyle Pelletier suggested creating a structured template with categories like physical observations, conversations, and interviews. In another group she's on, this made it much easier to collate information from multiple people. He doesn't want to complicate things but thinks it would help on the receiving end.

Undersecretary Peck noted they have a draft interview guide from previous visits. Bonnie stated she doesn't think the old guide was attached. The previous questionnaires were way too broad and long with about 25 questions covering areas not directly relevant. They had intent to simplify significantly. She recalls Bob suggesting not using a questionnaire at all. If they use the old one, it needs major simplification.

Dr. Brandy Henry agreed, noting the old one was almost like a script. There was consensus on moving away from that prescriptive approach. However, they circled back to having some guide or template - not prescriptive but with general topics to ensure coverage, especially since not everyone will attend every visit. The public records request got much of this information, so they should focus on what's not already covered and cull it down to topic areas. Undersecretary Peck stated they'll send out the old guide after the meeting for feedback.

V. SUBCOMMITTEE FOR DATA REVIEW

Dr. Brandy Henry asked if they could return to the topic of what to do with data from the public records request. They discussed creating a subcommittee but didn't take action. They need a timeline and process for membership. She hates to ask for all this information and then not do anything with it.

Undersecretary Peck recalled they discussed strategies including reaching out to academic institutions, PhD students, or law schools. Dr. Brandy Henry stated she can ask the Rappaport fellowship program, though they wouldn't provide support until summer.

Hollie Matthews noted she has a co-op coming in the spring (starting January 19th) who could potentially help. The student could help synthesize, and if they get a Rappaport person in summer, they could also help draft content for the report.

Kyle Pelletier asked if they could use AI to synthesize the data and identify trends, which could save months of work. Ryan stated from a legal perspective, the state is still figuring out AI policies and they're a ways off from allowing data to be put into AI systems for analysis.

Dr. Brandy Henry stated they should create a subcommittee - not to do the synthesizing itself (that's a full-time job) but to identify and secure resources like academic institutions. The subcommittee could direct student work, meet with them periodically to review progress and provide guidance. She'd be happy to participate.

Dr. Henry, Bonnie Tenneriello, and Holly Matthews all agreed to participate in the subcommittee.

Ryan stated he and Adrian will reach out to the subcommittee members about scheduling and get it posted. They'll try to hold the first meeting in early January before the next full Committee meeting.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Valerio noted since this is probably the last meeting of the year, she wanted to thank everyone for their work. This group has been wonderful at listening to diverse opinions and working together well. Sometimes other corrections groups can make people feel unheard or be condescending, but not this Committee.

She particularly thanked Undersecretary Peck for directing the group well, especially in early days when meetings were occasionally contentious. She wishes everyone happy holidays and a happy New Year.

Undersecretary Peck thanked Mary for her consistent investment over seven years and noted her presence provides accountability for the Committee's work.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Kyle Pelletier and seconded by Attorney Tenneriello. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:18 PM.