

DELAWARE COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION BOARD OF MANAGERS
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2024
5:30PM
HYBRID: DELAWARE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ROOM AND VIRTUAL

Board Members Present:

Kevin Madden, Chairman/Council Member
Dr. Monica Taylor, Council Chair
Elaine Schaefer, Council Member
Kelly Diaz, Deputy Controller

Candice L. Linehan
Chekemma Fulmore Townsend
Hon. Nathaniel Nichols
Rev. James Turner

Call Meeting to Order: Chairman Madden called the meeting to order at 5:33PM.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment (Agenda Items Only): No public comment.

Approval of Minutes: Board Member Nichols motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the August 2024 meeting. Board Member Turner seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Report:

- A. Monthly Detained Youth Report, Danielle DiMatteo- Ms. DiMatteo reported that there were currently five (5) youths being detained. Of those five (5) youths, three (3) are being detained in adult facilities. Two (2) of them are male and one (1) is female. The remaining two (2) youths are being held in juvenile facilities. Their genders were not reported.
- B. Interim Director of Juvenile Justice Services, Nelson Walker- Mr. Walker stated that while there continues to be a stand still regarding the existing facility in Lima, there will be forthcoming meetings with the Public Works Department regarding next steps. Mr. Walker also reported that the department recently received a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation for \$15,000. Mr. Walker stated that he plans to go before the County Council to ask to receive the funds which would be used for the continuum of care for young people in Delaware County by building out programming, providing necessary stipends, and to provide direct support to families of incarcerated youths. Lastly, Mr. Walker reported he continues to look for community-based detention shelter and plans to assess several potential locations along with Public Works in October 2024. Mr. Walker additionally stated that the reposted contract bid will emphasize contracts that providers with staff and programming, but no location are encouraged to place bids.

Chairman Madden, referencing the aforementioned standstill, noted that this was intentional as it is fiscally sensible to explore the options of community-based detention.

Councilwoman Schaefer asked if further information regarding community-based detention could be shared with both the public and the Board.

Mr. Walker stated that he does intend to host public forums. Additionally, Mr. Walker stated that a community-based detention center would ideally be a house, or any structure repurposed for residential use, that is suited for ten (10) to fifteen (15) young people in individual beds with shared common spaces. Outdoor recreation is not a requirement.

Councilwoman Schaefer asked what the zoning requirements are for such a facility.

Mr. Walker responded that zoning requirements would require informing neighbors of the community-based center and providing details on how the space will be used. Mr. Nelson additionally stated that the facility could receive “not in my backyard” pushback.

Councilwoman Schaefer asked how staff would operate in the facility.

Mr. Walker responded that there would be always at least two staff members and that there would be an eight (8) hour shift rotation of 4pm-12:00am, 12:00am-8:00am, and 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Board Member Nichols asked if there was any county within the Commonwealth other than Philadelphia that is comparable in population size that is currently using a community-based detention model.

Mr. Walker responded that Berks County and Montgomery County both have shelters that can also be used as housing for both dependent and delinquent youths.

Board Member Turner asked for clarification regarding if the facility would be secure or not.

Mr. Walker stated that this would not be a secure facility in that every door is locked, but rather a staff secure facility that doors do not lock but have delayed egress. Staff would not be permitted to restrain residents attempting leave. However, since any delinquent youth at a community-based center would have scored for detention under Pennsylvania Detention Risk Assessment Instrument (PaDRAI), absconding would result in the issuance of a bench warrant and detainment at a secure facility. Initial admittance into a community-based detention center would be at the discretion of juvenile court judges and probation.

Board Member Turner asked what the zoning requirements are and if an office park could be a possible location for community-based detention.

Mr. Walker stated that that is an option that could be explored,

Chairman Madden added that there are particular zoning requirements that must be met.

Mr. Walker stated that community resistance is the biggest obstacle.

Old Business: No old business.

New Business: No new business.

Public Comment: Andre Simms, Chester, PA- Mr. Simms stated that he is happy that the conversation continues to be centered around young people avoiding initial contact with the system. Mr. Simms stated that he would like to work with Juvenile Justice and the Board to workshop restorative justice practices within Delaware County.

Quan, Chester, Pa- Mr. Quan, an affiliate of Day One Not Day Two, additionally stated that there is a strong need for community programming and that teamwork with stakeholders can help provide the necessary manpower and resource to provide those programs.

Board Member Turner asked Mr. Simms if he could coordinate a meeting with stakeholders, restorative justice practitioners, and program providers together.

Mr. Simms [inaudible].

Board Member Linehan asked if the canvassing was exclusively in Philadelphia or if it extended into Delaware County. Ms. Linehan additionally asked if victims of juvenile offenders are being included in this conversation.

Insight Morris, Chester, Pa- Ms. Morris, a restorative practitioner for Day One Not Day Two and youth organizer for the De-carcerate Delco Campaign stated that over the past two weeks, she had specifically spoken with victimized youth who did not feel proper accountability had been taken and were interested in what restorative justice programming could offer. Ms. Morris additionally stated that many victims are themselves apprehensive of the criminal justice system and would like to see more community-based programs to address these concerns. Ms. Morris also stated that she is a testament to what restorative justice can do, as she was once a system involved youth who participated in restorative justice and is now a certified restorative justice practitioner. Ms. Morris invited the Board to an event for De-Carcerate Delco on Thursday September 19th, 2024, to see the work that they are doing. Lastly, Ms. Morris stated that her canvassing activity is primarily in Delaware County and that she does a great deal of canvassing the Upper Darby area.

Kimberly, Chester, Pa- Ms. Kimberly is a Day One Not Day Two affiliate who stated that young people are worthy of investing into, and that incarceration is a disservice to the young people and to the taxpayers of Delaware County.

Cheyenne, *location not stated*- Ms. Cheyenne, a youth advocate for Delco Youth Hub, stated that the community is unanimously asking for community-based service and programming to help rehabilitate and restore positive trajectory for youth in the outcome.

Duane Washington, *location not stated*- Mr. Washington, an affiliate of Delco Youth Hub, echoed the sentiment that stakeholder need to sit in on conversations regarding the need for restorative justice programming within Delaware County.

Board Member Comment: No Board Member comment,

Adjourn: Board Member Townsend motioned to adjourn. Board Member Turner seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:58PM.