



April 6, 2016 Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Lydia Thornton, Vincent Wojciechowicz (Bo Robinson), Gary Brown (CEC), Andrew (MCRTF), Jan Stokes (A Better Way), Barbara Flythe (Campaign to End the New Jim Crow), Adams Sibley (CELR), Ryan Pilarski (Isles), Tasheia Grimes (Mercer Probation), Martha Eustache (A Better Way), Giovanni Pirrella (TVRS), Wendi White (NJ DOC), Denise Higgins (Catholic Charities), Stacie McGeehan (MCDHS), Perry Shaw III (A Better Way)

The meeting commenced at 1:45pm

The members introduced themselves and Perry reiterated the mission of the Task Force. The minutes from the March meeting were reviewed and accepted by consensus.

New business: none

Chair updates: Last week the 3rd annual Jersey City reentry conference was held; Perry passed out the agenda. Governor McGreevey discussed recidivism at Martin's Place, which is only 14-16% in New Jersey. In Toms River heroin addiction is rampant, overdoses on a daily basis in prison system. Speakers included Ras Baraka, Al Sharpton, Andrew Napolitano, Gov. Christie, and Gov. McGreevey. As well as Koch Brothers representative. Perry attempted to invite Sharpton to Trenton.

Perry stressed importance of shifting conversation to beginning reentry plan on day one of prison.

Barbara inquired about the mayor and county executives' response to/interest in reentry. Mayor Jackson is interested but isn't prioritizing. As well, MCRTF has been tasked by MBK to coordinate their reentry working group; so we have leverage to push policies and programs on city.

Trenton needs a reentry representative in city government. RISE in Philly as a model.

Ryan Pilarski stated that Phentolol is showing up in a lot of drugs (meth, cocaine, etc.) – a painkiller used in hospitals. Large numbers of overdoses due to Phentolol. Causes respiratory failure. Synthetic with serious potency. Also transferred by contact – can pick up intoxication just from touching a patch.

Isles T-Recs - worked with 600 youths, 220 adults since they started. Will be at 5 unique sites each month (Reading Senior Center, North 25 Apartments, Wilkinson playground, 465 W Hanover Street lot, Edgewood Park).

Perry passed out an article "Denying housing over criminal record may be discrimination, feds say."

A Community Task Force meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 26 6-8pm, TrentonWorks 5 S. Broad Street. They are looking for agencies that want to give a small presentation to the community. They would like to send invitation to any organizations that want to present (including Bo Robinson – to talk about their changes).

Catholic Charities – EISS program (Emergency Intensive Care) can treat reentry folks for 30 days after release for their serious mental health issues. Those with violent offenses do not qualify (according to Barb).

Other announcements – Barbara indicated that there will be a conference on April 30: Caging our mentally ill – mass incarceration conference 8:30am-3:00pm at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, sponsored by CENJC, UMHA, Trinity. Akoma House (youth mental illness) \$10 donation, light breakfast and lunch served. Vince added that shuttering of mental health systems of 60s and 70s, economic downturn, prisons and county jails become repositories of mentally ill and addicted.

The date for the 2nd annual Mercer County Reentry conference is May 28, at Mercer County Community College James Kerney Campus (102 N. Broad St in Trenton) 10am-3pm. The keynote speaker will be Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman. We will need insight from MCRTF members on what the conference should look like. Employers will be there.

On April 15-17 – Students for Prison Education and Reform, 3rd annual conference, “Identity in the Age of Mass Incarceration.” The event is free, but registration is required. To register go to <http://princetonspear.com/conference-information>.

On Sunday April 17th, the CENJC solitary confinement will be on display at the Nassau Presbyterian Church Grounds in Princeton for Communiversity 2016.

On Friday April 22 9am-1:30pm, Senator Bob Menendez will host an Empowerment Summit at Trenton War Memorial. To register and for more information see: menendez.senate.gov/empowerment-summit

On April 30, 2016 Trinity Episcopal Cathedral will host Caging Our Mentally Ill: Mass Incarceration Conference 8:30am-3pm. A \$10 donation is requested.

The Summer Youth Employment Initiative was announced by Mayor Jackson last month in response to a need to connect “at-risk” youth who will most benefit from employment opportunities. One hundred youth ages 16-21 will be hired to work in Trenton this summer. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Jigna Rao at 609-989-7333 ext. 131

Working group breakout session- Members were divided into three groups and discussed issues facing the local reentry population.

Adjourned at 3:10.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday May 4, 2016.