

Minutes

**Board of Juvenile Justice
Conference Call
Monday, June 23, 2003
2:00 p.m.**

**Conference Room
4th Floor
3408 Covington Highway
Decatur, Georgia 30032**

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Steve Adams; Violet Bennett; Emmett Bryant; Major General Peter Boylan; Mary Linda Duncan; Dr. Edwin A. Risler; John Wiggins; Mary E. Wilhite

Advisory Board Members Present: Judge Gregory Adams; Judge Quintress Gilbert

DJJ Staff Present: Commissioner Orlando L. Martinez; Dr. Thomas L. Coleman; Mary Esposito; Chad Hoffecker; Greg Maxey; Camille Murray; Dr. Tom O'Rourke; Jimmy Taylor; Jaci Mays Vickers

Opening Remarks

Emmett Bryant, Secretary

Roll call was taken by Jaci Mays Vickers. With the absence of Acting Chair, Susan Dunwody, Secretary Emmett Bryant presided over the meeting as Acting Chair and called to order the June 23, 2003 meeting.

Resolution: Transfer of Property

Greg Maxey, Deputy Commissioner
Financial Management & Administrative Support

Greg Maxey, Deputy Commissioner, Financial Management and Administrative Support, reviewed with the Board that the transfer of property, if approved, would take the current Rome RYDC and transfer it to the State Properties Commission. This, he explained, would make it available to other state agencies and local municipalities once we move into the new facility.

Greg Maxey asked for the approval of the transfer of property and reiterated that once the new Rome RYDC is in operation, within the next couple of weeks, the transfer of property allows use of the old facility by other organizations.

Chair Emmett Bryant called for a motion. The motion was made by Vi Bennett, seconded by John Wiggins, and unanimously approved.

Resolution: Sale of Bonds

Greg Maxey, Deputy Commissioner
Financial Management & Administrative Support

Greg Maxey, Deputy Commissioner, Financial Management and Administrative Support, reviewed with the Board the first bond sale of the year. He explained that the agency was appropriated \$2.7 million to make modifications and enhance the safety and security of the sleeping rooms throughout the system.

He added that the agency had been studying methods of making its sleeping rooms safer. The agency will be swapping out security lights and modifying air conditioning in the rooms. The resolution being called for approval is to authorize the state to sale the bonds on the agency's behalf, he stated.

Chair Emmett Bryant called for a motion. The motion was made by Vi Bennett, seconded by John Wiggins, and unanimously approved.

Mr. Maxey concluded his update.

DJJ Board of Education-Approval of School Calendar

Tom O'Rourke, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent
Office of Education

- The Board of Juvenile Justice acknowledged receipt of the school calendar. Dr. O'Rourke explained that the school calendar corresponds with the state Department

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of Education calendar. He added that it is being brought before the Board for approval.

Acting Chair Emmett Bryant called for a motion. The motion was made by John Wiggins, seconded by Vi Bennett, and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Emmett Bryant, Acting Chair

Acting Chair Bryant called for the approval of the March 27, 2003 minutes. The motion was made by John Wiggins, seconded by Mary Linda Duncan, and unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes

Emmett Bryant, Acting Chair

Acting Chair Bryant announced that an amendment was offered by Susan Dunwody for the May 15, 2003 minutes. The change was in the Community Corrections portion on page 3. The original minutes read "Commissioner Martinez added that there has been a 17.8 % decrease and a 4.5 % increase in the YDCs". The proposed change is ". . . Commissioner Martinez added that, based on new methodology developed by Dr. Geoffrey Butts for the projection of future populations, if we continue with current policies and procedures, projections over the next five years would indicate a 17.8 % decrease in RYDC beds and a 4.5 % increase in the YDCs."

Acting Chair Emmett Bryant called for a motion to approve the May 15, 2003 minutes with the amended portion. The motion was made by Vi Bennett, seconded by John Wiggins, and unanimously approved.

Commissioner's Comments

Orlando L. Martinez, Commissioner

Introduction

Commissioner Martinez welcomed the assembly and thanked them for attending the June 23, 2003 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice. He thanked the Board for participating in the meeting on short notice.

Augusta YDC

Commissioner Martinez thanked everyone for their support and patience as the agency makes its transition to privatization of the Augusta YDC. He explained that on October

10th of last year, he met with the staff at the facility and shared his displeasure with the facility's operation. Concerns were offered by the Monitor and agency staff about how the facility was being operated. At that time, Commissioner Martinez stated, options were given to the staff to improve the program, close the program, or privatize the facility.

Following the October meeting, the 200 staff members indicated that they wanted to make things work at the facility. In December, Commissioner reported that he received the 6 month report from the Department of Justice which was less than complimentary regarding the facility. In addition to that, he explained, he received a report from the agency's own policing system, the Office of Continuous Improvement, which spoke of the deficiencies in the facility. At that time, a meeting was held with all of the auditors who had conducted the original assessment. During the meeting, recurring issues were discussed.

As a result of the meeting, some administrative changes were made to expedite the regionalization of services in the Department. He added that Chad Hoffecker, Legal Services Director, visited the facility and observed the daily aspects of the institution. Within 24 hours, after a report from Chad Hoffecker, the agency asked the Georgia Bureau of Investigations to investigate the facility. The agency has looked at ways to salvage the program and more closely work with the mental health provider there and the staff, Commissioner Martinez reported. Also, he explained, Mary Esposito assisted him in taking more direct administrative responsibility of the facility operations.

In spite of this, Commissioner Martinez stated, that it had become clear that something needed to change at the facility regarding the safety of the kids. For example, he added, there was a high rate of absenteeism of staff, not having sufficient staff on duty to provide safety for the youth, and critical incidents including: staff on kid assaults, kid on kid assaults, kid on staff assaults, and cutting. Also, he added, there was a suicide at the facility.

On June 2, Commissioner Martinez reported, a number of phone calls were made to alert people of his plans to travel to the facility to advise the staff that the facility would be privatized. He further explained that he spoke with Lieutenant Mark Taylor's Office, House Speaker Terry Coleman's Chief of Staff John Clayton, Senator Don Cheeks, Senator Randy Hall, Representative Alberta Anderson, Representative Sue Bermeister, Representative Quincy Murphy, and Representative Pete Warren. Commissioner Martinez explained that he did not talk to Representative Henry Howard but did leave the phone numbers to his home, cell, and office. The Oversight Chair, Georganna Sinkfield was also informed.

On June 3rd, staff of the facility were informed by Commissioner Martinez of plans to privatize on or around August 1st. Unique Solutions, who has been a mental health provider at the facility, was asked to manage the Augusta YDC over the next 6 months while the agency prepares a Request for Proposal and have a competitive bid process for a vendor to provide services on the campus. Commissioner Martinez explained that the

guidelines for privatization and the RFP are not a Department function, rather a function of the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS). DOAS was consulted regarding the proper procedure to effect the privatization. In addition, discussions were held with the Governor's Office about the problems at the facility. The decision has caused a considerable amount of political concern and media coverage. There has been staff resistance. Commissioner Martinez explained that his decision was not an easy one.

The lives of 298 staff were affected at the Augusta facility, but the decision needed to be made. He presented a profile on the staff as follows:

- 142 had less than 5 years of experience
- 69 had 5 to 10 years of experience
- 40 had 10 to 15 years of experience
- 20 had 15 to 20 years of experience
- 19 had 20 to 25 years of experience
- 7 had 25 to 30 years of experience
- 1 had 30+ years of experience

The biggest impact, he added, was on the staff who had been with the agency for less than 5 years. He indicated that the agency has been developing ways to assist the employees of the Augusta facility. The Department of Juvenile Justice has been working very closely with the Department of Labor, he stated. They have provided seminars on campus advising staff on how to reapply for jobs and what's available. They also offer career opportunities, development and training in other fields. Lastly, they established an office on campus for those who wish to apply for unemployment.

Commissioner Martinez indicated that Unique Solutions has hired about 93 staff. Some of the educational staff has been hired by public schools. The Director of Bill Ireland has interviewed staff on campus and two staff persons were hired with the Savannah RYDC.

Unique Solutions has operated the mental health unit at Augusta since February 2000. They successfully worked with the agency's Wrightsville YDC before its closure. Commissioner Martinez explained that they assisted with Assessment and Orientations and that they have extensive experience in working with kids. He iterated that this is no indication that Unique Solutions will be hired or rewarded the contract. The selection will be made within the next 6 months. Commissioner Martinez expressed his belief that Unique Solutions is taking a dangerous financial risk by agreeing to run Augusta for the next 6 months without having any assurance that they'll receive the contract.

The facility has been downsized, Commissioner Martinez stated, from 244 beds to 150 beds. He added that this is only a temporary fix because youth cannot continue to be housed at Bill Ireland and other facilities. After August 1st, some of the kids will be brought back on the campus so that the agency can provide for them the necessary programs that will meet their needs, he reported.

Commissioner Martinez called for questions.

Dr. Ed Risler questioned if it was the belief that through privatization, the agency will enhance the professionalism of the staff. Commissioner Martinez explained that there is a disconnect of job categories and the specialized services for the kids. Augusta for many years has been the facility where mentally ill youth were placed. For example, he stated, upon visiting the campus, out of 137 youth on campus on that day, 122 were on psychotropic medication. It is a specialized needs campus and the agency feels that it needs to have a specialized needs staff.

Dr. Risler also asked for clarification on the number of staff hired. Mary Esposito explained that out of the 93 staff that were hired by Unique Solutions, 29 were identified as DJJ employees. Commissioner Martinez added that privatization was not a new concept for Georgia. Four of this agency's facilities, he stated, are privatized. The Department of Corrections (DOC) contracts out and also Stone Mountain has been privatized, he explained. The Commission on Privatization concluded that each department must take a look at its own individual needs and decide what portions should be privatized. As of today, he added, about 22% of beds are privately operated.

Mary Linda Duncan questioned the timeline for the Request for Proposal (RFP) and how different it would look due to the high number of mental health youth. Commissioner Martinez answered that February 1st is the deadline and that the RFP differences would vary due to the specialized needs of the youth at the facility.

Mary Linda Duncan asked about the anticipated population. Commissioner Martinez explained that it would have the capacity of 150 beds and there is a need for each. For example, he stated, kids from Bill Ireland may be placed at the facility along with other youth throughout the system.

Judge Gregory Adams questioned the loss of beds in reducing the campus from 244 beds to 150 beds. Commissioner Martinez explained that the other 94 beds would be relocated to other facilities programs.

Judge Gregory Adams asked for clarification that youth currently at the facility all have mental health issues. Commissioner answered stating that they all have identifiable mental health illnesses.

Steve Adams questioned giving additional consideration to Unique Solutions. Commissioner Martinez responded that this must be kept as objective as possible. The provider is aware that they have no assurance that they would be selected as the provider. A good proposal must be submitted and that proposal will compete with firms such as Psychological Solutions Inc., Presbyterian Hospital Services, and Aramark, he stated. The agency cannot be accused of pre-selection.

Mary Linda Duncan questioned if the companies competing with Unique Solutions had experience in dealing with issues such as the security functions of an institution. Commissioner Martinez stated that the selection will be based on experience with the right target group and recommendations. He added that factors such as litigation history, and contract cancellations are taken into account.

Major General Peter Boylan questioned using smaller, disadvantaged businesses. Commissioner Martinez responded that he would have Chad Hoffecker, Legal Services, look into the suggestion.

Commissioner Martinez iterated that cost is less than 50% of the determinate in the decision-making process. The ability to perform and the firm's history will take the highest weight in the process. It will not be cheaper to operate this facility.

Judge Gregory Adams questioned the amount per day the facility costs to operate and the anticipated cost. Commissioner Martinez responded that the Augusta facility was at \$193 per day, but the anticipated amount has not yet been determined due to the bidding process.

Judge Gregory Adams questioned if the transition could be afforded. Commissioner Martinez explained that the money for this transition has already been allotted in the budget.

Operational Activities

Commissioner Martinez then briefly highlighted activities of the agency over the last several weeks, as follows:

Community Corrections

- Don Nix has retired as the Regional Administrator for Region I, Commissioner Martinez explained. The selection process for Regional Administrator for Region I has begun.
- Cheryl Dresser, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections was the recipient of the Howard K. Ables Award given by the Georgia Juvenile Services Association (GJSA). He reported, that this is the highest honor awarded in Georgia for significant contributions in the field of juvenile justice.
- Commissioner Martinez added that with the openings of Augusta, Macon and Rome RYDCs, the catchment areas are going to be changed. It will have an impact on where certain counties and districts will be transporting the youth, he explained. The changes will be submitted at the next Board meeting. The

aforementioned facilities will be operating by August 1st and the Crisp operation date is delayed to January of next year, he reported.

- The new Assessment and Orientation (A&O) process was implemented at the YDCs. Commissioner Martinez reminded the Board that with the closing of the Wrightsville YDC, the agency decentralized the assessment and orientation function at 3 facilities: the Metro, Savannah, and Macon RYDCs. This current change will prevent youth from getting stuck in the assessment process and be moved through the system more quickly.
- On July 1st, the short-term treatment program (STP) beds will come under the supervision of Community Corrections. General YDC beds will remain under Commissioner Martinez's supervision.

Commissioner Martinez concluded his comments and called for questions.

John Wiggins asked for a copy of the official reports coming from the Augusta YDC so that he could better understand and be able to answer the calls he has received.

Commissioner Martinez answered that he would provide him with a copy.

Chair's Comments
Emmett Bryant, Secretary

Acting Chair Bryant called for other agenda items. Jaci Vickers asked the Board if they wanted to disburse with the July meeting as usual and added that she would put something in writing to get the general consensus of the Board.

She reported that the August Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 28, 2003.

Lastly, Ms. Vickers reported that Community Corrections has asked if the Board would be willing to hold its September Board meeting in tandem with the Community Corrections Annual Conference on Jekyll Island. The Conference will be held September 24-26. The Board meeting could be held the morning of September 25, 2003 with the conference following. Again, Jaci Vickers stated, she would submit something in writing to the Board to get their general consensus about the conference.

Adjournment
Emmett Bryant, Acting Chair

Acting Chair Bryant called for the adjournment of the June 23, 2003 meeting. The motion was made by Vi Bennett, seconded by Mary Linda Duncan, and unanimously approved.

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Orlando L. Martinez
Commissioner & Superintendent
DJJ Board of Education

Emmett Bryant, Jr., Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice