

Minutes

**Board of Juvenile Justice
Meeting & Teleconference
Friday, September 5, 2003
1:00 p.m.**

**Board Room
2nd Floor
3408 Covington Highway
Decatur, Georgia 30032**

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Steve Adams; Major General Peter Boylan; Mary Linda Duncan; Susan F. Dunwody; Lois Frank; Dr. Edwin A. Risler; John Wiggins (teleconference); Mary E. Wilhite (teleconference)

Advisory Board Members Present: Judge Gregory Adams; Judge Quintress Gilbert (teleconference)

DJJ Staff Present: Acting Commissioner Gregory S. Maxey; Dr. Thomas L. Coleman; Mary Esposito; Greg Maxey; Camille Murray; Dr. Tom O'Rourke; Gwen Skinner; Pam Sloane; Mike Sorrells; Jamilah Stephens; Jaci Mays Vickers; Lena Wilson

Others: Bobby Carrell, Bobby Carrell & Associates; Ellyn Evans, Eckerd Youth Alternatives; Brooke Silverthorne, Emory Law

Opening Remarks

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair

Acting Chair Susan Dunwody called to order the September 5, 2003 meeting. Ms. Dunwody welcomed all in attendance to the meeting and roll call was taken by Jaci Mays Vickers.

Chair's Report

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair

Ms. Dunwody announced that Lois Frank and Major General Peter Boylan would investigate the options on post secondary opportunities for Georgia's detained youth. The two of them, she stated, will report back at the November-December meeting.

Ms. Dunwody then questioned the board members on who still had a copy of the Board Orientation Manual. She asked that each member bring their manual to the September 25, 2003 meeting in Jekyll Island.

Ms. Dunwody polled the board members on who planned on attending the September 25, 2003 meeting and Community Corrections Conference in Jekyll Island. As Board members responded, Major General Peter Boylan inquired about hotel reservations.

Approval: Salary

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair

Ms. Dunwody called for the approval of a ten percent (10%) increase in the salary of Acting Commissioner Gregory S. Maxey for the duration of his role as Acting Commissioner. The motion was made by Major General Boylan, seconded by John Wiggins, and unanimously approved.

FY'04 & FY'05 Proposed Budget

Gregory S. Maxey, Acting Commissioner

As copies of the budget were distributed to Board members and the audience, Commissioner Maxey went over the budget items. He explained that the task of cutting the budget by about thirty million dollars was not an easy one. He expressed that this agency's focus has always been one of community services and secure facilities. With a redirected mission, he explained, the manner in which the agency offers its services is also redirected.

With that being said, he iterated, a proposal will be made to shorten the 90-day short term program to a 60-day short term program. He added that the majority of youth do not receive credit for time served. By allowing credit for time served and placing a sentence of up to 60 days, costs would be dramatically reduced. It would amount to a reduction of 300 beds. The total savings amounts to \$14 million.

Commissioner Maxey also reported that a few facilities would either have to be closed or downsized. He mentioned a meeting with the Council of Juvenile Court Judges (CJ CJ)

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which opened the lines of communication between the two agencies. He added that a meeting in October or November would also be held.

In this meeting, he reported, the agency shared its budget reduction struggles. A verbal agreement was reached between the agency and CJCJ to write court orders for time served and a maximum of 60-day short term sentences.

Major General Boylan questioned if the agency had the authority to reduce the short term programs from 90 to 60 days, and if the re-write was voluntary. Commissioner Maxey explained that the judges have the authority by writing their court orders to read 'a maximum of 60 days'. He then added that the idea received a positive response from the judges. Some judges have already begun the process. An estimated 85 to 90 percent of youth in custody will be impacted and legislation will later be pursued.

John Wiggins questioned how the judges felt about legislation later being pursued. He stated that his concern was that judges like the flexibility that they have in the court room. Commissioner Maxey assured the Board that he would meet with as many judges as possible so that the judges won't oppose the legislation. He iterated that it would be an open discussion and that legislation would be brought before the judges in draft form.

Major General Boylan expressed his concern that the 90-day short term program does not correct the majority of the behavioral problems. He added that it would be logical to cut the short term program altogether, as opposed to reducing the program from 90 days to 60 days. Commissioner Maxey explained that the agency was trying to come up with programmatic options. The steps that have been taken, he stated, were immediate steps that had to be taken to slash the budget. He added that it is an ongoing discussion.

Judge Gregory Adams commented that he felt that it was very good thinking on the part of the agency to bring the proposal before the judges before attempting to introduce legislation. He added that the follow up meeting in October or November is a good strategy for the agency to take.

Dr. Ed Risler commented that the downside to the proposal was that because it was voluntary, the risk assumed is that instead of one kid with a 60-day term there might be several with 45-day terms. Commissioner Maxey commented that hopefully judges won't lock up more kids.

Judge Adams reiterated that at this phase, it would not be good to mention the elimination of the short term programs.

For FY'04, Commissioner Maxey reported the closings of the Pelham and Emanuel YDCs. He then announced a reduction in the McIntosh YDC, the Bill Ireland YDC, and the Augusta YDC which would only serve the specialized population. These reductions and closings, he stated, amount to a total of \$7 million.

For FY'05, Commissioner Maxey reported that 22 teacher positions would be cut. He explained that the teacher to student ratio is above average and that the agency is overstaffed on teachers.

Judge Adams asked that the agency keep as many teacher positions as possible.

Major General Boylan said that from the savings amount listed on the budget, the average pay for teachers is \$50,000 per year. Which he stated was a lot.

Mary Linda Duncan responded that the salary for teachers was not high and that it could actually be higher.

Dr. Risler inquired as to whether the 22 teacher positions being cut were currently filled. Commissioner Maxey responded that although some may be filled, the reduction could be managed through attrition or transfer to another location.

Dr. Tom O'Rourke explained that the teacher student ratio is 15 to 1 for regular teachers and 12 to 1 for special education teachers. Those ratios, he stated, came from an average daily population. The population in the RYDCs, he added, has declined, yet the allocation remained the same which resulted in an overstaffing of teachers.

Judge Adams questioned if it would benefit the population to have extra teachers. Dr. O'Rourke responded that right now the allocation was rich but that any time you have a greater teacher to student ratio, there is some benefit to the students.

Judge Adams again iterated that he did not want to lose any teachers.

Mary Linda Duncan questioned if the 12 to 1 ratio was the state ratio. Dr. O'Rourke explained that the ratios are different from the state ratios because of the periods per day the students are in special education classes.

Judge Adams questioned the distance that the teachers would have to travel to teach at another facility. Commissioner Maxey explained that the teachers would be able to teach in either of the YDCs, RYDCs, or Multi-Service Centers and that the concerns of the Board would be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Maxey reported that the Athens RYDC would be converted into a Weekend Sanctions Program.

Judge Adams questioned the elimination of the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) Program in Fulton County. Commissioner Maxey explained that in the past the agency provided the start up funds for Fulton County MST. The elimination only consists of the start up funds, he stated.

Commissioner Maxey reported that in the area of annualizers and other adjustments, the recommendation will state that the redistribution makes no sense.

John Wiggins asked if the schedule had changed in the facility opening in Crisp County. Commissioner Maxey explained that the opening scheduled for January had not changed.

Judge Adams questioned an item regarding short term beds on the budget request and expressed his concern about bringing this item before the Governor before speaking to the judges about the issue. He offered an amendment to the way the item was worded and asked that the item be deleted with a black marker. Commissioner Maxey and the Board of Juvenile Justice agreed.

Ms. Dunwody then called for a motion to approve the budget with the amended change. The motion was made by Major General Boylan, seconded by Steve Adams, and unanimously approved.

Adjournment

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair

Ms. Dunwody adjourned the September 5, 2003 meeting of the Board of Juvenile Justice.

Susan F. Dunwody, Acting Chair
Board of Juvenile Justice

Gregory S. Maxey
Acting Commissioner

Emmett Bryant, Jr., Secretary
Board of Juvenile Justice