**REENTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL (RAC)  
MEETING MINUTES**  
Dept. of Corrections Headquarters   
Thursday, December 15, 2016

**Attendees Present:**  
Secretary James LeBlanc, Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections  
Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington, Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections  
Joseph Ardoin, LA State Building and Construction Trades Council  
Michael ‘Mike’ Cazes, LA Sheriff’s Association  
Bridget Dinvaut, LA District Attorneys Association

Judge Jules D. Edwards, III, 15thJudicial Court (Telephone Conference)  
Judge Arthur Hunter Jr., Orleans Criminal District Court (Telephone Conference)  
Jennifer ‘Jen’ Katzman, Department of Health and Hospitals (Telephone Conference)  
Reverend Paul Murray, Elyan Hunt Correctional Center  
Chris Newton, LA Association of Builders and Contractors  
Joseph Prejean, Big Poppas Fitness Gym  
Mary Fuentes, Designee for Sheryl Ranatza, Committee on Parole  
Dr. Raman Singh, Department of Public Safety and Corrections  
Monty Sullivan, Designee for Angela Day, LA Community and Technical College System  
James Dixon, Louisiana Public Defender Board

**Absent:** Courtney Baker, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry  
Ava Dejoie, Workforce Commission  
James Dixon, LA Public Defender Board  
Robert Hanser, University of Louisiana at Monroe  
Daniel Martiny, LA Senate  
Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives  
Chairman Louis Reine, LA AFL-CIO  
Robert D. Hanser, University of Louisiana at Monroe (Telephone Conference)  
David Helveston, Designee for Monty Sullivan, LA Community and Technical College System  
Senator Daniel Martiny, LA Senate  
Representative Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives  
Marketa Walters, Department of Children and Family Services  
 **Others:**Alex Priebe  
James Windom, Capital Area Reentry Coalition

**Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections Headquarters Staff:**  
Malcolm Myer, DOC Headquarters  
Natalie LaBorde, DOC Headquarters  
Perry Stagg, DOC Headquuareters  
Angela Whittaker, DOC Headquarters  
Kristen Canezaro, Office of Offender Reentry  
Tammy Jetson, Office of Offender Reentry  
Gretchen McCarstle, Office of Offender Reentry

**Meeting Called to Order at 9:39 a.m. by Rhett Covington  
  
Approval of Minutes**

* Sherrif Mike Cazes motioned to approve the September 2016 board meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Joseph Ardoin.

**Welcome and Introductions**

* Roll call

**Opening Remarks from Secretary James LeBlanc**

* RAC council is playing a more prominent role in the JRI Taskforce
* Maybe put some of the DCFS in subject reform commission conversation
* A good representation that we need at the table
  + Met 5 times since June, doing the data research 🡪 excited about responses
  + First subcommittee meetings this week on getting into policy looking at sentencing reform, classes, direction for judges in uniformity in how we sentence people, revocations and resources.
    - Sentencing Reform – Rep. Legit – 4 taskforce members there – DA’s, judges, very open minded about talking about the things that need to be put on the table and discussed, even if it cannot be changed right now, but maybe down the road in another legislative session
    - Budget and Finance
* Down 4500 from previous year, not releasing 5000 people, but reducing our prison population over time and reduce crime
* 104 jails in the state that hold state prisoners, inspections 🡪 economic issues 🡪 step of Basic Jail Guidelines

**Reentry Council Strategic Planning Revision Draft**

* Pipeline data development – who needs what data and when, what information if any do you need in the area
* Apprenticeship programs – how would it look like before they get released, what would it look like when the leave, how will they know how to contact once they cross the fence.
* Detainers and outstanding attachments – District Attorney’s Association may be able to help with this so the offender isn’t rearrested on another charge from before they were arrested so as not to waste the efforts for them to be successful on the case plans

**Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI) Recent Outreach Efforts**

* Statewide effort of bringing structure and organization of putting things into place by technical expertise and funding across the board. Dennis Schrantz consulting….
* Creation of Community Coalition structure and direction – strategic plan can aid in providing direction for things we can be working on in different point from the state.
* Implementation Steering Team – to inform community leaders if
* Judge Edwards – Dr. Singh and DOC have been working on getting offenders signed up for Medicaid pre-release enrollment prior to release
* Jennifer Katzman –
* Include on pg. 10 – department health and hospitals – complete Medicaid expansion and look at housing opportunities through DHH – transitional housing….etc.
* Dr. Singh met with Chief Justice \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ - expand access to care opens up so many thing that we want to do, provide treatment to keep them as functional citizens
  + Medicaid expansion
  + Wrap around – subsidize housing and tranportation
  + Behavioral health – working with Dr. Ghee
  + Capital Area, St. Tammany and Lafayette programs – front end diversion, alternatives to prison
* Mental health and substance abuse issue – psychotic patients, but we don’t know the data on how many patients belong to this category
  + Survey of inpatient mental health patient at Hunt w/ Kristen Thomas – was it a coincidental finding 🡪 starting next week at Hunt, New Orleans, Jefferson, Baton Rouge & Lafayette will give us a pretty good idea of what we are looking at
  + What is the alternative? How many beds are needed to take care of this population?
  + Medium care – outpatient treatment and inpatient treatment – large group that falls between
  + First step is to find the data from law enforcement – in a given month how often do officers have to use the CIT training
  + Survey results will be presented in March from local jails and law enforcement
    - Will impact where we go with our planning
* Children & Family Services: coordination of child support payment plans so that it is a reasonable amount from the person to keep the person consistently working and is more likely to be engaged with their children
  + Paul Murray – comments on taking only a ¼ of his check so he can pay the child support and still live on the remaining wages – what is a reasonable amount, who decides this?
    - Even if you owe the IRS will ask how much they can pay…if you give the man the option on how much he can pay, the offender will see you are not trying to hurt him and he will try to meet his responsibility
  + Joseph Prejean - encouraging mothers to be mothers and fathers to be fathers because they are paying something will entice them to stay on the right path
    - We are losing because we are not making these people responsible enough to make a spreadsheet that this is his bills, this is what he makes, but people can only pay what they can pay. Educate on finance and how to manage their money.
    - Must change the mindset of these individuals to make them want to do better.
  + Cazes & Sec. LeBlanc met with DCFS – willing to work with us, but will require the law to be changed, because the statute indicates how much … will require legislature to work with us so that they are not in violation of a court order
  + Judge Edwards – from reentry court, lawyers will file motions to reduce the child support, a lot of effort to get lawyers to do this =offenders returning 🡪 will be difficult to get them to do this for all offenders
  + Rhett – logistics point of view to help the child and get parent engaged, the current legislature does not work because this will gridlock dockets, the negotiation is how can we do this efficiently
  + Bridget Dinvaut - Is their a risk assessment that determines what the responsibilities are….individual planning will require case workers to identify what that person is looking at and what their obligations are and let them know what their liabilities are; conversations that they have to do something or they will go back…there is no linear process for them to understand their liabilities from the DA’s side 🡪 more done in life skills, refocuses their attention to their commitment and embrace it in order for them be successful 🡪 would like to see some individualized case working and training as they are coming back into their community 🡪 these are the organizations in St. John or if they need something more in a larger local and what those availabilities are 🡪 personal attention if they feel like you have a vested interest in them and not just the big scheme of things you may get a little more productivity.
    - No DOC staff in local jails, but we do have regional reentry sites and we get as many as we can get there we get there.
    - Recommendation is if that person had that obligation maybe have a form prior to release and make an offer of payment based on what their anticipated income and obligations will be on what expectation is 🡪 acknowledge child support and what is anticipated to pay % of minimum wage employment 🡪 maybe a consent judgement between child support, judge and case worker 🡪 good faith effort
    - Judge Edwards – inmate doesn’t know what his obligations are … how many tickets are out there, warrants are outstanding, child support obligation are outstanding … someone in DOC has the role of following that plan that the RAC can create for them as to how to do this… DA could say who DOC needs to communicate to determine what is out there to get a realized vision of what his obligations are
      * Joseph Ardoin – some of these inmates do know some of the local charges in their rap sheets, but they may not know if it is something statewide so may need to do something
* James Windom – Capital Area Reentry Coalition -- Employer Reentry Initiative in the Capital Area, but plans are to be expanded into the state
* Community based testing for industry based testing
* Chaplain’s Association – Paul Murray – before he is discharged, we notify the church that he will be releasing to that area, we introduce the church and offender and inform them what he has been skilled to do and keep an eye on them; church willing to work with offender’s we recommend if we provided them something to go on
  + List every contractor, every plant, he can go online and complete the application…certificate will say Baton Rouge Community College which will carry weight 🡪 provide him a list of contractors, plants along with his certificates and let this church be responsible for him
  + How do we replicate this in other parish jails?
* Chris Newton – Lowes and Home Depot maybe other options for those with skills as they are located throughout the state
* LA District Attorneys Office – individually amend charges to a lesser charge and not go to trial on the greater charge to reduce the amount of incarceration time
  + 1st offender’s, non-violent – reduced to state probation and they are revoked for new criminal activity, under diversion, we try to look for funding within our offices to have diversion programs in order to bring new additional program
    - Opportunity Now Program – working with Workforce Commission & \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sincere commitment from DA’s office to realize there is a population within our jurisdiction that may need extra help “It is easier to build strong children, than fix broken men” however even in that mindset you have to deal with the broken men. We are trying to facilitate something with no funding and therefore are dependent upon our budget.
      * Program will pay three months’ salary of an ex-offender if the company just gives them a legitimate opportunity to work and show their skills with the expectation that if they excel they will gain employment long term with this employer.
      * Biggest challenge to the program is the mental process of the people; when we have them in a structure environment they excel, but when they go back into the community where we have no control over them is where they begin to fall off.

**2016/17 Meeting Schedule**

* 2017 Meeting Schedule will be provided at the December meeting for review of further schedule conflict or approval discussion.
* March date March 9th & new schedule.

**Other Business:**

* No new business was announced.
* No members of the public were in attendance for open commentary.

**Adjournment:**

* Sheriff Mike Cazes motioned for the adjournment of the meeting. Bridget Divault seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m. by Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington.