**Reentry Advisory Council (RAC)**

3rd Quarter 2017 Meeting Minutes

Department of Corrections Headquarters

Thursday, July 20, 2017

**Attendees Present:**

Secretary James Le Blanc, Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

Deputy Secretary Malcolm Myer, Designee for Rhett Covington Dept of Public Safety and Corrections

Chairman Louis Reine, LA-AFL-CIO

Joseph Ardoin, Jr., LA State Building and Construction Trades Council

Courtney L. Baker, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry

Randall Domingue, Designee for Ava Dejoie, Louisiana Workforce Commission

James T. Dixon, Louisiana Public Defender Board

Judge Jules D. Edwards, III, 15th Judicial District Court

Robert D. Hanser, University of Louisiana at Monroe (Telephone Conference)

Arthur L. Hunter, Jr., Orleans Criminal District Court

Jennifer Katzman, Department of Health

Reverend Paul R. Murray, Elayn Hunt Correctional Center

Joseph Prejean, Big Poppas Fitness Gym

Sheryl M Ranatza, Committee on Parole

Dr. Raman Singh, Department of Public Safety and Corrections

Angela Day, designee for Monty Sullivan, Louisiana Community and Technical College System

Nicole Sweazy, Louisiana Housing Corporation

**Absent:**

Bridget Dinvaut, Louisiana District Attorney’s Association

Michael ‘Mike’ Cazes, Louisiana Sheriff’s Association

Daniel R. Martiny, LA Senate

Steve Pylant, LA House of Representatives

Marketa Garner Walters, Department of Children and Family Services

**Other:**

Sandra “Candy” Christophe, Reentry Solutions

Brittany Dixon, Reentry Solutions

Mark Walters, Jr.

Elain Ellerbe, Right on Crime

Andrew Hundley, Refined by Fire Ministries Inc.

Mary Fuentez, Pardon & Parole

Dennis Schrantz, MCCD, Center for Justice Innovation

**Dept of Public Safety & Corrections Headquarters Staff:**

Robert Vehock, Office of Offender ReEntry

Gretchen McCarstle, Office of Offender ReEntry

Amanda Mayeux, Office of Offender ReEntry

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Louis Reine at 9:32 am.

Welcome was given by Chairman Louis Reine.

Roll was called and a quorum was established.

**Previous Meeting Minutes**

Motion to adopt the March 2017 minutes made by Joseph Ardoin, Jr., seconded by Judge Edwards. There were none opposed and the March 2017 minutes were adopted.

**Opening Remarks, James M. Le Blanc, Secretary**

Secretary Le Blanc thanked everyone for their continued hard work.

Secretary Le Blanc discussed briefly the meeting he attended in Washington D.C. involving restrictive housing. He stated that he is working with VERA and ACA in order to take a close look at how restrictive housing is currently handled in our facilities. While the Secretary was in Washington the NY Times posted a positive article in regards to the Justice Reinvestment package.

**Overview of Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Package, James M. Le Blanc, Secretary**

90% of the package made it through the legislature.

Notable accomplishments include:

* Expansion to alternative treatment options (drug court) which opens up who qualifies for drug court.
* Allow more offenses to be “probate-able”. Allows for parole eligibility, not guaranteed release
* Treatment parole (furlough) – 150-160 inmates who can be released to a nursing home or LTAC unit
* Expanding administrative sanctions to more crimes for probation and parole – administrative sanction in lieu of revocation
* Credit for good time while on probation or parole
* Reducing good time from 40-35% (retroactive)
* Creating parole eligibility for all non-violent offenders at 25%
* Administrative parole (perspective, not retroactive)
* Reduce habitual offender statute
* Reinvestment of the savings – Secretary feels this is the most important part – total savings for 10-year period will be $280 million. First year, $9 million savings allocated out: 30% back to state to fill in gaps, remaining 70% (of the 70% 🡪 30% grants at local level, 20% LCLE for victims’ services last 50% goes to DOC to reinvest) – after 1st year OJJ is involved, they will receive 30% of savings, 70% remaining (30%, 20%, 50% as previously stated above)

Allen Correctional Center will become a reception center that will accommodate the 5 parishes in the LA-PRI. Allen will also house another reentry center for Southwest Louisiana and house a general population that has been scaled down from 1440 to 920 due to funding issues. It will be a state operation.

Crime and Justice Institute will be providing support in implementing everything previously mentioned. They will provide $500,000 to help implementation phase.

**Reentry Solutions Center Presentation, Sandra “Candy” Christophe, Reentry Solutions Center**

Thanked Secretary Le Blanc and the Reentry Advisory Council for all of their hard work

Reentry Solutions focuses on 3 areas: 1) Housing, 2) Employment, 3) Restoration of mind, body, and soul, with a goal of keeping families together whenever possible. Serviced over 900 persons who are returning from incarceration in central Louisiana. Reentry Solution incorporates employment partners who are friendly to felony hire creating a pipeline to employment. Ms. Christophe provided materials that highlighted Reentry Solutions’ awards received. She presented several short videos which dealt with the sex offender population and some of the struggles they deal with described by individuals who are registered sex offenders. Among the issues discussed were state identification cards that bear “Sex Offender” and the stigma associated, inability to hold a job that requires you to move around (“suitcase job”), and inability to be around minor family members because of their classification as a sex offender. There was also a brief video that highlighted that one particular offender was required to obtain a job prior to release in order to be granted parole.

Ms. Christophe asked that everyone on the Reentry Advisory Council continue to help strengthen Louisiana families, help to secure public funding in advertising for education and awareness, help to ensure that work is a right for all Louisiana residents, and help to strengthen non-profits without substantial funding.

**TIGER Update, Robert Vehock, Office of Offender Reentry**

Mr. Vehock reported that testing of the automated version of the institutional tool has begun. The algorithm for the supervision tool is finished. The Needs package is ready to go. In the next few months there will be lots of programming, testing, fine tuning, in order to hit their December date (end of year). When Allen reception center opens, they will have a version of TIGER tool ready to use.

**LA-PRI Update, Malcolm Myer, Deputy Secretary**

Deputy Secretary Myer reported that assets, barriers, and gaps have been identified in the areas of housing, employment, education, and behavioral health. The start date has been moved back to March for the first group of cohorts which could be up to 20. There are currently 4 active parishes, EBR, St. Tammany, Caddo, and Orleans. Jefferson will be joining at a later date.

Dennis Schrantz provided a handout that outlined the timeline for implementation of LA-PRI activities. There will be training in Plaquemines, St. Tammany, West Baton Rouge reentry center, Caddo reentry center which will encompass those who work in these facilities as well as community partners and Probation and Parole.

He introduced the overarching departmental policy that details how cases will flow, how we keep track of reentry plans, what is expected within these reentry plans, and what is expected as far as recidivism reduction. In September there will be another update. They are working on identifying moderate to high risk offenders and moving them to reentry centers closer to home. Prior to release they will have programs already lined up. St. Tammany will be the first parish to participate in LA-PRI cohort releases. There are plans to incorporate a trained mentor (offender) among these cohorts that will help lead other offenders within the group (peer support). During a discussion between Chairman Reine, Malcolm Myer, and Dennis Schrantz it was confirmed that the overarching departmental policy and the Strategic Plan match up in activities and outcome.

Jennifer Katzmann mentioned that she be interested in presenting on the Medicaid rollout at the next Reentry Advisory Council meeting in September if possible.

**Reentry Council Strategic Planning Revision Draft, Malcolm Myer, Deputy Secretary**

Deputy Secretary Myer discussed the Strategic Plan as a guide to deploying evidence based practices and policies throughout the state within the next 5 years. He provided a brief overview that described that the plan promises to improve collaboration, establish means to share data, identify funding areas across agencies, maximize delivery of state services, promote areas of research and programs, conduct review of existing policy, create and support local reentry councils, commence offender reentry public education campaigns, enhance the role of faith based and community based services for formerly incarcerated individuals, and provide coordination of reentry initiatives across state to ensure avail for second chance grant opportunities.

Chairman Reine entertained the motion to adopt the Strategic Plan at the next meeting. Motion made by Sheryl Ranatza and so moved that the Strategic Plan should be further reviewed and edited to be adopted at the next RAC meeting in September.

**Other Business, Louis S. Reine**

There was no other business.

**Public Comment**

Elain Ellerbe (Right on Crime) of Refined by Fire Ministries introduced the new leader of their initiative Reentry Benefitting Families, Andrew Hundley, one of the first individuals that had life without parole as a juvenile and has since been released.

Men’s Wearhouse Suit Drive throughout July. They accept not only men’s suits but also women’s professional clothing as well.

Chairman Reine entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Malcolm Myer and the meeting was adjourned at 11:21 am.

The next meeting will be held on September 21, 2017 at 9:30 am.