



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PROBATION COMMISSION  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY PROBATION TRAINING CENTER**



**WebEx On-line Session**

**Thursday, May 28, 2020**

**10:00 AM**

Present: President Joe Gardner, Commissioner Levine 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Commissioner Swartz 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Commissioner Meredith, Commissioner Caster, Commissioner Herbon, Commissioner Seaver, Commissioner Shutan, Commissioner Mitchell, Commissioner Martinez-Sonoqui, Thomas Faust, Sheila Mitchell, Mark Garcia, Jennifer Kaufman, Alex Nieto, James Phelps, Adam Wolfson, Joan Pera, Lynette Wilson, Anna Garcia, and Jessica Ayala

**Attachment:** [Audio Transcript](#)

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

Commission President Joe Gardner welcomed all and called the meeting to order. President Gardner announced that meetings are recorded and asked that everyone identify themselves prior to addressing the Commission.

1. Excused Absences: Commissioner Butler
2. Roll Call

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. The following meeting minutes were approved:
  - May 14, 2020

**The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take vote and action relevant to Item 3.**

**III. PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

4. Continuation of response from the Probation Department and Los Angeles County Office of Education regarding Commissioner Butler's inspection of Central Juvenile Hall submitted to the Department February 25, 2020.

Superintendent Alex Nieto addressed the following concerns:

Graffiti in units/classrooms – Monthly inspections are being conducted and work orders are being processed to remove graffiti. Graffiti inspection forms have been posted outside of each living quarter and staff are to conduct a graffiti checks at every shift. Principals will track marker distribution/collection.

Sinks - Clogged sinks have been unclogged

Phones - Missing phone has been replaced, phones are usually turned on, youth are always given the right to contact the Ombudsman and allowed to make up to three personal phone calls weekly. Since COVID-19 youth can make an additional weekly call via WebEx, and phone call access has been increased. Staff have been instructed to keep phones turned on.

Laundry Area - Laundry area roof leak has been repaired, washing machine is pending repair, asbestos pending removal.

Assault - Criminal cases are filed when youth assault staff.

Staffing Ratios - Field staff have been deployed to assist with staffing ratios.

Commissioner Kaplan recommended the Department keep a log of when/why phones are turned off.

The Commission expressed concerns regarding the amount of staff out of leave. The Probation Department (Probation or Department) is collaborating with Human Resources Return-to-Work unit to track each individual out on leave. Liaisons are assigned to each work location to improve communication with staff on leave. The Department confers with the Unions regarding encouraging its members to return to their assignments.

Ms. Kaufman stated that there is a unit that investigates fraudulent leaves.

The Commission requested the percentage numbers of the actual charges that were filed against staff that were committing fraudulent use of time and to include the percentage of each facility of staff that were using FMLA time or staff that were out on IA.

Deputy Director Dalila Alcantara clarified that the information was requested from Internal Affairs unit and that Deputy Director Ron Barret would be the person to provide this information.

**Speaker(s):** Mark Garcia, DSB Bureau Chief  
Alex Nieto, Superintendent  
Jennifer Kaufman, RTSB Bureau Chief  
James Phelps, Assistant Superintendent

- 5. Report from the Probation Department regarding preparations to accommodate future arrivals from State Department Juvenile Justice facilities as outlined by Governor Gavin Newsom's revised state budget including responses to:**

- What site could be the potential dedicated high-security facility
- Number of juveniles that would possibly return to Los Angeles County Probation.

Tom Faust, Acting Chief Deputy, provided a brief overview of the Board of Supervisors motion regarding the closure of State Department Juvenile Justice facilities (DJJ). As of January 2021, DJJ will no longer admit new youth to their facilities. Probation sends approximately 60 youth per year to DJJ for supervision. Youth returning to local facilities may benefit from being closer to family, support networks, and community-based services.

The Youth Justice Workgroup is forming a transition subcommittee to formulate strategies and overall model/plan. The Department is evaluating incoming DJJ youth housing options.

The Commission expressed concerns for public safety related to supervising such a violent population of young adults. Mr. Faust stated that the Department is focused on rehabilitation and treatment as well as security and housing. Probation will require adequate funding and programming to provide much needed mental health and other treatment.

The Commission inquired if DJJ staff would join Probation as subject matter experts to provide their supervision expertise. The Department stated that its still unknown.

The Commission expressed concern about the Department's ability to release youth at their discretion. Probation has reduced 35% of its population.

The Commission discussed concerns regarding staff safety without being equipped to deal with violent offenders.

**Speaker(s):** Tom Faust, Acting Chief Deputy

**Action Item(s):** Commission request to place future agenda topic regarding Kilpatrick. Why has it been closed for two years. What is the plan going forward?

Add trailing item regarding the incoming changing 25 and under population.

Request a report of prevailing offenses. What type of training will be provided to prepare staff to supervise such a violent population?

**6. Case study of actions taken by the Probation Department after assault on staff within a facility.**

Probation Department has a zero-tolerance policy regarding assaults on staff.

Superintendent Nieto to provide details regarding an incident where a regional center youth threw a laptop at a staff member.

The Commission tabled the item to address a specific case to review the overall process at the next meeting.

**Speaker(s):** Jennifer Kaufman, RTSB Bureau Chief  
Alex Nieto, Superintendent

**7. Update and discussion of the status of the Probation Department Reserve Program.**

Joan Pera provided an update on the Reserve Deputy Probation Officer (RDPO) program. Ms. Pera stated that the RDPO academy was scheduled to begin April 13, 2020. Both the academy and interviews were suspended due to COVID-19. The RDPOs are not currently assigned to a facility due to COVID-19 restrictions, no volunteers are allowed into the facilities. The Commission inquired what the Department's expectation of the RDPO program will be going forward. The Department decided to proceed with a non-post training curriculum and all applicants will be required to undergo a full background screening process. Adam Wolfson envisions the program as a vehicle where individuals who are interested in the profession get exposure to what it would be like to work for the Department.

The Commission expressed their frustration with the length of time it has taken to move forward with the RDPO program and suggested that the Department utilize this time to prepare a plan instead of waiting for COVID-19 to be resolved. The Commission stated that the pandemic would have been the perfect opportunity to deploy these Reserve Deputies.

**Speaker(s):** Joan Pera, Director of Community Relations  
Adam Wolfson, Public Affairs manager

**Action Item(s):** Probation to provide update to pending candidates regarding program status and estimated processing timeframe.

Probation to provide Commission with 90-day progress report on RDPO program.

**The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion and take vote and action relevant to Items 4 through 7.**

**IV. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

- 8. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest within the subject matter of the Commission. Three (3) minutes are allowed, per person, on each agenda and non-agenda item with a total of 15 minutes for public comments unless the Commission sets alternative limits or other allocation of time.**

None provided.

**The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion, and take possible action relevant to Item 8.**

**V. BUSINESS CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**9. Continued discussion of recommendations for dedicated mental health center(s)**

Item tabled for further discussion at June 11 meeting.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND UPDATES****NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Martinez would like to Invite a Reserve Officer to share how long they've been a member and how many times they've been deployed.

The Commission would like to request a Departmentwide plan to reopen all Probation facilities.

**The Probation Commission will receive, exchange, distribute information, conduct discussion, and take possible action relevant to COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND UPDATES.**

Discussion regarding proposed topics for next meeting, scheduled for June 11, 2020.

**8. Discussion with Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, Dr. Jonathan E. Sherin regarding refining the approach to enhance safety within Probation Department facilities and improve the care of minors suffering from forms of mental illness.****VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

June 11 meeting will be tentatively held virtually.

JCOG Virtual Graduation will be held on June 10 – Academy #43

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08 P.M.