

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Governor's Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force
Thursday, October 25, 2007
Room 1B, LOB

Members Present: Ana G. Alfaro, Brian Austin, Maureen Price-Boreland, William Carbone, Linda Cimino, John Danaher, Robert Farr, Thomas Flaherty, Lisa Holden, Kevin Kane, James Kenny, Thomas Kirk, Lisa MacDonald, MaryAnne O'Neill, Susan Storey, Judge Thomas West

Members Absent: Eric Crawford, Mary Galvin (Excused due to illness), Judge Barbara Quinn

Others Present: Randy Braren, Judge Pat Carroll (on behalf of Judge Barbara Quinn) Representative Michael Lawlor, Fred Levesque

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m., by Linda Holden, Co-chair.

First to present: Representative Michael Lawlor, Co-Chair, Judiciary Committee: Representative Michael Lawlor spoke of what the Committee is hearing about career criminals/violent criminals. He stated that he had 22 years in legislature and lessons learned dealing with offenders. Rep. Lawlor said there are many laws on the books (cell phones, speed limits) that are not being obeyed. Crimes involving violence should have priority. The more serious offenders should be imprisoned and the lesser crimes should be addressed according to the crime and the situation with monitored release.

Kevin Kane, Chief State's Attorney (CSA), suggested gathering all information at the time of the arrest and that would give a better idea of the severity of the crime, hence the determination of non violent to violent sentencing.

Representative Lawlor stated due to layoffs of probation and parole officers, this contributed to the increase in prison population. Prison population has considerably escalated to 977 inmates since the Cheshire incident on 07/23/2007.

Representative Lawlor noted there have been less trial and more plea bargains over the last 20 years in the court system. He discussed several areas that need improvement: Information technology systems, better training and communications between agencies. These are goals that should be worked upon.

Mary Anne O'Neill requested copies of the Judiciary Committee proposals to send out to the task force to review.

Lisa Holden, Co-Chair, acknowledged Representative Lawlor for presenting to the task force.

Commissioner Lantz asked if the risk assessment of an inmate could be made available too the committee.

Thomas Kirk, Commissioner, from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, stated that risk assessment would have to be situational point and time. All assessments would be different depending on the degree of the incident. Static point assessments may not be accurate.

Lisa Holden stated that when criminals are assessed, their old and new paper work, if any, should stay together with the individual so the proper decisions for sentencing can be made.

Commissioner Susan Storey stated that women have a large portion of the overcrowding in prisons with the lesser crimes, consisting in prostitution and drugs.

William Carbone of Pardons and Parole said that presently being constructed is a program for parole and corrections to have automated PSI and also will be open to the prosecutors. This should be available in January.

PowerPoint Presentation by Brian Austin and John Forbes:

Brian Austin Undersecretary Office of Policy and Management gave a very detailed presentation on Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, the Planning Prospective and the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Austin discussed Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Committee (CJPAC) and the structure. Subcommittees should promote more effective and cohesive state criminal justice and juvenile justice systems and to develop and implement the offender reentry strategy.

Mr. Austin spoke of the Outreach Effort; (CJPAC) members were given three separate options to submit their issues and concerns to the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division. First submit narrative in writing, submit agency issues identification framework and focus group. He also discussed Sex Offender Management issues and implementation strategy.

Please see attached PowerPoint presentation at <http://www.ct.gov/opm>.

Maureen Price-Borelan, Community Partners in Action, asked Mr. Austin what would Federal grants money be used for. The hope was marketing strategies, internships, things of this nature.

A break was called at 3:09 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 3:17 p.m.

Commissioner Theresa Lantz, Randy Brarer and Fred Levesque Department of Correction (DOC) presentation:

Commissioner Lantz spoke of DOC offender Management Plan. A handout of DOC and its operations had been presented to the task force. Ms. Lantz spoke of classifying an inmate. There is a lot that plays into the role. Risk assessment is one, along with violence history and severity of the offense. In cases of mental illness inmates are assessed and incarcerated into facilities that can manage their care.

Commissioner Lantz also spoke of the release process, specifically what types of programs are available to the inmates being released.

Randy Braren said discretionary release should be contingent on suitable sponsor or home life. A background check on the sponsor is crucial on the release of the inmate.

Chief James L. Kenny stated criminals with mental illness should have programs available to them such as DMHAS clinicians. This could determine if the offender is incarcerated or hospitalized.

PowerPoint presentation by Chairman Robert Farr Board of Pardons and Parole and Andrew Clark Member of the Connecticut Sentencing Task Force:

Andrew Clark reviewed the activities and focused on the Connecticut Sentencing Task Force. What the next steps would be and the timeline it would take place. The Task Force is in the position of providing highly valued recommendations to the legislature regarding sentencing and overall criminal justice policy. Please see attached PowerPoint Presentation at <http://www.ct.gov/opm>.

Bob Farr Connecticut Pardons and Parole states it isn't easy to get into prisons in Connecticut. The crime would have to be very serious. A lot of the inmates come from broken homes, no fathers, or multiple fathers. Children in this situation can be raised in chaos and the outcome can be crime and imprisonment. That the statutes need to change as far as the sentencing of criminals and their offenses, example an offense for food stamp fraud can lead to a 20 year prison sentence.

Other Business: Lisa Holden Co-Chair announced there would be a public hearing on November 26, 2007 in Room 2C at 9:00 a.m. The Governor's Office will issue a press release.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Governor's Sentencing and Parole Review Task Force is scheduled for November 08, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Avarista Office of Policy and Management