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MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Date: November 10, 2020

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Location: <https://statema.webex.com/statema/e.php?MTID=m4ea1c80cbee7efd21bbe531ad15de8f7>

Meeting Number (Access Code): 161 285 3290

Meeting Password: pBuYaZpG823

Join by phone: 1-203-607-0564 US Toll

1-866-692-3580 US Toll Free

Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Andrew Peck at 11:05am.

		Video	Absent
1	Chair-Andrew Peck	X	
2	Scott Taberner	X	
3	Derek Keenan (by phone) (*)	X	
4	Sen. James Eldridge		X
5	Becky Michaels	X	
6	Allison S. Cartwright	X	
7	John Millett	X	
8	Ret. Chief Fred Ryan		X
9	Diane Coffey	X	
10	Mary Quinn	X	
11	Judge Rosemary Minehan		X
12	Kara Hayes	X	
13	Carolyn Boyes-Watson	X	
14	Erin Freeborn	X	
15	Cheis Garrus		X
16	Susan Jeghelian	X	
17	Strong Oak Lefebvre	X	

(*) Designee for Rep. Sean Garballey

EOPSS Staff: Anjeza Xhemollari and Spencer Lord

Others in attendance:

Between 10-15 members of the public attended the meeting.

2. Welcome

Chairman Andrew Peck welcomed all committee members and attendance was taken.

3. Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 13, 2020

Erin Freeborn had minor edits on Jon's presentation. 3rd paragraph to include "current work in Massachusetts". Roll call was taken to approve the meeting minutes with edits. All present members voted in favor to accept the meeting minutes.

4. Presentation by Chandra Banks. District Wide Conflict Mediator, Cambridge Public Schools, Local Practitioner

Chandra Banks started her presentation by a video. The video was 5-6 minutes long. Please see the script below.

Most of the research that can be found readily, in books and on the internet, point to Restorative Practices as they are used to address harm. However, in 2017, I had the privilege of meeting Judge Abby Abinanti of the Yurok Tribe at the Harvard Law School after a screening of the documentary film, "Tribal Justice". In our conversation after the film, she said, "I don't know anything about this, uh, 'Restorative Justice'. This is just how we live."

The First Nations Tribes, the original inhabitants of Canada, were credited for sharing what we know as Restorative Justice with juvenile justice professionals in the United States during the late 1970's. Howard Zher, known at that time as an American Criminologist, facilitated the first recorded victim offender dialogue in Indiana, USA. He later became known as the father of Restorative Justice.

I also learned that Natives in New Zealand, members of the Maori Tribe, won a long battle with the juvenile court system there in 1989, to include "Family Group Conferencing" as a means to redirect a young offender prior to court. This allowed for the family, the community and law enforcement professionals to meet together to develop the necessary intervention and support to help the young person resolve their difficulties.

The Navajo Tribe, here in the United States, have a phrase to describe their form of Tribal Justice that is translated as "people talking together to re-form relationships with each other and the Universe": hozhooji naat'aanii.

According to Courtney Marsh, in her November 1st, 2019 article, "Honoring the Global Indigenous Roots of Restorative Justice", posted on the website of The Center for the Study of Social Policy, "Restorative justice in the Westernized sense often indicates the implementation of tools used to resolve conflict, but indigenous peacemaking is inseparable from the restorative healing practices that are lived every day in connection with oneself, one's community, and nature according to tribal traditions and lifeways. "

This is why I took up the Judge on her invitation to visit her home and court on the Yurok Reservation in Northern California. I sat in the Tribal Court for 5 days and spent the rest of my time with various court staff, making home visits, touring the RedWood Forest, Juvenile Hall, the coast line, family shelters, the casino, checking on the elk, visiting the museum and listening to songs and stories about the tribe's connection to salmon and the Requa river that runs through their territory. I attended a meeting that included US and Tribal lawyers, social workers and judges to plan a collaborative effort to improve youth outcomes for the Yurok, Hoopa Valley and Karuk tribes. Every night I had dinner with the Judge, her brother and her housemates. One of her housemates is the proprietor of the book store, a traditional jewelry maker and basket weaver as well as the leader of the Girls Group. I was interviewed by Yuroks as much as I interviewed them. They were eager to know what I was doing there and generous with their commentary, especially the Elder Council member. I learned so much and had to take a lot of notes because it was overwhelming.

I left there with an insight to Judge Abinanti's words about how she and her people live. I was smudged in the court by the DV specialist on my way out to see "The Big Tree" accompanied by the court Mediator and one of the Probation Officers. I observed a Maori law student as she was sworn in to service as a lawyer by the Judge. She wore her traditional dress and sang traditional songs and shared her traditional food with us. One of the probation officers gave me preserved smoked salmon and eel and another staff took me to the post office to mail it back to Mass. to avoid having it confiscated at the airport. All in a day's work for my Yurok

colleagues. They gave me documents, shared curricula for DV and Substance Abuse groups provided by the court. I attended a certification class with one of the probation officers one evening and we ran into her son at the gas station!

There is no difference between the people on the reservation.

They do not silo events.

Crime and other conflicts are managed in the value system that the community is built on. I did not see any fear or shame delivered or experienced while I visited the reservation. I did not see a hint of confidentiality. You don't swear in or stand up when the Judge comes in. Everyone was (WAY!!!!) more transparent than I am used to in general and specifically in court. That is a key point to begin the path to Restorative Practice.

At this point I would like to acknowledge my teachers in this practice, including Steven Brion-Meisels (Cambridge resident, HGSE professor, CPSD parent and staff, my mentor) Janet Connors (Social Justice Activist of Dorchester, survivor of homicide, RJ trainer/practitioner, my friend), Jordan Johnson (Austin FC Youth Program developer using Circle my, former HGSE intern and my self titled "Navajo Buddy"), and my kids!

5. Q&A Public Members and Q&A Committee Members

Reflective of community centered process, Chandra began the Q&A on her presentation with members of the public who were in attendance, followed by RJAC members. The questions explored Chandra's own experience of Restorative Justice (both as a student of her mentors, and her facilitation work) in schools, community and law enforcement settings (she works with the MBTA police department on the RJ programming). Chandra is committed in all her practice areas to involving the entire community.

Chandra reflected on the importance of a circle keeper who keeps the values of restorative justice. The ability and values 'must be inside you' as a practitioner. There are many programs locally and across the country that offer educational certifications- Chandra stressed that it's not about 'getting a Masters in RJ' (as a response to one of the questions she fielded) but doing the work, holding your values and learning the basics of facilitation.

6. Alternative ways of funding

The Chair started a conversation with committee members on trying to find alternative ways of funding the RFP. One way it would be for the Committee itself to do the inventory. It will not fulfill the statutory obligation, but at least we will know what types of Restorative Justice programs are out there. Another way would be to release the RFP without funding, just as the RFI was released last year. The Committee did not vote on those two options.

7. Review of Annual Report

Kara Hayes provided a review of the Annual Report to the full committee. She stated that the work was coming along. The report will discuss funding obstacles, RFP, impact of COVID-19 and other things.

8. Public Comment (10 minutes)

Members of the public wanted public comment session to be added into the annual report. To provide a different perspective and observation.

Members of the public though Chandra Banks presentation was great. Awesome points to recall. Hit the nail on the head. Honor the roots of Restorative Justice.

9. Open Session for Topics not Reasonably Anticipated within 48 Hours of the Meeting

N/A

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:29PM