



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
 One Ashburton Place, Room 2133
 Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Tel: (617) 727-7775
 TTY Tel: (617) 727-6618
 Fax: (617) 727-4764
www.mass.gov/eops

CHARLES D. BAKER
 Governor

THOMAS A. TURCO, III
 Secretary

KARYN E. POLITO
 Lt. Governor

MEETING MINUTES
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
First Meeting-The Planning Subcommittee

Date: February 23, 2021

Time: 12:00PM-1:00PM

Microsoft Teams Virtual Location: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only) 857-327-9245 Phone Conference ID: 874-100-095#

Agenda Items:

1. Welcome and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 12:01pm

		Video/Call	Absent
1	Chair- Becky Michaels	X	
2	Strong Oak Lefebvre	X	
3	Mary Quinn	X	
4	Erin Freeborn	X	

EOPSS Staff: Arielle Mullaney, Anjeza Xhemollari and EOPSS interns Katie Queally and Bethany VanAntwerp

2. Introductions

Becky Michaels-ADA with Northwestern District Attorney's Office. She hopes that this subcommittee could expand other voices at the table. She hopes that public members of RJAC could be part of the process within the guidelines.

Mary Quinn-Works at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department at the women's facility. She has been involved in restorative justice work for about twenty years. She started a community accountability board twenty years ago and it is still going strong. Covid-19 made things challenging but with time, things have gotten back and running. Mary has done some victim-offender mediation. She agrees with Becky on not having great diversity at the table. Mary would like to access on going organizations and projects that are already happening in the state.

Arielle Mullaney- Attorney at EOPSS. Board counsel assigned to RJAC. She is here to help with any questions.

Erin Freeborn- Executive Director at C4RJ. Lawyer who went into law to do restorative justice. She is very excited to help the committee and this subcommittee on planning. She thinks that RJAC could do so much more with the questionnaire survey and the legislation.

Strong Oak- Executive Director at Visioning B.E.A.R.Circle Intertribal Coalition, Inc. She comes from a prevention place and from indigenous people. She does a lot of prevention work with conflict resolution, and she does many speeches with the coalition on sexual violence.

Katie and Bethany introduced themselves as the interns for EOPSS.

3. Including public/community voices in Planning Subcommittee meetings

Becky asks on how the public can participate the meetings.

Arielle Mullaney states that members of the public can attend any meetings that are open to the public, but typically the last 10-15 minutes are dedicated to the public. She states that all depends on how the chair wants the meeting to flow. In terms of voting, the public would not be voting.

Becky also asked if subcommittee members will be allowed to respond to the public comments.

Arielle stated that the Chair decides. If other members want to respond, they could ask the Chair and if that is allowed, the member can respond. It is also about the nature of the board. Some boards are much more by the book and adhere to the agenda.

Strong Oak- Finds the whole process distressing and wishes that we could have a more circular process and incorporate people that attend open meeting. She thinks the structure in place currently is silencing, and is particularly silencing for people of color, and the process is a silencing technique, and she finds it quite racist. She states that we are trying to build connections, but this does not feel inclusive at all.

Becky Michaels- What do you mean by inclusive? I do agree the structure of this is silencing, but I am trying to come up with a way for it not to be. And anyone who joins is part of the meeting. I want to make sure that I understand what you are saying and that this conversation leans to how it is not silencing.

Strong Oak – What we are getting from the state level is what traditionally is acceptable, and if we are going to adopt, then we want to make the inclusion topic better.

Becky Michaels- It seems that we can push boundaries without getting in trouble. It turns out the rules are pretty flexible and come up with something that is inclusive.

Erin Freeborn-One question for Arielle is that I specifically remember in our public meeting rules introduction having a portion of that discussion of not being able to engage back and forth in conversation with the public.

Are there certain times when that is restricted, or is it just based on the Chair?

Arielle Mullaney- It is really based on the chair. And the nature of the conversation. Maybe in the larger meeting with Andy, it would stick more to the regular meetings and less engaging with the public. But that is not a clear rule, more so to maintain the flow and structure, but in a subcommittee, you have a lot more leeway, and it would be up to Becky as chair whether she wants to engage in that conversation.

Mary Quinn- Can we try to function and that we really try to operate out of the circle model. And we can learn a lot, and that may be something we can start doing and see how it goes.

Becky Michaels- I like the idea of putting it in the minutes because then I think members of the public can go and talk, and then members of the public know they are welcome to participate.

Erin Freeborn- I wonder if there should be a different subcommittee that might be more of the circle process and more of a listening session.

Becky Michaels- I like the idea of having the purpose of having people listening. But the planning should come out of the listening.

Mary Quinn - I am just thinking of the circle model, and it is sort of essential to any restorative justice work. To follow up what we were talking about before- we could be operating from that model and then bring any pieces that need to be discussed we could bring to the committee meeting, and it would be known and in the meeting minutes.

Strong Oak- I would love to see us rotate the circle process every time we meet. Currently, right now, you are the one to follow up, but in a circle process, the circle keeper is someone different each time we meet and everyone could have the chance to be the circle keeper.

Becky Michaels- I think we have two topics right now. The substance of what it is going to be and then the planning piece of it. We want community members to be involved, and we would like to do as much as possible to do a circle format. I think a rotating circle keeper is a wonderful format. For the time being, I think it should just be the committee members, but maybe later, we can change that. Can this be clear in the meeting minutes? (Everyone gave a thumbs up to make sure this is in the meeting minutes) We as a group have voted to cooperate in the circle format, and members of the public that agree to join will be able to be included in the circle process.

Arielle Mullaney- We are going down two different paths with the planning and substance- but maybe we should discuss if there should be two different subcommittees or not. In an hour, you can only do so much. It might make sense to also do a listening subcommittee. I just wanted to put it out there, so you are able to plan as well.

Becky Michaels- I am trying to understand more is that sometimes the quick planning and efficacy gets in the way of hearing what everyone wants to say, and sometimes it is better to be slower. I think my thought is not to separate listening and planning yet. I think there is urgency in the work that we do in that we want more restorative justice out there, but I don't think, as a subcommittee, we are going to make that happen. My thought for the moment would not be to separate those two pieces.

Erin Freeborn- I think that makes a lot of sense right now, Becky. You have to listen to be able to plan well.

Mary Quinn - A part of the planning process can come from listening. Part of the process.

Anjeza Xhemollari- An easier way to do that is to set the meetings monthly or bi-monthly, and that way, it is on people's agenda and calendar, so they know to attend it.

It was determined for this subcommittee to meet the 4th Tuesday of every month at noon (12:00pm).

Agenda will be posted 48 hours in advance.

4. Purpose of this Subcommittee

a. Susan and Carolyn's Memo

In planning of the subcommittee, Susan and Carolyn's Memo must always be in preview.

b. Other ideas

With everything said above, the subcommittee members decided to review the statute and include specific questions to be addressed at the next meeting. Such as what does 'assist' mean to you and what do you believe the purpose/mission of RJAC should be?

5. RJAC Members

Legislative mandate; Current community members; Missing perspectives; Proposal for adding/expanding

Will be added as a future agenda item. Not enough time for today.

6. Next Steps

Next agenda to include specific questions from the legislation.

7. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 1:00PM