



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

James C. Bridgers, Jr.,  
Ph.D., MBA  
*Acting Director*

### **Commission on Juvenile Justice Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 16, 2024**

**Online meeting**

**CITIZEN MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kimberly Alfriend, Bonnie Beavers, Carol Cichowski, Tracey Friedlander, Gerda Gallop-Green, Scott Joftus, Ashya Johnson, Andrew Messick, Elizabeth Pentecost, Joshua Pestaner, Michael Pinard, Kevin Redden, Jonathan Scriven, Tom Smith, Tony Summers, Heather Sweren, Shuaa Tajammul, and Erin Whaley.

**AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joanna Bonner, Francha Davis, Frank Duncan, Elizabeth Emen, Susan Farag, Brett Lonker, Steve Neff, Jordan Satinsky (Jeffrey Innocenti substituting), Nathaniel Tipton, and Carlotta Woodward

**ABSENT MEMBERS:** Melissa Goemann

**PRESENT EMERITUS MEMBERS:** Carole L. Brown.

**ABSENT EMERITUS MEMBERS:** Chris Fogleman, and Wendy Pulliam.

**GUESTS:** Laura Mitchell, Sara Rose, Tia Scott, and WJLA news.

**STAFF LIAISON PRESENT:** Diane Lininger

- I. **Welcome** – The meeting opened by Kevin Redden, Chair of the Montgomery County Commission on Juvenile Justice (CJJ).
  - A. Kevin introduces new members:
    - Tony Summers
    - Elizabeth Pentecost
    - Ashya Johnson
    - Andy Messick
    - Scott Joftus
- II. **Legislative Committee** – Chair Carol Cichowski, Vice Chair Bonnie Beavers.

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8818 Georgia Avenue, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Suite 501 • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 • 240-777-1450 • 240-777-1367 FAX.  
7300 Calhoun Place, Suite 600 • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-1432 • 240-777-4447 FAX  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)



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- A. Carol Cichowski-** reported the highlights from County Council working sessions on juvenile crime, the school-to-prison pipeline, restorative justice, and truancy. Reports on the working sessions that County Council held this past fall. The videos and reports of the sessions are available online.
- B. Session on Crime – Carol Cichowski**
- a. Agreement that there is need to connect children to services.
  - b. Some comments on under-utilization of some services in the county and the state
  - c. Not enough programs
  - d. Generally, there is agreement that nationally and in Maryland there has been reduction of youth crime over the last decade.
  - e. Pre-pandemic arrests are higher than arrests we have today. However, arrests have started to pick up.
  - f. Crimes most discussed as particular problems: carjackings and car thefts.
  - g. Also concerns about access to guns/gun violence.
- C. Bonnie Beavers-** reports on Session on School to Prison Pipeline
- a. Trying to address racial disparities/inequities in suspensions/referrals to DJS. Intersection of race/disability
  - b. Legacy of over-policing in school and discipline gap
  - c. Trying to replace police with counselors.
- D. Bonnie Beavers** - reports on Session on Restorative Justice
- a. Has been working in MCPS (promising results)40% decrease in suspension of Black students in schools with Restorative Justice (RJ)
  - b. But MCPS needs more resources.
  - c. MCPS has 9 RJ specialists.
  - d. Wants to scale RJ and have it in all schools.
- E. Steve Neff** - reports on Session on Absenteeism and Truancy
- a. MCPS continues to struggle with absenteeism.
  - b. Multipronged impact of COVID has had big impact on attendance. Cannot punish our way out of attendance problem.

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- c. The accountability is with the school system.
- d. Need to continue to build relationship and know while every single child is chronically absent.
- e. To address, must be partnership between schools, parents/caregivers, and community partners.

### F. Carol Cichowski - Background on Reforms CJJ Previously supported.

- a. Minimum age - SB 52
- b. Lowers age of juvenile jurisdiction in two instances: firearm possession; and third offense (three violations of the law)
- c. Carlotta Woodward explains the current law (given the recent legislative change)- References 11-year-old in Baltimore who had 17 motor vehicle thefts – could not be charged because under 13.
- d. Crime has gone down but need to factor in the inability to charge children under 13 in these stats.
- e. States Attorneys are concerned - Children tell officers they know they cannot be charged/prosecuted (can fall victim to older children/adults). Need to look at these issues as a whole.
- f. **HB 134** also seeks to lower the age of juvenile jurisdiction. Nathaniel Tipton: the services we often talk about that are needed are not available. Scott Joftus – would like Maryland to look at California as a model – focusing money and resources around children. Suggests that our Commission and the State look to California.
- g. Protections during Interrogation - Bills seek to allow parent to waive child's right to access to an attorney.
- h. Discussion and possible vote on 2024 bills affecting juveniles. We will vote electronically, so that Commissioners have time to read the bills. Francha raised the question of what our process should be to discuss bills in the future, so that we can consider the different views/perspectives. We will create a Google doc that would allow members to add their perspectives and insights.

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### III. **Update on Behavioral Health and Crisis Services –**

#### A. **Sara Rose**, LCPC - LBHA Director, Operations Manager, Local Behavioral Health Authority, Montgomery County Department of Health, and Human Services

- Sara is speaking on behalf of Dr. Santiago
- Covers treatment programs in the County for adolescents.
- Vast majority of adolescents do not complete treatment.
- There is disconnect between need for services (i.e., for opioids) and the utilization of treatment services.
- Andrew Messick's question: How do we advocate for more services in the legislative context given Maryland's budgetary issues and the inevitable budget cuts across many sectors? This is an issue to cover at a future meeting.

### IV. **New Business**

A. November Minutes - Minutes adopted- All were in favor. Children's Center Ad-hoc Committee – Carlotta Woodward and Jordan Satinsky. Carlotta reported that the committee met on Monday and is continuing working on a vision statement.

B. Legislative Committee – Already has presented.

C. Meeting with Commission on Children and Youth – Kevin had a positive meeting with the Commission. In the future we may work with them and several of their members may speak to us as well.

### V. **Upcoming Meetings**

A. **February 20, 2024** – Legislative meeting. This meeting may last until 9pm as we will have numerous pieces of legislation to discuss.

B. **March 19, 2024** – What would Commission members like to have meeting about. If have an idea of topic, please email Diane and/or Kevin.

C. **Announcements from Members – Commission members have any announcements about events or activities?** None

VI. **Meeting Adjourned** - Meeting adjourned at 8:43 P.M.

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