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## San Francisco Juvenile Justice Commission GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY April 16, 2019

*Five (5) Commissioners attended the April 16, 2019 general meeting of the San Francisco Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC).*

### JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

- **Census: 25 male, 7 female**
- Low-mark was 23 youth in custody, average daily pop. in 2018 was 40, 2019 high-mark was 56
- Rarely if ever are there young people who are actually committed to Juvenile Hall
- Board of Supervisors, incl. Matt Haney, Hilary Ronen, and Shaman Walton have issued a proposition to close Juvenile Hall by 2021
- It would seem to Chief Nance that the Juvenile Justice Commission should have been consulted before introduction of the legislation to close the Hall
- Chief Nance has been clear that this would not necessarily be a good idea for San Francisco
- Proposed ordinance calls to dismantle the system without a clear alternative, only aspirations
- Youth with delinquency charges need to be held somewhere, which would most likely be Juvenile Hall facilities in other counties, which begs the question of why SF's should be closed
- Families should not be expected to pay for transportation between SF and other counties to visit
- Nance's concern that eliminating Juvenile Hall would remove a deterrent for youth crime in San Francisco, which would not aid in the elimination of the school-to-prison pipeline
- Mayor London Breed has established a panel of stakeholders to partner with experts in Juvenile Justice to explore evidence-based alternatives to incarceration
- Believes some are misreading the data. E.g. if there is a young person with violent felonies, and they are picked up for leaving their group home, they will be held with a misdemeanor
- Typically, there would not be a violent misdemeanor aside from possibly battery or a fight at school (Code 243) could be charged as a misdemeanor
- California has reformed and allowed Judges some flexibility to make charges tailored to the case
- California has eliminated third-strike laws (maybe specific to San Francisco)
- JPD has no control over misdemeanor youth who are transferred to SF from other counties
- There are opportunities to create alternatives to Juvenile Hall for the subset of juveniles here now. There are currently youth who are better suited for CBOs in custody right now
- Many undocumented, unaccompanied youth are in Juvenile Hall because of lack of documentation and family support. No alternatives exist for undocumented youth
- If youth are in on "failure to appear" warrants, why are they put in Juvenile Hall rather than taken care of? 85-95% of the time they will be released. They were held only for being nonresponsive
- Title XV calls for specific requirements when it comes to holding youth, making group homes are difficult to staff (e.g. Juvenile Hall has someone on staff 24/7/365, checking cells every 15 min.)
- Youth in psychiatric hospital right now costs \$25K/month
- LCR task force was set for March 22nd, same week as ordinance was released. LCR body was dissolved in favor of building blue-ribbon panel to address the future of Juvenile Hall
- Relatively small number of youth who are undocumented, who are admitted most of the time for economic charges like drug dealing, typically in the Tenderloin neighborhood

- Staff have committed their entire careers to the Hall and many are from the neighborhoods these youth are from. JPD leadership is worried about the public discounting their service

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH**

- George Calvin from SPY, SF Department of Public Health, provides behavioral health services for all youth at Juvenile Hall. Has a team of physicians providing short-term therapy to youth
- Currently conducting surveys with parents, should help SPY provide more tailored services for youth, will have data by end of April
- SPY does not follow youth post-release, but helps address gaps in services, from medical needs to post-release resources
- Juvenile Hall is stressful and may increase anxiety, so there are psychiatrists and nurses on call
- JB220 requires psychotropic medications to be approved by a judge unless in an emergency
- SPY and POs coordinate frequently before release, they work with a program called Aim High, which links youth with CBOs in San Francisco

### **UNIFIED FAMILY COURT**

- The move to close Juvenile Hall is political, and Judges not allowed to make political comments. Funding will be at the heart of all this, and Judges cannot be part of that either
- The court will continue to be involved as a State institution whether or not the Hall is closed
- No request was made to any Unified Family Court Judge for input about the proposal
- Mayor appointed Judges Wiley and Chan to the Panel, Judge Flores will standby to help
- From the Judge's perspective: misdemeanor/felony charges apply to sentencing, but it is adult language and Juvenile Law is always meant to address the best interests of the child
- Misdemeanor and felony classifications do not have regard for the mental state of the child, and also ignore the Judge's input as a quasi-parental role in the best interests of the youth
- Sometimes what is on paper is not indicative of the real issues of the youth, and a detailed analysis is needed case-by-case
- Unless there is public safety issue, many youth who are undocumented do not have homes to go to, they cannot speak to the pressures they have
- Undocumented youth will often not tell a Judge what their name is or their date of birth, and the Judge needs to order dental exams to determine whether or not they are a juvenile
- Many undocumented youth will go to out-of-home placement and immediately go AWOL
- Regarding previous meeting's notes on lack of alternative sentencing options for females, the female youth who was in the Hall due to lack of alternative options was released to her uncle
- There are no longer youth being held in the Hall due to lack of alternative options