



## JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

### Safety and Crime Reduction Subcommittee on Data and Research

#### Meeting Minutes

**Ronnie King- Chair**

Timothy Sloan, Camille Burban, Frank Denton, Linda Joseph, Shelley Grant

Council Staff: Carol Owens; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

**Topic:** This was a meeting of the Sub-Subcommittee on academic data and research

**Attendance:** Shelley Grant, Vicki Waytowich, Frank Denton, and Larry Cook

**Convened:** 8:32 am

This was a meeting of the temporary sub subcommittee on academic data and research. Ms. Grant convened the meeting and the members introduced themselves. The group reviewed the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss risk factors, protective factors and basic criminological theory for juveniles. The group also intends to emphasize the use of evidence based programs as a recommendation to the full commission.

There were several handouts: the executive summary and fact sheet from the Orange County 8% problem study; Risk and Protective Factors of Child Delinquency; the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey for middle and high school students. Copies of the handouts are on file. The Orange County 8% problem study indicated that most youth offenders do not continue to commit crimes after their first offense. According to the findings, most resources are expended on roughly 8 percent of the juvenile offender population and a significant proportion of chronic juvenile offenders can be targeted for early intervention the first time they are referred to the juvenile justice system. The risk factors in their lives are evident before they are influenced by the juvenile justice system or involved in further crimes. Risk factors may include: School Behavior/Performance (attendance, behavior, grades); Family Problems (supervision, abuse, illness/trauma/discord/finances, criminal behavior or incarceration of family member or parent); Substance Abuse; Delinquency (stealing, running away, and gang affiliation). The study has been replicated and in the Florida sample the percentage was slightly higher than 8 percent.

Mr. Denton spoke about the complexity and varied factors which may lead to criminal behavior. Ms. Waytowich mentioned the importance of evidence based risk screening instruments, which are currently conducted upon intake of all juvenile offenders in Jacksonville. The funding for the screenings however is grant based and not permanent. Diversion programs in Jacksonville have in the past been under the auspices of the State Attorney's Office, but are now going to be overseen by the Kids Hope Alliance. The

RFP for KHA diversion services includes the use of evidence based screening instruments. The use of such instruments enables the personalization of services to mitigate specific risks.

Commissioner Waytowich discussed the issues associated with making program or community needs assessments based on assumptions instead of on evidence and research. For example, it should not be assumed that funds need to be directed towards mentoring programs if it is not known how many kids actually need it, or knowing the capacity for existing mentor programs. The University of North Florida is currently conducting a gap analysis of juvenile services to identify both needs and capacity. It was requested the 2006 JCCI Reducing Murder Study be distributed to the full commission, which identified local structural and systemic concerns which are still relevant today.

Mr. Cook spoke about the recommendations from the Task Force mentoring subcommittee, which outlined the creation of a City department which would coordinate mentoring services throughout the city. Mr. Denton talked about his personal experience as a mentor for an elementary student who was struggling with literacy and was retained in the third grade more than once. Mr. Denton noted that the student's learning challenges were deeper than reading ability and included family instability, parental support and trust. Ms. Waytowich commented that it sounded the whole family needs assistance and wraparound services, in a manner similar to what the JSO gang intervention team has experienced.

The JSO gang intervention team reaches out to young adults at risk of being shot or associating with gangs to offer an alternative to a different life path. The intervention team has found that most of the time other members of the family need assistance as well. Ms. Grant added that there are often assumptions about families in regards to chronic truancy also, wherein it may be believed that the parent does not care about the child's school attendance but in reality there are usually multiple other crises occurring in the home. The members talked about how to reach the vulnerable group of juveniles who do not go on to 9<sup>th</sup> grade but are not counted in the dropout or graduation rates. The group spoke about the importance of early identification and intervention, trauma informed schools as related to discipline responses and the role of social workers in the school system.

The group discussed the formation of a panel of experts to weigh in on Jacksonville specific data related to juveniles, such as representatives from DCF, DCPS, SAO, and the Public Defender's office. This panel could produce a white paper or presentation to explain the local juvenile offender data to the full commission. It was agreed that Commissioners Grant and Waytowich would present background on risk and protective factors and basic criminological theory to the full commission at an upcoming meeting. The presentation could potentially take place in late February or March. Mr. Denton and Ms. Waytowich agreed to update the data and research subcommittee on the discussion from the sub subcommittee meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**Adjourned:** 9:52 am

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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