

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



Jennifer Maddox, Chair
Deborah Hall, Vice Chair
Donna Connolly
Amanda Gregoire
Heidi Sue LeBoeuf
Ariel Lim
Jennifer Madson
Benjamin Roberts

City Manager's Advisory Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday July 11th, 2017, 5:45 PM
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber 3rd Flr.

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: Donna Connolly, Deborah Hall, Jennifer Madson, Jennifer Maddox, Benjamin Roberts,
Absent: Amanda Gregoire, Heidi Sue LeBoeuf
Staff: Jayna Turchek, Dr. Mattie Castiel, Veronica Fitzgerald, and Kathy A. Esparza
Guests: Nicole Bell, Mary Quinn

1. Call to Order and Introductions at 5:57pm

Chairperson Maddox announced that Commissioner Heidi Sue LeBoeuf is resigning and there are two openings for the ACSW for districts 2 and 4

2. Review of minutes May 2nd and June 6th, 2017

Commissioner Madson motioned to approve May 2nd, 2017 minutes. Commissioner Connolly seconded. Unanimously approved as written.

June 6th, 2017 minutes – tabled

3. New Business- Conversation:

A. Mental health and re-entry needs for Worcester women in the Western MA Regional Women's Correctional Center

Discussion:

Mary Quinn, Program Coordinator for the Out of County Reentry Services at the Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Center in Chicopee spoke about the various needs that women who are in pre-trial and sentenced at Chicopee have; the primary needs are mental health and re-entry.

- There are about 275-300 women in the facility and they are from Worcester to Western Massachusetts; Presently 105 (64 pre-trial and 41-sentenced) of these women are from Worcester County. Although right now there are more women from Hampden (Chicopee's county) there are usually more women from Worcester County.
- About 80-85% of the women suffer from substance abuse and 50% of the women are dual diagnosed.
- Women in pre-trial are in a more vulnerable position because they have different court dates and can be released in the same date, which means they don't enter full programming while in jail. Furthermore, when they are released, they most likely will not have any support or re-entry plan, which means that they could relapse or go back to someone who has previously been exploiting them.
- The three primary needs that women re-entering society are housing, employment, and support systems that assist them navigating services.
- Worcester women currently do not have a re-entry staff person to connect them back to services and programs in Worcester. In the past there was a woman working full-time for Worcester County (position paid by Hampden County), this staff was 2 days in the jail developing relationships and then 3 days at 340 Main Street assisting women accessing services and support.

c/o Jayna Turchek, Director of Human Rights & Disabilities

TELEPHONE (508) 799-8486 | FAX (508) 799-1218

EMAIL: humanrights@worchesterma.gov



Dr. Castiel stated that she was told Chicopee gets about \$60,000 to \$70,000 for each of the women they house, so if Hampden County gets money, why are they not providing the resources that the women need?

Ms. Quinn stated that Hampden County certainly provides services while women are incarcerated and that Hampden also paid for the staff that was supporting Worcester County. She also stated that the reality is there is imperative need to have a person from Worcester in Worcester assisting the women navigating systems.

Ms. Quinn mentioned that the position that will support Worcester County could be filled within 2 months. Ms. Quinn also emphasized the importance of having someone who has lived experiences, knowledge, and commitment to this cause as the staff filling this position. Ms. Bell also agreed on the importance of these qualifications for the staff in this position.

Ms. Bell added that she asked Worcester Sheriff who is responsible of filling this position and he stated that is Worcester's responsibility but that they are low in resources.

Ms. Quinn also mentioned that Hampden would continue to pay for this position.

How can the Committee help?

- There needs to be awareness about women who are incarcerated and the needs they have and what's going on systematically that is impacting women.
- Dr. Castiel suggested that ACSW visit the women in Chicopee and invite City Manager to join the ACSW for this conversation.
- Advocate for housing programs for women in re-entry and substance abuse programs with the following components: job training, mental health, substance abuse, and sexual exploitation. At least a 20-25 bed facility (in-patient) to start utilizing a harm-reduction model.

Follow up:

- Chair Maddox will email Director Turchek to request City Manager to meet with the women in Chicopee and listen about their needs

4. Old Business- Discussion:

A. Planning for ACSW 40th year anniversary

Discussion:

Commissioner Madson confirmed that Girls Inc. will be happy to host the event on a Monday in October 2017 and will get back to OHRD about a specific date. Additionally, she suggested that in terms of Girls Inc. youth participation, she recommend a break in the program so that the first part could be geared towards intergenerational activities and the latter could be the more formal program.

Commissioners agreed that the theme for the event could be a historical representation of the women's movement with protest signs and information on issues, initiatives and progress through the decades. The program will also include a speed-networking component where prior women serving in the commission have to the opportunity to get to know current commissioners, youth and other event's participants.

The OHRD created a membership list of previous ASCW members to invite them to the 40th anniversary and to ask them about previous ACSW members they may know. Once all commissioners add any contacts they may have to the membership list, the OHRD will send a letter and questionnaire, electronic or paper copy, to all folks in the list. The questionnaire will be sent out in waves as the OHRD gets more ACSW previous members' contact information.

Commissioner Madson suggested reaching out to other committees to see if they know of anyone who has served in the ACSW. Commissioner Connolly suggested using social media to look for past members.

Commissioners agreed to add their contacts to the membership list by July 18th, 2017.

5. Review assignments for next meeting (Tuesday August 1st, 2017)

- Commissioners will add contacts to membership list by July 18th, 2017
- Next meeting will focus on planning and logistics for 40th anniversary event
- Chair Maddox will send an email to Director Turchek with ACSW's requests pertaining mental health and re-entry needs for Worcester women in the Western MA Regional Women's Correctional Center.

6. Adjournment at 7:14 pm