



# Tulare County

## Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission

### Meeting Minutes – March 28, 2023

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**Location:** Connections Center, 3249 W. Noble Ave, Visalia, 93277 and via Zoom

**Members Present:** Jennie Bautista, Bud Darwin, Galen Quenzer, Sam Weiser

**Members Absent:** Megan Casebeer, Sneha Kumar

**Additional Attendees:** Carla Calhoun, Manny Castro, Miguel Garcia, Jose Gonzalez, Jeff Jacobs, Gordon Osmus, Valerie Salazar, Mike Santos, Kelly Vernon, Leanne Williams

- I. **Call to Order:** Bud Darwin called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.
- II. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments made at this meeting.
- III. **New Business:**
  - a. **Juvenile Court Update:** Judge John Bianco was not present, so he did not provide an update. Division Manager Jose Gonzalez shared that, beginning next week, Judge Bianco is assigned to Civil Courts and Judge Sylvia Hanna is assigned to Juvenile Courts.
  - b. **Probation Update:**
    - i. Division Manager Jose Gonzalez (DM Gonzalez) said that officers in his division continue to participate in career fairs at various schools to speak about careers with the Probation Department and the roles of Probation Officers. Officers in his division recently attended school fairs at Lindsay High School and at Tulare High School and career fairs held at other venues that included participants like Court Appointed Social Advocates (CASA). The turnout at each fair was good, he said. DM Gonzalez also shared that he is still working with Probation Administration and schools within Tulare County to possibly bring back the Gang Resistant Education and Training Program (GREAT). Probation formerly participated in GREAT, but the program was terminated due to various reasons. Bud Darwin suggested that research on this program be done, and Galen Quenzer informed that there currently isn't a lot of information on it. DM Gonzalez added that there are between 13-14 officers in his division who devote a minimum of a couple of hours at least one (1) time per week at ProYouth and at other after-school youth programs/activities to interact with juveniles in a positive way. An example of this includes officers recently participating in Read Across America at six (6) schools in areas throughout the county including Exeter, Strathmore, Tulare, and Visalia.
    - ii. Division Manager Mike Santos (DM Santos) also gave an update and informed that there have been no substantial changes to report since the January meeting. He said that the average number of youth at the Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) is 61; there currently are nine (9) SYTF youth at JDF; and they anticipate that seven (7) youth who currently are at the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) will be returned to Tulare County following the official closure of DJJ on June 30, 2023.



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**IV. Actions Items and Discussion:**

**a. Actions Items:**

- i. Galen Quenzer made a motion to approve the January 31, 2023 meeting minutes. Sam Weiser seconded the motion.
- ii. Swearing in of new commission members will take place at the next meeting. Judge John Bianco previously said that if the need arises, a special session for swearing in could take place via Zoom or at the courthouse.

**b. Discussion (Roundtable):**

- i. Bud Darwin said that the Commission is still in the process of recruiting youth to serve on the Commission. There are two (2) youth who have applied and he and Jennie Bautista plan to interview them within the next couple of weeks. Ms. Bautista said that there actually are now four (4) applicants. Ms. Bautista requested that members of the Commission continue to reach out to youth they interact with to inquire on interest. Galen Quenzer asked what qualifications are sought to serve in this role and Mr. Darwin responded by saying that there is no distinct answer but youth who have had some contact with the juvenile justice system are preferred as they are able to bring a valuable voice to the table.
- ii. Bud Darwin said that he welcomes working with (not changing) the Commission to establish what is working well with getting youth connected to vocational opportunities and augmenting community service events available to youth. Transportation for youth is an issue and will require the Commission to look into how to appropriately address it.
- iii. New Chief Probation Officer, Kelly Vernon, was introduced to the Commission by Bud Darwin. She shared that, while she is new to Tulare County (3 weeks), she has 30 years plus of experience in law enforcement in various capacities including eight (8) as Chief Probation Officer with Kings County. Chief Vernon said that she advocates and loves finding opportunities for juvenile justice involved youth to be successful. Chief Vernon also said she appreciates how active the Commission in Tulare County is and looks forward to working with everyone. Mr. Darwin shared that the Commission has been around awhile, and even though it is active now, the past few years have been slow for Commission activity. Chief Vernon shared that the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) has training opportunities and she will look into them to share with the Commission.
- iv. Bud Darwin welcomed Gordon Osmus. Mr. Osmus said that he works with youth who are on informal probation. He mentioned work with Mending Fences during Christmas break as an example of an opportunity for youth to obtain community service hours. He also said that he is looking for additional resources that will help youth complete their community service hours and mentioned an animal rescue organization in South Tulare as an example. He also said that there are a lot of people who are willing to assist youth.
- v. Carla Calhoun shared that Community Services Employment Training (CSET) mainly works with those who are age 24 and above and that CSET currently



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doesn't have too many opportunities available for youth who are age 16 or less. She said that CSET has many opportunities available for youth that are geared to help them with transitioning into the community including education assistance, career development/work experience, mental health services, nutrition and cooking, internships, etc. She pointed out that CSET has a civic engagement program that is supported by Tulare County Board Supervisor Eddie Valero. Ms. Calhoun mentioned that awareness (volunteer/vocational opportunities) is key to helping youth explore what options they have.

- vi.** Jennie Bautista asked if youth can go to their Probation Officer for assistance with volunteer work. LeAnne Williams addressed what appeared to be a misunderstanding among the Commission members. Ms. Williams clarified that youth who are supervised by Probation receive multiple services while on probation, including being connected to volunteer and/or vocational opportunities. However, as Ms. Williams explained, the Commission involves a broader scope of juveniles than youth supervised by Probation and the Commission should have other sources like community service providers that can facilitate services for these youth.
- vii.** Manny Castro pointed out that the Commission needs to be realistic about the population (youth) it serves; high-risk youth and gang members are not likely to engage in the same volunteer/vocational activities as lower-risk and non-gang members. He went on to say that understanding the risk level of each youth served is important to connect youth to appropriate services. He also said that youth struggle with reaching community service hours because access to them is not easily accessible. Further, Mr. Castro mentioned that Champions and high schools like Golden West and El Diamante have programs in place that the Commission should consider.
- viii.** Sam Weiser mentioned that there are many moving parts that can affect the behavior of high-risk youth. He suggested that the Commission take into account the complexity of the needs and importance of connecting this population to programs and services that will better resonate with their interests and real-life situations. He believes that communication is a key component to bridging any gaps that could hinder positive outcomes. He brought up the motto, "intentional service, intentional about experience".
- ix.** The Commission members discussed the concept of having a "master resource list" of organizations where youth can volunteer to obtain community service hours. LeAnne Williams explained that supervised youth receive community service hours while on probation, so the Commission does not need to develop a list for Probation but might consider doing so for other youth served. Jennie Bautista found a volunteer match (originally developed by United Way) service that could be a good tool for connecting youth to volunteer services.
- x.** Galen Quenzer stated he likes the idea of youth participating in volunteer work. He believes that volunteer work can be beneficial for youth who are not in trouble, are starting to get in trouble, or in trouble and have had contact with the juvenile justice system. He said that the youth whom his organization, Boys



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and Girls Club of the Sequoias, have served enjoy being involved and like community engagement. In exchange, the community sees youth who participate in community service in a different, more positive way. Bud Darwin said that community service can give youth a sense of self-worth and belonging. Mr. Quenzer replied that mentorship is a critical component in youth's lives. Sam Weiser added that being a part of the community can benefit youth and help them to identify what their interests are and that a career in a field of interest can help give youth a sense of intrinsic value. Carla Calhoun said the Commission is a great resource for facilitating services, learning, and leadership opportunities to youth.

**V. Correspondence Received by the Commission:**

- a. No correspondence received.

**VI. Agenda Development for the Next Meeting:**

- a. List (Master) of community service resources
- b. Report on VolunteerMatch
- c. Report on applicants
- d. Have new members present so they may be sworn in
- e. CSET PowerPoint of services provided
  - i. Future items may include
    1. Presentation from Miguel Garcia at Office of Youth and Community Correction (OYCR)
    2. Presentation from Jeff Jacobs
    3. Overview about the juvenile justice system class Judge Bianco's teaches at College of the Sequoias

**VII. Adjournment:**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.
- b. The next scheduled meeting is May 30, 2023.
- c. Minutes prepared by Gina Rizza, Staff Services Analyst.