

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CADDO PARISH COMMISSION'S
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE
HELD ON THE 3rd DAY OF MARCH, 2025

The Caddo Parish Juvenile Justice Committee met in legal session on the above date at 1:00 p.m. in the Government Plaza Chambers Conference Room, with the following members were present constituting a quorum: Commissioners Burrell, Cothran, Gage-Watts, Jones, Thomas, and J. Young (6). ABSENT: Commissioner Blake (1).

Mr. Randall gave the invocation, and The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Thomas. There were no Agenda Additions, so the Committee moved onto Citizens Comments.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Jon Glover came before the committee and gave the following comment:

I just want to reiterate if we don't, as a citizen, the information that you all are privy to whereby we can make a comment of substance, then we feel left out of the loop. I just want you to know that maybe you should reposition comments until after we hear what you all have to say. Thank you.

There being no more Citizens Comments, the Committee moved onto New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Report from Director Andrew Randall*

Mr. Randall provided the Committee with statistics regarding the Juvenile Detention Center. He pointed out that there were 326 new admissions to the detention center in 2024. These numbers are shared during the Commission's Work Sessions. During the month of May, the intake numbers increase due to children being out of school with nothing to do. The highest population in the detention center are black males aged 12 to 15. The types of crimes that are typically being committed are simple burglary and illegal possession of a firearm. When children are in schools, then they're not breaking into people's homes, cars, etc. Working with the Violent Crimes Abatement Taskforce (VCAT), the Caddo Parish Juvenile Probation Officers have provided intelligence and information to significantly reduce the amount of handguns that are in the hands of juveniles. Forty-three guns were removed from juveniles in 2024 based on the intelligence that was provided.

Mr. Randall also said that differences in how schools handle incidents (in-house vs. involving law enforcement) could skew the data. One school's approach might lead to more reported incidents than another, even if the actual number of incidents is similar. School specific crime data is compiled and analyzed, which provides a more informed perspective on crime distribution among schools. The goal is to provide necessary information to determine where resources should be allocated.

Mr. Randall then talked about the 2025 census for the detention center. There have been thirty-four intakes in the month January with various charges.

He also provided a summary of the work that the probation officers do based on their case assignments. Mr. Randall said that the primary goal is rehabilitation rather than incarceration. Resources like probation officers and partnerships are utilized for restorative justice. The system aims to achieve rehabilitation through diversionary processes while maintain public trust regarding safety.

Mr. Randall talked about mental health as it relates to juveniles. He said that the goal is to provide necessary support, such as counseling, instead of solely focusing on punishment. He then spoke on human trafficking. Staff is trained to identify trafficking signs and refer children to the Star Court for resources and family support. Human traffickers predominantly target young women. Drug Court tracks the number of children who are participating, as well as, the specific drugs these children are dealing with. GPS monitory systems are vital for public safety and ensuring accountability. An effective monitoring system is in place, utilizing top-tier materials.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know if the juveniles at CCC were continuing their education. Mr. Randall does not believe that they are. Educational responsibilities cease once juveniles are transferred out of the Juvenile Detention Center. Mr. Clay Walker, Assistant Parish Administrator, pointed out that juveniles at CCC do have an iPad, but they can only access educational materials, such as GED, Hi-Set, etc.

Mr. Thomas wanted to know if Teen Court was still active. Mr. Randall said that they do, and it is run by Volunteers for Youth Justice (VYJ).

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know if there have been any further discussions regarding the housing of juveniles. Mrs. Bryant said that they have not. She said that 17 year olds are housed at the detention center. She pointed out that the millage did not pass. Expansions of the detention center requires additional operational capacity, which is currently unavailable.

She then wanted to know if there were any issues with undocumented immigrants being

brought into the detention center. Mr. Randall said that it is not an issue with the Caddo Parish Juvenile Detention Center from a criminality standpoint.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know if there was anything else that was needed from the Commission to help improve Juvenile Services. Mr. Randall said that Administration provides the necessary resources to do what needs to be done. He said that they are only two officers short of being fully staffed.

Mr. Cothran wanted to know if they need volunteers. Mr. Randall said that there is a vetting process to work with the children, but there is a need for people to work with their partners to provide mentorship opportunities for the children.

Mr. Jones commended the Juvenile Services staff for all of their hard work in helping the children out.

- *Visit from and discussion related to My Community Cares, the Harbor, and the Father Initiative*

Ms. Kreesha Bennett said that My Community Cares is a community-driven approach to strengthen families and prevent child abuse. Part of the My Community Cares initiative is to identify and address the need for support services for fathers. Research is being conducted to determine suitable programs for implementation. In doing so, they reached out to 'Fathers on a Mission' in Baton Rouge.

Mr. Lamar Robson, Fathers on a Mission, said that this is a 12-week program on responsible fatherhood, and includes topics like stress management, understanding children's needs, and a father's influence on their children. This program has been effective and offers engaging discussions and opportunities for participants to share their experiences. It also offers services, such as employment skills, interviewing skills, and mental health services. This program aims to offer additional resources beyond what is typically available, like a treasure room where a father can get clothes, etc. Another initiative shows fathers how to make healthy meals for their children.

Mr. Robson also mentioned that they tour the prisons and offer their program to incarcerated men.

They would like to come to Caddo Parish and offer their services to the fathers in the community.

- *Visit from and discussion related to RAPS Program*

RAPS focuses on providing skills and knowledge for young people to begin their careers in the music industry. This program encompasses behind-the-scenes roles, such as audio technicians and lighting technicians. The music industry offers profitable career paths for young people. RAPS aims to equip young people with professional skills and crucial developmental skills, like character development, social development, and people skills. Success in the music industry relies heavily on relationships and networking. Music producers, music engineers, and sound technicians will be part of the staff. Participants will learn music production skills applicable to various formats, including commercials and albums. The program will also cover transforming various spaces, whether it be a TV studio or out in the field, into broadcasting environments. Future plans include networking with other organizations to expand learning opportunities after completing the program.

Mr. J. Young mentioned the recording studio at the Harbor. He said that the Harbor is a hub where families and kids can receive all kinds of services, such as character building. Mr. J. Young said that a recording studio has been set up there as well. He suggested that the RAPS representative contact the Volunteers for Youth Justice for more information.

RAPS representative said that this is a year-long program that is divided into quarters that aligns with the school year. The curriculum includes field recording and a dedicated recording space that will offer online access to platforms like YouTube VR or Facebook Live.

Mr. Thomas said that the Commission has been approached by several organizations with a similar vision.

RAPS representative said that this program focuses on education to cultivate interest in specific job sectors which will address the skill gap in supporting crucial industry. They aim to develop a strong local workforce for future industry needs.

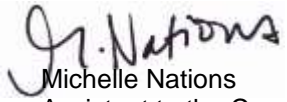
Mrs. Bryant asked the following questions: What is the overall budget? Where else are you receiving funding? Are children being charged for this program? And what is the request for the Parish? RAPS said that they have not explored other avenues for funding. The overall budget is \$900k. The program is initially set up for 36 kids.

Mrs. Gage-Watts wanted to know if they were amicable to working this as a pilot program for \$25k. RAPS said that they could serve 6 to 8 children with that amount of funding.

Attorney Frazier wanted to know if this request was going to be sent to the Appropriations Committee. Mr. Jones said that this will take more vetting, but it will be more than likely be sent to that

committee.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned
at 1:15 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Nations". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michelle Nations
Assistant to the Commission Clerk