

Duplin County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
Minutes of the Meeting
September 7, 2021

Jason McGuirt, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all to the September 2021 meeting of the Duplin County JCPC.

Invocation was offered by Mayor AJ Connors.

Present: AJ Connors, Jason McGuirt, Darryl McCaster, Jessica Harper, Trisha-Ann Hoskins, Melissa Reese, Erica Bostic, Earlean Rivers, Nancy Hodges, Lance Turner, Darryl McCaster Sr., Penny Thorne, and Dolna Hill.

Present via WebEx: Ashley Reiger, Jasmine Williams, Jesse Dowe, Wendell Boykins, Judge Mario White, Ciaria Miller, Diane Herring, Nikita Newkirk, Candice Mathis, and Ava Chavis.

Quorum was confirmed.

A motion was made to adopt the 2021 JCPC meeting minutes; motion – AJ Connors; Deputy Turner 2nd –; motion carried.

Old Business—Minimum age for service of Jurisdiction was raised to 10 years old. NC is one of 11 states that were still charging children as young as 6 who may have behavioral issues arising out of mental health issues/concerns. All serious offenders in that age group were juveniles with problem sexual behaviors back in 2019 prior to the pandemic. These offenses in the very young are usually a crime of opportunity and many of the perpetrators have been victimized themselves. Changing the age changes the age of jurisdiction and will force community stakeholders to once again, adjust the way we have dealt with juveniles in the last 21 years.

New Business – Next Two (2) years will determine how we deal with these behavioral cases in children. The judicial process is not developmentally appropriate for ages six (6) to seven (7) years old. New focus for 8-9 yr olds with a qualifying felony will be a “Care Review” process for those considered “vulnerable juveniles.”

Agency Reports

- Psychological Services – Juan Jimenez representative; Explained their department establishes care; complete care and close cases.
- Teen Court – Ciaria Miller reported for the program; implementing a divergent program, referrals come from the SRO, In the process of recruiting volunteer minors; October/ November is when teen court usually picks up cases.

- Restitution program –Nikita Newkirk reported for the program; Community service placement typically at Sarah’s Refuge Domestic Violence Women’s Shelter.
- Building Peace– Diane Herring reported for the program; Ages six (6) to seventeen (17) who show they need assistance in communications, etc. This program is based on mostly Court Councilors; before that the referrals were coming from schools. This Program has an accountability workshop on Saturday. 3 new referrals, program length is 12 weeks, no more than 3 “student patients” at a time.
- Mentoring program– Nikita Newkirk reported for the program; one on one structured learning program with supportive guidance. Issues is getting adult volunteers. Two hours a week adult volunteer. One-year commitment, qualifications include: Love for kids, pass a background check, age twenty-one (21) +, with an option for group mentoring (husband and wife).
- DNA Structured Learning – Earlean Rivers reported for the program; Referrals can come from the DJJ/court-involved and school; involves student and parent; aides in employment and learning. Trial: Child not progressing; Trend: Kids are not used to being back in the classroom.

Other Announcements – Looking for someone who may have been involved with the system, college aged or a teen court participant to be added to the council for a different perspective on the judicial process of juveniles. Also, in need of mentors for a two hour a week per year commitment volunteer program service. Warsaw Night Out begins September 11th, 2021 at 301 Memorial Drive. Implement more trauma informed school system programs.

Closure and Next Meeting

A motion to adjourn was made by Lance Turner 2nd Mayor AJ Connors; motion carried.

Next meeting is set for October 5th at 1230 pm. Details to follow.

Respectfully Submitted:

Trisha-Ann Hoskins