

MDOC Updates for the JJAG Meeting 1/21/2022

Commissioner's report to Criminal Justice/Public Safety Committee – Friday, 1/21/2022 @ 11:00

Commissioner Liberty will be delivering a presentation to the Legislature's Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee on current events in the juvenile justice system. All testimony to the legislature for the foreseeable future will be virtual so anyone can watch or listen to the Commissioner's presentation in one of the following ways:

- a. Watch on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/MaineStateLegislature/channels>
- b. For more information, including audio only live stream please visit the legislative committee webpage: <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees/CJPS>

Commissioner Liberty will be addressing the Criminal Justice Public Safety again in February to report on progress made toward legislative mandates enacted last year. I'll share information on how to access that presentation as soon as a date for the presentation is confirmed.

New Superintendent for Long Creek Youth Development Center as of January 31, 2022 – Lynne Allen

Lynne Allen who has decades of experience operating juvenile facilities within the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services will take the helm at Long Creek Youth Development Center on January 31, 2022. Here's an article in the Portland Press Herald regarding Ms. Allen's

hiring: <https://www.pressherald.com/2022/01/14/new-superintendent-hired-for-long-creek-maines-beleaguered-youth-prison/>

New Restorative Justice Coordinator for MDOC – Vic Viera

As of January 2, Vic Viera is now MDOC's Restorative Justice Coordinator who will help develop a robust array of restorative practices in the community, at Long Creek and work closely with other RJ professionals including MDOE's designated RJ Coordinator. (Jonathan or Page may have additional information about that person's status.)

Bearings contract nearing completion

Contract negotiations continue toward opening the Bearings House in Auburn. The facility will eventually have a capacity to serve four male residents who are either on community reintegration status or are on probation but eligible for the program and at risk of commitment. There will be two additional beds available for attendant care stays up to 72 hours. The target date for opening the facility is March 1, 2022. Fingers crossed!

New LCYDC staff started training

New hires for JPW positions began their formal training last week. Five new JPWs have recently completed the training and 9 more are in the process of receiving training and shadowing staff. All JPWs must receive Maine Criminal Justice Academy certification within 12 months of being hired. DOC leadership continues to work with the Academy on a specialized certification curriculum for JPWs that emphasizes adolescent development, trauma, mental health, restraints authorized for special populations (which includes juveniles), etc. MDOC is committed to specialized certification for any staff working with juveniles either in the field or at Long Creek.

Collaboration and Technical Assistance from community partners to execute MDOC's juvenile justice initiatives

Discussions began yesterday with some of the Long Creek Board of Visitors on facilitating two separate "technical assistance" groups to assist MDOC in achieving legislative mandates and expectations:

- c. Whether any of the potential community residence locations identified in the January 1 report to the legislature are viable, and if so, what resources must exist in the community to properly serve MDOC clients, and
- d. How should MDOC utilize funds expected to become available due to reducing the staff size of Long Creek? The legislature has emphasized that the savings from reduced populations at Long Creek are expected to be invested in juvenile services and MDOC is honoring that expectation.

The focus of these two groups is going to be strictly on building out the continuum of care in an intentional and well-informed manner. As stated by one member of the Board of Visitors, "This is a process centered in hope." I will be reaching out to potential collaborators within the next week and hope that we'll have lots of community input on how best to allocate MDOC resources.

Thomas College Innovation Challenge – solving the problem of "boredom" at LCYDC

Each year, Thomas College in Waterville hosts an Innovation Challenge, whereby small teams of students compete to solve problems for local organizations, and in the process students gain professional experience and career development. The Innovation Challenge culminates with a final pitch competition during which teams showcase their designs/prototype and aim to be the most impactful. MDOC will be one of the host organizations this year. LCYDC specifically will be the host location and the "problem" will be something to the effect of: boredom among detained and committed youth. Catherine Curry at Long Creek will be the "point person" for this exciting opportunity!

General outline of how the Innovation Challenge works:

- For 8 weeks a team of 3 students will learn about the problem and come up with methods to mitigate the problem.
- The students will spend a few days at LC over the course of the 8 weeks.
 - At the start of their project they'll need a tour and discussion time with staff and residents so they can grasp the issues associated with the problem.
 - Half way through they'll need to spend 1-2 days discussing and testing their proposed solution.
 - At the end they'll need 1-2 days to discuss, test, or analyze their final solution.
- The students will need 1 point of contact at LC throughout the project who can answer questions, set up the onsite visits, and otherwise support the project through completion.