

RE-ENTRY'S INDISPENSABLE TOOL: AN EFFECTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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**“Next to doing right,
the great object in the
administration of justice
should be to give public satisfaction.”**

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist

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Introduction

But how can the public be satisfied that the justice system is doing right when it knows so little about its operations? And how can the justice system do right unless it can call on all the resources it needs - both financial and community - to do its job?

Public support lies at the heart of a well functioning justice system. No place is this element more needed than in the criminal justice part of that system, where a lack of understanding of restraints other than walls leaves the public feeling vulnerable to offenders on the street. And no where within the criminal justice system is public support more essential than in the difficult re-entry process, when administrators must often work to achieve a successful reintegration for offenders in the face of an apprehensive home community.

Access to community resources is almost as important as public support. We say "almost," because once the community is supportive, the doors of local agencies are more likely to open. Board members and directors will come to appreciate the contribution their agencies can make to the re-entry process.

We believe advisory committees, drawn from a range of constituencies and working collaboratively with corrections administrators, offer one of the most effective tools for gaining both support and access.

A Committee for Each Community

Ideally, each community should have an advisory committee to help those in charge of re-entry succeed in their task. Such a committee, bringing together members of affected neighborhoods, of the business and treatment communities, of the housing and educational sectors, will help create the access and climate needed by inmates returning to life outside the walls.

The value of such a group has been demonstrated in Lowell, Massachusetts in another context, but equally applicable to re-entry. A private provider created an advisory group composed of public officials and members of the business community, neighborhood associations, and social service agencies, to advise on a program aimed at reducing violence in the city. Together, based on the provider's research, the committee and the provider picked the neighborhood and crimes they wanted to address, and devised strategies with the goal of "making Lowell the safest city in the country." Today, the provider's involvement is finished, but the advisory group continues as advisory to the Chief of Police.

Advisory committees are not new to the criminal justice system. In their publication, *Restoring Hope Through Community Corrections*, the American Probation and Parole Association calls them "potent methods for involving the community in the criminal justice process." The Federal Bureau of Prisons requires community relations boards to its community facilities. The National Center for State Courts has promoted their

creation, including in those states in which probation forms part of the court system.

- New Jersey's courts have a long history of using volunteers throughout their system. The volunteers number around 5,000. In the vicinages committees of volunteers oversee the volunteer programs within their jurisdictions.

Some boards already play a role in the re-entry process.

- Colorado's Community Corrections Boards screen and approve or reject applicants as well as oversee the operations of public and private programs within the district.
- Vermont's reparative boards, drawn from the local community, are being used to reintegrate youthful offenders into their neighborhoods.

Such committees have proven their effectiveness in many ways. Administrators have been given greater access to community resources and more support in dealings with funding sources or other agencies. And committee members have been given the opportunity to become involved with what is arguably the most compelling area of public policy, thus gaining an appreciation of what corrections can and cannot offer a community.

Most important, advisory committees create constituencies who can speak on behalf of re-entry needs and issues. Members, volunteers coming from outside the system, will have a unique credibility when they speak to re-entry's needs and issues. Because of the committee membership they will also be seen as knowledgeable. They can become your most effective advocates.

- In Iowa, members of a facility's advisory committee are raising funds for services the state does not provide.
- In Alabama, retired businessmen, by screening probationers for potential jobs, were appalled to discover many couldn't read. They persuaded the legislators to add literacy moneys to the community corrections appropriation.

Yet despite their value, advisory committees have not yet become an integral part of the re-entry process.

Getting Comfortable With Advisory Committees

Advisory committees can be uncomfortable for many administrators. After all, nothing prepares you for working with an advisory committee. Neither academic courses nor other jobs expose you to the process. It is truly experiential learning, both for those who serve as members, and for those to whom they are advisory.

The main purpose of this booklet is to offer some suggestions that come from the authors' years of serving on and staffing advisory committees, and helping others create or galvanize committees of their own. The ideas reflect lessons learned, often the hard way, through situations you have no doubt encountered or will encounter as you deal with an advisory committee.

This is not a "how-to" manual. There are other materials to provide those basics, and we have listed a couple under Resources. We have also included as Appendices examples of basic advisory committee functions for you to adapt to your own purposes:

Appendix A is a mission statement currently being used by the Community Relations Board of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Appendix B is the mission statement used by the Citizen Advisory Board to the Massachusetts Commissioner of Probation.

Appendix C contains a set of procedures used by the Suffolk County House of Corrections.

Appendix D contains training modules developed for the advisory committees which until recently existed within the government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Committees appear in a variety of forms, with a variety of purposes and a variety of members. Some are advisory to directors of halfway houses or day reporting centers, others to Chief Probation Officers or Commissioners. Some have members from both within and without the criminal justice system; others have only members from the public. Many have statutory functions built into criminal justice procedures, such as planning local programs or reviewing private provider contracts. Others are used to help improve the system, "to involve the community in the corrections process" or "to explore innovative administrative and programmatic ideas."

Whatever the mandate, however, all advisory committees have certain dynamics in common, dynamics that would certainly apply to re-entry committees. Our purpose here is to focus on those key dynamics common to all committees that, from our experience, can enhance or reduce a committee's effectiveness.

I. Advisory Committees are Not Boards of Governance

Members of the public are familiar with the concept of boards of governance of public and private organizations. Frustration often comes when committee members do not understand the distinction between those boards and advisory committees, or feel themselves powerless because they are “only advisory.” It is therefore important that both administrators and committee members be clear about that distinction.

The main differences center around their respective sources of power, and the role played by the administrator.

The Sources of Power

The power of any board or committee is gauged primarily by its ability to bring about change and to assure quality of service. On a board of governance, that power comes from having the final word on policies, personnel and budget.

Advisory committee members do not have that power. They exercise power indirectly, through influencing decisions made by others - by officials in the agency to which they are advisory. They also can influence key members of the executive and legislative branches, even by members of the public in their attitudes towards an agency's client population.

This is a more subtle exercise of power, and requires an understanding of its sources. You could say it comes from combining the qualities of a trusted friend with that of an effective civic organization. The following points provide examples.

It comes from providing the agency useful and credible information about the world outside the agency, and from focusing the agency on possibilities and concerns in the area served.

An advisory committee to a local jail canvassed the local community for resources for those being released. Breaking into subcommittees, one canvassed job possibilities, another housing and transportation, and a third treatment, counseling, and mentoring possibilities.

It comes from access to other policy-makers and community leaders and the ability to provide them with credible and useful information.

Members of advisory committees in Oregon lobby their legislators for increased funds for client services.

It comes from the ability to galvanize others, including the media, on behalf of the agency's needs.

A probation department worked with a local community corrections committee to develop programs in the community for children of persons who had been in jail. The program involved screening inmates on intake about their family situations and working with social services and schools to develop support for children who may have been separated from their parents.

It comes from the quality of the advice offered the administrator on existing and future policies and procedures.

An example from another area but equally applicable to re-entry: A Commissioner wanted to review the rules on welfare mothers' ability to cash checks at local banks. A meeting of the Commissioner with two of his advisory committee members, a welfare mother and a bank president, ended in new procedures that met the demands of all three participants.

A committee's understanding of these dynamics will help members see how they can be effective without the more traditional power of

purse and personnel. And the use of the term “committee” rather than “board” will reinforce the distinction between the two types of groups.

The Role of the Administrator

In a governing board, direction can come from either the board or the director. In an advisory committee, the initiative must come from the administrator to whom the committee is advisory.

A committee's success depends largely on the administrator's ability to focus the group on issues that are a priority to you or your agency. To the already overworked and understaffed administrator, this can seem a heavy investment for an uncertain return. But an administrator's lead is critical. Otherwise, committee members will flounder, not knowing where to focus their attention.

A Commissioner of Probation needed to develop a public education strategy. Using his committee as a mini-focus group, he and they came up with key elements to include in the strategy, and the member from the League of Women Voters, well versed in the art of public education campaigns, helped develop the details.

An understanding of the “why” of things will make a large difference to the constructiveness of the members' involvement. Members need to know not only the area but why their input is being sought, and the options being considered by staff. For instance, if opportunities for job training are the issue, the members will need to know why jobs are considered to be so important, the numbers and types of slots needed, the clients' characteristics, what have been the previous experiences, and how they themselves can be involved. And if they do become involved, they will need to be told the results of their engagement.

Before they understand the “why,” advisory groups need an overview or orientation of how the agency works and what are its missions, ethics and rules (dealt with further on). They also need to know about public safety measures and the factual background of any area they are considering. Many volunteers may have unrealistic expectations about the ability of an agency to change and accommodate a different perspective.

An administrator may not feel comfortable taking the lead, feeling that it is up to the members to set the agenda. But find an effective advisory committee, and you will find an administrator who has given it

strong direction. And we can attest from experience on both sides of the table that the members will welcome the leadership. This does not preclude members from having ideas of their own. But if members do not have a sense of an agency's or an administrator's priorities, they will be offering advice in one area while the administrator's attention and worries are focused elsewhere. Or they will just sit silently, wondering why they are there. Result: frustration on all sides.

II. Anchoring the Committee in the Proper Place

It follows, then, that in order for the administrator to set direction, the advisory committee must be advisory to the top decision maker. Re-entry responsibilities are assigned to different offices in different areas. The committee must be firmly attached to whatever office that might be, and must be advisory to the top decision-maker in that office. Any other arrangement will reduce the effectiveness of the committee.

A local jail, operating under a Consent Agreement, was required to have an advisory committee. The warden, uneasy with the idea, made the committee advisory to his director of human services. At each meeting, when members responded to issues by proposing ideas, they were told, "I have to take that up with the warden." Everyone was frustrated: the members, the human services director and the uneasy warden. Finally the members suggested that they could be more useful to the human services director if advisory to the warden, who would ultimately be having to pass on their activities anyway. The argument carried the day. The committee became a productive asset, much to the surprise of the reluctant warden, who became its strongest booster!

If an administrator finds it impossible to meet regularly with his or her committee, a surrogate can be named. But the clear line to the top must be evident, and the committee's access to the decision-makers should be "on demand."

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A sheriff established an advisory group but was not available for the monthly meetings. The group began to question its purpose and powers, and discord was evident between the communities of interest on the committee. To provide direction, the sheriff designated his chief deputy to attend the meetings. Additionally, the advisory group was chaired by the public defender, who would act as a liaison for the committee with the sheriff's office.

III. The Critical Trust Factor

Trust is the single most important element in the advisory committee/administrator relationship. It is not an easy quality to develop.

In an advisory situation, trust must contend with several factors.

Administrators may tend to view committees as basically adversarial. The committees grew in their present form out of the confrontations of the sixties and seventies between government and certain segments of the public, a fact some may still remember. The stance today is collaborative, but the sense of unease can remain.

Many professionals question the value of the non-professional on the committee. An explanation of the clients' needs should take care of this, but may need reinforcement from time to time.

Committee members wonder whether "advisory" has any clout, particularly as many join in hopes of affecting major changes—difficult under the best of circumstances — and underestimate the impact of the smaller measures they can effect.

But trust will come when:

- agency personnel understand and accept the purpose and promise of the committee, and provide sufficient staff for its support;

- committee members feel comfortable with the system and valued by both administrator and fellow members;
- administrators seek advice in real time, not when input can no longer affect a decision;
- members stay out of individual personnel or client cases, an area where they do not belong;
- members respect the constraints and demands on the administrator and the confidentiality of any information given them when asked;
- committee members always talk an issue through with the administrator before taking their advocacy to others; and
- administrators respond to all committee suggestions, and give good reasons when suggestions are not taken.

Trust takes time to develop, and no time at all to evaporate.

One of the authors' first encounters with advisory committees was on a group formed to review and rank applications for state funding. The committee took the assignment seriously, and put in a great deal of time — doing research on potential grantees, weighing relative needs — only to be told at the end of the process that the decisions had already been made by the granting agency hierarchy. Needless to say we all promptly resigned.

Trust is not only nurtured through meetings; it can be strengthened by recognizing volunteers in an annual reception. The reception can include elected officials as well as civic and business leaders. Additionally, newsletters and articles about the committee's accomplishments will help build a culture of trust.

IV. The Members: The People You Want, The Qualities You Need

The tendency is often to recruit people who already know a fair amount about the criminal justice system: social service agency personnel, academics, retired or current law enforcement officials. These can make good members and should not be overlooked. But when it comes to re-entry, certain other categories are important.

Those You Want

The first step in forming an advisory committee is to consider the needs of the re-entry agency and those of the re-entry clients. Is it jobs for the clients? Greater acceptance in the community? Technical advice? More equipment?

Singling out one or two priorities will help a committee form itself and see its purpose.

A probation commissioner wanted help with his data-systems and recruited a senior vice president from an insurance company who could provide him that kind of technical assistance.

A probation office needed computers and calculators. A member from the legal community provided access to the discarded equipment which law firms often store at local bar associations for use by non-profits.

A halfway house needed mentors for the residents. Members of local churches were recruited for the committee not only as mentors, but also to consider how best to integrate the residents into the area.

Meeting the immediate needs will make administrators, staff and members more easily see the committee's purpose and benefits. But as it takes a village to raise a child, so it takes all segments of the community to make re-entry a continuing successful process. We have found starting with the local Chamber of Commerce, the United Way, and neighborhood associations, helpful points of entry to grow the membership.

Qualities You Need

Experience has shown that four qualities are indispensable to an effectively operating committee:

- 1. The ability to run a meeting.** Administrators have enough to do at a meeting without also having to run the show, imparting information, responding to questions, watching the body language to make sure everyone remains interested and understands the topic. A person who knows group process and understands what goes into a successful meeting will prove invaluable. He or she can help develop the agenda, make sure everyone has a chance to speak, deal with difficult members, and help retain the members' involvement and interest.

Such a person should chair the committee. Just as picking the members, so picking the chairman is the administrator's prerogative. Two civic groups have members experienced in running meetings: the League of Women Voters and the Junior League. They will be responsive and interested.

- 2. An understanding of the levers of power.** Sooner or later the committee will need something (funding, change in procedure) that depends on decision-makers in another area of government—the county commission, the legislature, another human services agency. If the committee is willing to take on an issue, it will need someone who understands how to move the group politically and non-confrontationally.

That person, again, could come from the League of Women Voters or another advocacy group, or be a former or current legislator, commissioner, or savvy staff member to a public official.

A chief probation officer was having trouble gaining access for his clients to services provided by the Department of Mental Health. He created an advisory committee with local "heavies" who, once aware of the problem and supportive of the effort, arranged a meeting with the Governor to discuss the issue. DMH's cooperation was soon forthcoming!

3. A thorough knowledge of the community and its networks.

One of the prime reasons for an advisory committee is to gain access to local resources, volunteers and foundations, and to tap local networks for public education purposes, for newsletters or speaking engagements. If you have trouble thinking of someone appropriate, confer with the director of your local United Way to see if one of his or her board members might fit the bill.

When setting up a community corrections center, the local judge tapped the head of the Junior League - a complete novice to the criminal justice system - to be its leader because she knew the area from A to Z. She did a masterful job in integrating the center into the community and linking it to local resources.

4. A buddy for the administrator. Administrators need someone with whom they can frankly discuss their issues, concerns about the committee's dynamics or individual members, and whom they know will respect their confidences. Having such a person to talk to will get an administrator through the frustrating moments which inevitably arise.

And a couple of pointers on recruitment:

- Administrators should not worry about going cold to someone. As long as they can explain just how that person can contribute to the committee's work, he or she will be first of all intrigued, and secondly, responsive. This is particularly true of the person totally uninvolved in and uninformed about the criminal justice system. If the person can't become a member, ask for suggestions of someone who might be able to join. Administrators should remember they are offering a front row seat on what is arguably the most compelling area

of public policy for their community. Many committee members exposed to the criminal justice system for the first time through committee membership become “hooked,” the experience of one of the authors of this monograph.

- When asked to join a group with which they are not familiar, people generally want to know the “climate” of the group. The first question often asked is, “who else is on the committee,” rather than “what does the committee do.” The recruiter should therefore be prepared to describe each member and what he or she brings to the committee.

V. Orientation for Meetings and Staff

For Committee Members

Orientation is critical, both to the work of the agency and to the advisory process in general. Under Resources there is a sample orientation in two stages: first to the agency, and then to the advisory committee process.

At a minimum, orientation should cover the following:

- The purpose of the committee with regard to the criminal justice system in general and to re-entry in particular, and a mission statement if one exists.
- The committee's activities, either actual or potential, to show how the purpose can be carried out, or how that purpose has been demonstrated elsewhere.
- What each individual brings to the group and why that contribution is important. In other advisory committees, the contribution of the layperson is all too often not understood either by the citizen or by the agency staff. In the case of re-entry, it should be readily apparent since the needs of re-entry are so all-encompassing.
- The parameters of authority of a committee which is "advisory," and its sources of power, and particularly what a committee does not get into (individual cases or agency personnel).
- Issues of importance to members, such as conflicts of interest and liability concerns, and ways to address them. The question of liability often arises, although it has seldom, if ever, actually arisen in practice.

Some states have exemptions for volunteers such as advisory committee members.

Background materials for members new to corrections are listed under Resources. If the entire group is new, the orientation can be offered to everyone at once. If new members join an ongoing committee, they could tour the agency, then sit in on one or two meetings, and then, in a sort of "buddy system," be assigned a current or former member to discuss the committee's work with them and be available for questions.

For Agency Personnel

Administrators would also do well to provide a small orientation for their colleagues. All too often they can be mistrustful of citizen committees, seeing them as possible threats to their autonomy or to their jobs.

Such orientation could cover the committee's purpose, what to expect of it, the kind of information and responses the members will need from staff in order to feel effective, the potential contribution the committee can make to individual staff needs and to those of the agency, and a request from staff for ideas for committee activities.

Staff can also help in various ways to educate advisory board members. Staff can be assigned to subcommittees who are working on various projects and who then report back to the group.

Advisory members can accompany staff to public meetings. Also, working groups can reach out to other similar agencies in the region and conduct informational forums geared to understanding such issues as continuing education programs started in jail after the inmate is back in the community.

VI. Meetings, the Glue That Holds the Group Together

Because meetings are the glue that keeps the process moving, they need attention. Attendance at advisory committee meetings is a chronic problem, and can set off a discouraging spiral of increasing non-attendance that is hard to stop.

Committee members are volunteers. They need to see that coming to the meeting will be worth their time. They come because they are interested in a current project, want to share some information, or want to learn.

An advisory committee, to be successful, needs to show it can make a difference. A demonstrable need that can be visibly—and fairly quickly—met will go far to assure both staff and committee members that the process can produce results.

If a project can be put into quantifiable terms, so much the better because you will know it has been successfully completed, i.e., two computers, reorganized file systems, six service agency slots. And when that moment comes, give it wide publicity. The public will see its involvement in your work, engendering confidence, and potential members become easier to recruit.

Aside from a time and place convenient for the members (rather than the staff), we have found three elements important to the health and welfare of committee meetings.

I. A welcoming atmosphere

Three things will help create a climate conducive to trust: food and drink, name plates, and a table.

Each member of the committee needs to feel accepted and valued—a sense of belonging. There is nothing like food and drink to create that sort of climate.

An example from another context: Two members from each of 20 organizations were convened to share legislative priorities for the coming legislative session. The groups were as different as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Association of Chiefs of Police. Jugs of wine and mounds of Armenian braided cheese went far to diminish the unease of the participants. In fact, at the request of the organizations, for the next five years the meeting became an annual event, always with the same menu!

It does not have to be wine and cheese, but some kind of food and drink will help create the climate you want. Usually there is no budget for meetings, but there is usually a coffee pot at any site, and members can be asked to bring the food. The welcome and few minutes of conversation as members arrive and help themselves helps create solidarity among the group and between the group and the administrator.

Be sure you sit around a table. Some meetings have been held in classroom fashion and that simply does not work. Nor does it work as well to sit in a circle on folding chairs. A table diminishes the need for comfortable chairs, and provides space for the food and drink.

And either have a name plate for each person or, using an 8 1/2 x 11 paper folded lengthwise, ask each member to write his or her name in large letters and prop the tent in front on the table. A name tag cannot be read across the table, and people want to know each other's names to be comfortable.

2. An enticing agenda

The criminal justice system, the business of public protection, is arguably the most important and interesting aspect of public policy for a community. Don't assume that any aspect of it is really understood by those outside the system, and therefore everything about the agency is of interest. Members will appreciate the inclusion in each meeting of a topic related to the agency's work: the provisions made to assure the public's safety, the difficulties of re-entry from the viewpoint of the offender, the problem of the mentally ill or the mentally retarded, the tensions around halfway houses, elements of supervision and revocation,

what goes into siting halfway houses, or a current issue in criminal justice. A member familiar with an area under discussion can share the presentation. Or staff from another agency can be invited to speak.

An advisory committee invited representatives from those organizations who dealt with the agency's clients to tell of their experiences, and of any suggestions for closer collaboration.

Members will always want to know whether, or how they can become engaged in the topic.

The agenda, highlighting the topic, should be sent out a good ten days before the meeting. A reminder call a day or two before the meeting will show how valuable is the member's attendance, and allows the member to be reminded of whatever item on the agenda is most relevant.

3. Interesting minutes

By the same token, interesting minutes will help lure members to future meetings. They show absent members the quality of discussion and remind those present both of why they came and of the points made.

Good minutes also serve as a history of committee projects and as background reading for potential or actual new recruits.

We have previously mentioned that administrators should not have to run the meeting. Nor should they have to take the minutes. A staff member would be best. Failing that, committee members can take turns, but the minutes should be typed and distributed from the office.

These items of food and drink, seating and name plates, agenda and minutes, may seem somewhat tangential, but they are an integral part of the infrastructure of successful committees. Attention paid should increase attendance, engender trust, and elicit constructive engagement on the part of the members.

Finally, a suggestion about Roberts' Rules of Order. Since these re-entry committees would not be final decision-makers, we believe in keeping them relatively free of such formalities. The same would hold about by-laws: only a minimum, stipulating length of board membership and a quorum, and possibly a requirement that members attend a given number of meetings, which will allow the dead wood to be removed gracefully.

Resources

Because re-entry requires involvement from so much of the community, and because an advisory committee provides the forum in which the various elements can come together, we hope you will come to agree with the Commissioner of Probation who said: “Having an advisory committee was the smartest thing I ever did.” To help you on your way to that conclusion, herewith are some resources, some of which come from advisory committees in other disciplines but which can be readily adapted to your needs.

**Available from the Center for
Community Corrections web site:
www.communitycorrectionsworks.org:**

Basic information for committee members:

Community Corrections—An Overview for Elected Officials

Highlights the history, operations, effectiveness, costs, and the public’s view about community corrections. It provides questions for public officials to pursue, and it lists resources to support the collaboration between levels and branches of government that is necessary to make programs effective.

Thought and Definitions for Volunteers

Offers suggestions to volunteers in community corrections about the unique roles they can play, and provides a glossary of the more common terms heard around the criminal justice system.

Information for committee members on specific topics:

Home Confinement and Drug and Alcohol Treatment

Describes the possibilities offered by new technologies to deal more effectively with offenders in the community.

Balancing Correctional Costs to Improve Public Safety

Discusses the issues surrounding corrections budgets.

Targeting Special Populations

Explains the importance of carefully choosing appropriate individuals for community corrections programs, and the groups most likely to benefit from these programs while posing little threat to communities

For administrators:

Volunteers: How to Find, Train and Manage Them

Emphasizes the particular assets and pitfalls of managing volunteers in a criminal justice setting, and suggests approaches and training to make volunteer programs effective.

Other Suggestions

How to Make Meetings Work, Michael Doyle and David Straus, Berkeley Books, New York, 1993.

Advisory Boards and Community Corrections: Some Forms, Some Issues and Some Suggestions. Unpublished paper prepared for the Division of Community Corrections of the National Institute of Corrections, M. Lindsay, 1988.

Probation Advisory Boards: A Handbook, New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts (1991).

Models To Be Adapted As Needed

Training modules for board members

Sample mission statements:

From the Citizen Advisory Board to the Massachusetts
Commissioner Of Probation

From the Community Relations Boards of the Federal Bureau of
Prisons

Sample Procedures:

Procedures used by the Suffolk County House of Corrections

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Appendix A



U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Prisons

Program Statement

OPI: IPD
NUMBER: 1415.03
DATE: 8/14/98
SUBJECT: Community Relations
Boards

- I. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** To provide guidelines for establishing and maintaining Community Relations Boards as a means of mutual communication and support between institutions and their local communities. While such boards have no formal advisory function to institutions, their purposes are to serve as a two-way communication link between institution and community leadership, and to advance public education, understanding, and advocacy for issues concerning Federal prisons.

Community Relations Boards benefit the Bureau and the community by:

- # increasing public awareness of and education about the mission of the institution and the Bureau,
- # determining the availability of community services for the institution,
- # coordinating Bureau operations with local law enforcement activities,

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- # assessing the impact of the institution on the community, and
- # increasing the institution's involvement in community affairs and services.

2. **PROGRAM OBJECTIVES.** The expected results of this program are:

- a. Ongoing, positive communication between institutions and their local communities will be fostered.
- b. Citizens will be informed about programs and operations of institutions in their communities and about the Bureau of Prisons in general.
- c. Institution staff will be advised about pertinent community needs, concerns, and developments.
- d. Community interest and involvement in institution programs will be encouraged.
- e. Public understanding about corrections will be enhanced.

3. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED**

- a. Directive Rescinded

PS 1415.01 Community Relations Boards (7/10/91)

- b. Directive Referenced

PS 1400.04 Contacts with other Agencies and Organizations (9/9/96)

4. **STANDARDS REFERENCED.** None.

5. **ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARDS.** Each Warden may decide whether a Community Relations Board should be established at his or her institution.

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6. **BOARD MEMBERSHIP.** Board members may work closely with local law enforcement, government, business, civic, education and training, health care, pre-release, and religious agencies and organizations.
- a. Initially, the Warden may select Board members. The Warden shall base his or her assessment of the individual's potential to develop opportunities for mutual assistance and support. The subsequent selection process shall be addressed in each Board's bylaws.

Consideration shall be given to citizens representing:

- # local and Federal law enforcement;
- # city, county, or township government;
- # business and civic organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.);
- # council of churches;
- # school boards; health care organizations; and
- # media groups.

The Warden is an ex-officio board member. At the discretion of the Warden, the union representative may be a member of the Board. Other institution staff may attend meetings to support Board functions or explain institution programs and respond to questions on specific issues.

- b. Initially, the Warden shall determine the number of members. Subsequent changes shall be addressed in the Board's bylaws.
- c. A method for replacing or re-appointing Board members shall be provided to allow for judicious removal of a member who may not fit into the Board's mission.

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7. **INSTITUTION COORDINATOR.** The Warden is the coordinator for the Board.
8. **MEETING SCHEDULE.** The Warden shall meet with the Board at the institution on a mutually agreed-upon regular schedule. Any frequency-of-meetings requirement in the bylaws shall be flexible enough to accommodate local needs.
9. **BYLAWS.** The prototype bylaws for Community Relations Boards (Attachment A) are intended to suggest a general approach, rather than a definite structure. Bylaws shall:
 - # contain a clear statement of the Board's objectives,
 - # define (and limit) the Board's role in the internal affairs of the institution,
 - # provide a structure for Board operations,
 - # define who may be a member,
 - # explain how members are selected, and
 - # set term lengths for each officer.

They may also address such issues as:

- a. Standing or Ad Hoc Committees. Institutions shall have the flexibility to establish either type, as local issues require.
- b. Reporting. Reporting requirements are at the Warden's discretion, and there is no requirement for periodic reports to regional offices or the Central Office.

Wardens are encouraged to report to their Regional Directors any notable successes or problems. Such reports may be distributed so that other institutions may learn about other programs.

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c. Agendas. Ordinarily, the Warden prepares the agenda for each Board meeting, but other members may contribute agenda items on institution/community issues. A typical agenda might include such matters as:

- # inmate population and security level trends,
- # inmate movement, significant news or events (escapes, fires, etc.)
- # goals and objectives,
- # new programs,
- # staff changes,
- # construction projects,
- # accomplishments,
- # special activities, and
- # special visits or tours.

/s/
Kathleen Hawk Sawyer
Director

Appendix B

CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD to the MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSIONER OF PROBATION

I. CAB Mission and Goals

Mission: To advise the Commissioner of Probation on ways to increase the ability of the Massachusetts Probation Service (MPS) to sustain organizational achievement, quality public service, effective innovation, and an organizational commitment toward excellent.

Goals: To increase the public’s understanding of probation and how the Massachusetts Probation Service functions;
To make the Massachusetts Probation Service more aware of and responsive to the public’s concerns;
To review established policies and programs;
To explore innovative administrative and programmatic ideas;
To develop new needed resources;
To provide advocacy for mutual concerns.

2. CAB Membership

The 13-member board is composed of one sheriff, one attorney in criminal practice, four academics (including a law professor), one

media professional, three representatives from the business community (including a business foundation head), and three representatives from public interest organizations. Five of the members are women; three are minorities.

3. Operating Procedures

The Probation Commissioner chaired the meetings of the CAB. The Commissioner's secretary prepared and distributed the minutes.

After the first three meetings, the CAB was divided into three sub-committees: Public Information/Public Relations, Employment and Job Placement, Training. These areas were selected on the basis of MPS's needs and board members' interests.

Appendix C

SUFFOLK COUNTY HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PROCEDURES FOR THE ADVISORY BOARD

To affirm the importance of the advisory board:

- The Commissioner shall be present at all full board meetings;
- Key administrative staff shall be present at all committee meetings;
- Reimbursement shall be available for board members’ out-of-pocket expenses;
- Board members will be kept informed about major changes in Department policies, programs and procedures.

To facilitate the work of the board:

- Meeting schedules for the full year will be determined early in the year by board and Commissioner;
- A detailed agenda and briefing materials will be mailed to members ten days in advance of each meeting;
- A staff secretary will take the minutes at each meeting;
- Requests for information will receive quick responses;
- Candor and frankness on the part of all participants will be observed;

- A person shall be designated as contact for board members, to answer questions and facilitate board projects.

To make sure the board's work is targeted towards areas of maximum impact:

- The Commissioner will discuss his own priorities with the board;
- Board members will have a chance to state their own interests;
- Members will be told where they can be most effectively involved and the constraints on that involvement;
- The Commissioner and key administrative staff will suggest ways in which the board can interact with the Department.

To enable board members to feel their time is well spent:

- They and the Commissioner will jointly develop plans of board activities;
- Objectives that can be measured and attained within a time certain shall be set along with longer term goals;
- Periodic progress reports by any subcommittee will be shared with the full board;
- The impact of the board shall be identified and acknowledged whenever any of its members has made a difference to the way in which the Department conducts its business;
- All suggestions from board members shall receive a response.

To reflect the special relationship members of an advisory board have with their agency:

- Board members will preserve the confidentiality of the proceedings or information received when so asked;
- Public statements by board members will be coordinated with the Chairman and shared with the Commissioner;
- Board members will be informed before the public of major Department issues.

Appendix D

ORIENTATION FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS: GENERAL

GOAL: To become familiar with the role of an advisory board member. **GROUP SIZE:** Any number.

OBJECTIVES: To define the purpose of advisory boards. **TIME REQUIRED:** Approximately two hours.
 To identify the activities through which the purpose is expressed.
 To review the individual’s part in the various activities.
 To identify sources of help available to board members.

TIME	CONTENT	METHOD	PRESENTER
15 min.	Introductions.	Leader and group to one another. Review goal and objectives, set tone and climate for discussion.	Workshop leader
15min.	Purpose of boards from agency’s perspective.	Roles: link between agency and community independent resource group for staff. Examples of impact and issues that arise. (Take from “An Overview, Guide to Community/Agency Connection”)	Administrator

APPENDIX D—RE-ENTRY’S INDISPENSABLE TOOL: AN EFFECTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TIME	CONTENT	METHOD	PRESENTER
15 min.	Purpose of boards from board’s perspective.	Roles: means for holding agency accountable source of advocacy, affecting change. Examples of impact and issues that arise. (Take from the “Guides to Planning, Monitoring, Proposal Review, Advocacy, Meetings & Membership)	Board member
60 min.	How to work within the system.	Exercise: Divide into groups of 4 to 5. Distribute “Guides to Planning, Community/Agency Connection & Advocacy” to serve as reference. Give each group a “situation” such as: (a) the agency wants to put two group homes in your area; or (b) the Commissioner has said agency funds will be cut by 10%. Pretend you are a board: How would you get involved? What would you do? Report back in large group issues discussed and decisions reached.	Leader
15 min.	Wrap-up and evaluation.	Identify sources of help: Central Board Office, other Guides, each other. Summarize workshop.	Leader

ORIENTATION FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS: AGENCY-SPECIFIC

GOAL: To become familiar with the agency’s operations.

GROUP SIZE: 4–15

OBJECTIVES: To meet key agency staff.
 To review agency programs and services.
 To receive materials pertinent to the agency and to its board.
 To tour the agency office.

TIME REQUIRED: Approximately
 1-1/2 hours.

TIME	CONTENT	METHOD	PRESENTER
15 min.	Introductions.	Each person gives a summary of background and why involved with the board. Review of goal and objectives.	Administrator and/or board member or outside facilitator.
15 min.	Explanation of the agency.	Lecturette: Agency’s purpose, current programs and office structure.	Administrator and/or Program Director.
15 min.	Examples of board’s activities.	Lecturette: A history of what the advisory board has done, current projects and concerns, issues that have come up.	Board chairperson or board member.

APPENDIX D—RE-ENTRY’S INDISPENSABLE TOOL: AN EFFECTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TIME	CONTENT	METHOD	PRESENTER
30 min.	Review of the orientation packet.	Hand out to each participant an orientation packet containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ annual report of agency or board ■ by-laws of the board ■ lists of board members and key agency staff ■ organizational chart of the agency ■ regulations and/or statutes relevant to board ■ “Guides to the Language and to Meetings.” Questions and answers on the packet materials.	Administrator, board member and/or leader.
30 min.	Tour of the office		Administrator.

Refreshments with board and staff following tour.