

Texas Civil Commitment Office



Christy Jack, Chair
Board Members:
Kathryn "Katie" McClure, Vice Chair
Jose Aliseda
Roberto "Robert" Dominguez
Rona Stratton Gouyton
Marsha McLane, Executive Director

Friday, April 17, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

MINUTES

Board Members Present

Christy Jack, Chair
Jose Aliseda

Katie McClure
Robert Dominguez

Rona Stratton Gouyton

TCCO Staff

Marsha McLane
Mike Necker

Stanley Muli
Scott Merchant

Jessica Marsh

House Corrections Committee

Representative James White, Chair Roel Benavides

Senator Charles Perry's Office

Caitriana Corkill

Legislative Budget Board

Samantha Brock

Rustin Dudley

Management and Training Corporation

Dr. Sean Casey

Convene the Board of the Texas Civil Commitment Office (TCCO)

Board Chair, Christy Jack convened the meeting at 10:02 a.m. Roll was taken and it was noted that a quorum was present. Ms. Jack went on to note that this meeting was being held via webinar to comply with the Governor's order to minimize in-person contact, and members of the public have the opportunity to join the meeting via telephone or video.

Board Chair report

Board Chair, Christy Jack, gave no formal report.

Executive Director's report concerning program operations and the routine functioning of the TCCO

TCCO Executive Director, Marsha McLane began by introducing the new TCCO General Counsel, Scott Merchant.

The final draft of the MOU between TCCO and the Department of Family and Protective Services for the use of the SafeSignal equipment under the contract between DFPS and SafeSignal is now at DFPS for review and signature. This equipment will allow TCCO's community case managers to call the police immediately just by unplugging a device or headphones from their cell phones. TCCO has also ordered AT&T First Net phones for staff because these phones are for first responders and AT&T has identified TCCO staff as first responders

due to the need to protect the public safety and respond to emergencies 24/7. These phones should provide better service than the regular AT&T phones currently in use. The phones should be received within a week.

TCCO has submitted a grant request to the Governor's office to be used mostly for safety training and program evaluation.

TCCO held a videoconference with the resident council at the facility, which is made up of clients from every tier of the program, after hearing from Case Managers that many residents have been concerned with the fact that they have not seen TCCO Austin staff at the facility recently due to the suspension of travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, and are wondering if management is still paying attention to facility operations. The meeting was held to answer any questions or concerns the clients had and let them know that TCCO is, in fact, still very involved with the program and facility in Littlefield. The meeting went well and there were not many complaints from the residents who expressed appreciation for the way TCCO has taken action to keep the residents safe and healthy during the pandemic.

An interagency contract between TCCO and the Department of State Health Services has been finalized and executed, allowing TCCO the ability to obtain birth certificates for those clients released from TDCJ without them.

TCCO has arranged for clients to pursue secondary education at Adams State University via correspondence or at South Plains College in the Lubbock area in person or via video. This has been placed on hold due the fact that representatives from these universities want to go to the facility and visit with the clients first but all visitation at the facility has been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This program will not be paid for by the State, this will be grant funded or paid for by the client himself.

TCCO is in the process of getting smart phones for the clients who are allowed to have cell phones. Every other civil commitment program in the United States allows its clients to have smart phones. TCCO clients will be required to pay for their own cell phones and restrictions will apply for clients to be allowed to have a phone, including the requirement to be at least at Tier 3 of treatment and be abiding by all rules and requirements of the program. Tier 3 clients will only be allowed to make and receive phone calls with their phones, Tier 4 clients will be allowed to use text messaging as well as phone calls, AGE clients and above will be allowed phone calls, texting and internet access. All client activity on the cell phones will be closely monitored by TCCO using software installed on the phones.

TCCO had a meeting this week with Texas Tech and HHSC regarding the issues there have been with mental health treatment for TCCO clients who need it. Texas Tech contracts with HHSC, not with TCCO directly, to provide these services. The meeting was to discuss the requirements for the treatment and ways to ensure the treatment is provided. Plans were made for corrective action for the issues that TCCO has been having.

There is a new Clinical Director at the facility, Dr. Sean Casey. Dr. Casey will introduce himself and speak about the program at the facility later during this meeting. Sex offender treatment at the facility is continuing as usual at the facility despite COVID-19 because the groups are made up of clients who are housed together and are around each other daily so there is really no reason to reduce the group sizes. Substance abuse treatment and GED education have been suspended for the time being because these would require that clients not housed together attend groups together.

The new buildings at the facility have been delivered but are not hooked up to water, electricity or sewer. The vendor states that the buildings should be operational by the First of June.

TCCO's major concern is the health and safety of its staff and clients housed at the facility. TCCO was originally screening visitors and taking their temperatures upon arrival at the facility; however, at this time visitation has been suspended to comply with the Governor's order. All TCCO clients are now wearing masks when they leave their assigned living areas and all TCCO staff are also wearing masks while at work.

Chief Financial Officer's report regarding FY 2020 Budget/Expenditures and Offsite Healthcare Costs

TCCO Chief Financial Officer, Stanley Muli, started by stating that the budget has not changed since his presentation at the last Board Meeting at \$18,000,973. Mr. Muli further broke down the budget to note the percentages remaining for each area of the budget. Salaries have 44% of their budgeted amount remaining due to vacant positions and TCCO hiring positions for lower than the budgeted amount. For operating costs, which is the bulk of TCCO's budget and includes items such as contracts and service providers, there is 3% remaining because the funds in this budget have been encumbered for specific purposes, leaving the 3% as a cushion for any unexpected expenses. The travel portion of the budget has 65% remaining because travel has been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Muli ended by discussing off site healthcare costs, noting that during the first quarter of 2020, total healthcare expenditures were \$743,401; however, at the end of the second quarter, total expenditures were reduced to \$743,043 because most of the first quarter dollar amounts were prior to the bills being negotiated down by the contractor, but by the end of the second quarter, the estimated totals had been replaced by actual totals that had been negotiated down by the Contractor, resulting in a reduction of \$208,929.

Introduction of TCCC Clinical Director Dr. Sean Casey and discussion of the TCCC Treatment Program

Dr. Casey introduced himself and gave a brief synopsis of his background as a psychologist who has worked in for over 25 years in sex offender treatment, which includes work in in-patient facilities, outpatient facilities and correctional settings, as well as working for the Monarch Assessment and Treatment Center, the company that introduced the PPG testing that is currently in use by TCCO.

In his description of the treatment staff at the facility, Dr. Casey indicated that, according to his observations since arriving, the staff is very professional and genuinely concerned with providing the best treatment possible to TCCO's clients, even expressing suggestions as to what type of training would be beneficial to them in meeting their goal. He further indicated that the administrative staff have been quite helpful in helping him hit the ground running.

Dr. Casey then offered a list of some of his short and long term goals which include improvement of the intake process and more efficient delivery of services with a concentration on documentation of services provided. He added that he would like to meet one-on-one with each therapist to get their insight on the effectiveness of the program as well as any weaknesses where they feel additional training would be helpful.

Longer term, Dr. Casey would like to focus on additional and better training for the clinical staff to be more equipped to interpret and put into use the information provided by PPG testing. He would also like to look more deeply into clients who have moved down in tier ranking and be able to better address their issues in lower tiers so that when they start progressing again treatment can help them avoid backsliding in the future.

Discussion, Consideration, and Possible Action Regarding Excused Absences

Ms. Jack noted that all Board Members were present at the last meeting.

Discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding February 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes

After determining that all Board Members present had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting, Board Chair Christy Jack asked for a motion to adopt the February 6, 2020 meeting minutes; the motion was made, seconded, voted on and passed without opposition.

Discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding future meeting dates

The next meeting of the TCCO Board was tentatively scheduled for August 14, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the Texas Civil Commitment Office in Austin.

Public Comment

There was no member of the public requesting to address the Board.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Christy Jack, Chair

Date

SIGNATURE ON FILE

Marsha McLane, Executive Director

Date