

MINUTES:

Quorum is Present

1. Chair Carmen Pacheco-Jones called the **meeting to order** at 11:33 AM. The chair called on those present to **introduce** themselves. The agenda was shared via screen-sharing.
2. **Minutes** from the January meeting were distributed. No action was taken on this item.
3. **Discussion on the Blueprint for Reform - Status Report**

At the chair's request, Maggie Yates gave a brief history of the Blueprint for Reform. She provided links to the status report and the original document in the Zoom chat. She also said the information could be found on the SRLJC website.

Yates then answered the question, "What were the original recommendations on racial equity and where are we now?" She stated that the answers to those questions could be found in specific areas of the status report. She used screenshare to show how the report was structured and pointed to areas that summarized what was done and what needed to be accomplished. She opened the floor for questions.

Chair Pacheco handed over the discussion to Chair-Elect Angelique Tomeo-Sam. She also stated that critical issues have impeded the work of the RE committee and asked about SRLJC restructuring recommendations that were mentioned in the status report.

Yates stated that there was a recommendation in the report to move the SRLJC from its current structure to that of a criminal justice coordinating council. There are examples of these councils across the Country including in Multnomah County, OR.

Committee member Boone asked a series of questions including:

Who moves on the recommendations to make change?

Have the county commissioners and other members of the council reached the limits of their expertise when it comes to implementation of changes? She believes that this level of expertise exists at the community level and that more diverse community organizations and voices could be added in order to make the changes that are necessary for those most impacted by the justice system. She would like to know if community members and organizations were at the table when these status recommendations were made.

Yates answered that council members took a survey and were asked recommendations and that there is a summary of the survey results online.

Chair-elect Tomeo requested that the SRLJC move forward on approving her election to chair. She expressed her concerns about a coordinating committee and stated that it seemed exclusionary.

The Admin committee's role in the status recommendations was discussed as well as the general council. Yates stated that to the best of her knowledge all meetings surrounding status recommendations, including the establishment of a coordinating committee, were public meetings; either admin committee meetings or SRLJC council meetings.

Yates then discussed recommendations from the community that were laid out in the status report, including Justice Task Force recommendations. These recommendations were in addition to jail forecasting. The recommendations were provided to the BOCC and included in two categories of recommendations and guiding principles and specific initiatives endorsed by the task. Some examples include citation redesign. The Justice Task Force closed its work after making its recommendations to the BoCC.

Chair Pacheco-Jones asked if the recommendations were incorporated into the design.

Yates replied that they were referenced in the evidence-based reforms section of the status report.

Strategic Planning Committee member Mary Lou Johnson suggested that members of the RE committee take the same survey that was given to all council members as a means of comparing the community's take on reforms with those of the council. This suggestion was received positively by many committee members and prompted the question of whether that survey could be distributed among the broader community as well. Yates recommended that the survey be taken by the RE committee first

then distributed to the broader community.

Committee member Boone expressed her skepticism that any survey responses provided by the community would not be taken seriously and it might be a waste of the community's time to fill out the survey.

Mary Lou Johnson provided more detail, saying that if the RE committee could return the surveys by Monday then they could be presented at the SRLJC Council Meeting on Wednesday. Lengthy discussion ensued with no formal action taken on distributing the survey among committee members or the broader public.

A question regarding the recommendations of the Justice Task Force was revisited with committee members asking if the task force's recommendations were being given the same weight as the status report and if not, could both task force recommendations and status recommendations be brought forth to the council in tandem. Yates replied that both recommendations were imported to the document but she recommends that the JTF recommendations be kept separate.

Yates turned the committee's attention to section 5.5.9 of the status report. It recommended an equity screen be created and implemented for use in the county's therapeutic courts as these courts have historically had a homogenous population that does not reflect the demographics of the overall justice-involved population. She suggested that this recommendation was an opening for the RE committee. No discussion or action was taken on this suggestion.

Committee Member Curtis Hampton revisited the lack of community representation and voice at the SRLJC council meetings. He was referring specifically to the February SRLJC meeting. He stated that after many months of not being given the opportunity for public comment the community was finally given ten minutes to deliver testimony. He said he felt as if the testimony was going "into a black hole." He asked Yates where the testimonies go.

Yates replied that community comments are available in audio form and right now the Strategic Planning Committee is working on posting written and audio public comments to create a record of community input.

Hampton followed up with additional references to community participation being asked for and then not being taken seriously. And if it is provided, what do they do with it?

Yates suggested that the RE committee take action on an area of concern and move it to the agenda for future meetings.

Chair Pacheco-Jones and Chair-elect Tomeo requested that Yates work to put issues on the agenda as they believed she would be more successful at achieving that outcome.

Council Member Kurtis Robinson provided context to new RE committee members about the importance of being heard on the council and that providing public voice would, "address the systematic moves by Al French [county commissioner] to cut out community voice over a sustained period of time and moving forward in meaningful conversation is important but we have to place [this challenge] within a historical context."

Yates stated that she did not have information relevant to Robinson's concerns. She pointed toward the recommendations of the status report and the Washington State Supreme Court's commitment to racial justice as a break from the past.

Yates revisited the survey issue and asked that she be contacted if there was any interest by the committee in taking the survey and that she looks forward to hearing more information from the committee on gaps in the status report. Robinson was in favor of taking the survey. Chair Pacheco-Jones requested that all members of the RE committee be sent the survey. Yates agreed and followed up that results of the survey and a plan for extending the survey to the broader community would occur at the next meeting.

Committee member Boone had two additional issues that were not fully resolved. She wanted to know if it were possible for the SRLJC to move forward on approving Chair-Elect Tomeo and Vice Chair-elect Haney's positions as soon as possible. She wondered if it were possible for the RE committee to urge Yates to pressure for the election's approval. Boone then revisited her concerns about the survey being "an activity of futility." She said there are questions regarding the survey's value and that if the community was not invited to participate originally then "will our comments or effort have any merit?" She believes these questions need to be addressed before filling out the survey.

In response to Boone's concerns, Yates stated that regarding the election results and formally establishing Tomeo and Haney as chair and vice chair, that the Strategic Planning Committee is on the agenda for February's meeting and it would be possible for the Planning Committee to include that recommendation in a motion for inclusion on the March agenda.

Second, Yates addressed Boone's concerns about "an activity of futility" and suggested that the RE committee could petition the RE Committee Chair to request time on council to present summary findings of the survey as a means to get the community

perspective in front of the eyes of council.

Chair Pacheco-Jones was wary of this suggestion “as community testimony is so often dismissed.” She requested that Yates make the motion on the committee’s behalf. Yates then suggested that the request be placed alongside the Strategic Planning Committee’s as they are already on the agenda. However, if they do not make the motion then Yates will make the motion at a future meeting.

Mary Lou Johnson reminded the committee that the Strategic Planning Committee meets on Monday and in order for the RE committee’s recommendations and survey responses to be included then the Strategic Planning Committee would need survey results by February 10.

Chair Pacheco-Jones suggested making the recommendations now. Pacheco-Jones apologized that Chair-Elect Tomeo could not formally make these suggestions herself. She then turned the discussion over to Tomeo without any formal action being taken on the survey, the election results or a presentation of a summary of community concerns.

Chair-Elect Tomeo turned the discussion toward community representation and revisited the concerns regarding a change in organizational structure to a coordinating council. She mentioned the systematic exclusion of community members from holding seats at the table. She discussed the importance of diverse voices at the table to engage solutions. She said that the RE committee has its back against the all when it comes to restructuring; that restructuring is a means to undermine their recommendation of including another community seat; that a coordinating committee would “shake up” the way things are currently being done and that paring down the council would make the a committee that is even more exclusive. She asks if people are truly invested in community to maintain a formal place in the discussion. She asked that if anyone has any ideas on how to keep discussion open to the community and to strategize about maintaining community seats on the council, to please share those ideas. She added that she supports the survey being taken and delivered in a timely manner.

Boone said that the survey idea is great but that it doesn’t go far enough. She wanted to know if there were a timeline for a new outline to be presented and implemented. She sees that as an opportunity to turn things around and so that “we can have a larger voice and unveil a vision that has the community in mind and that reflects that community engagement, empowerment, sustainability and puts our ideals in place so that we can present them at some point and not be left begging for crumbs.” She adds that the community can add so much more; she is amazed at the strength of participation and expertise and has seen initiatives grow and endeavors come to into being. She concluded with the thought that these things come to being when community is included at the table and shares their ideas. This is what change looks like.

Kurtis Robinson expanded on Boone’s thoughts. He explained that this is how systemic oppression and generational trauma have “taught us to be thankful when we get crumbs from the table.” Robinson stated that he has never been satisfied with crumbs and is not going to be satisfied with them now. He said this conversation needs to be a conversation in collective and that white allies have to take this further. He requested that the following be included in the record:

- 1) Our voice has been systemically taken out of the SRLJC committee while under the supervision of Al French.
- 2) Al French’s tenure has been simultaneous with with the “defanging and dialing back of the committee’s meaningful voice to the power structure and what are we going to do about where that’s going now?”

Robinson answered his rhetorical questions with, “We make meaningful change across race and intercede and intervene collectively.”

Robinson continued with a request to white allies to take part in a coordinated effort and response against the stifling of community voice. He said if it takes demonstrations of thousands of people then we should demonstrate. He said demonstrations will make meaningful community representation happen and will shift the existing power dynamics and result in meaningful community change.

Minute-taker Annemarie Frohnhoefer asked if he could break it down clearly so that white allies would know how they can assist in tangible ways. Robinson responded:

- 1) White allies need to press for community representation on the SRLJC
- 2) Use their privilege and position to press voices of power to effect policy

Chair Pacheco-Jones reminded everyone that there was a presentation from the State Department of Health scheduled and that this discussion needs to continue so that the committee can strategically work on the issue.

4. Presentation from DOH at 12:30

Presentation began at 12:45.

The Department of Health's Center for Public Affairs shared a powerpoint deck via Zoom. Yen Baynes MAEd of the WA DOH presented virtually.

The presentation was titled "COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization and Planning - An Overview."

Baynes began by sharing the history of the Center for Public Affairs and the difficulties and inequities that had to be navigated in order to establish the Center. Baynes stated that if these obstacles had not existed prior to the pandemic, then the agency would have been better prepared to mitigate the disproportionate effects on BIPOC and other communities such as the disabled and the poor.

Baynes explained that resources are limited due to underlying systems of inequity. Ms. Baynes was seeking insight and information from the committee to share their own issues and problems with vaccination and health care.

She shared that the Center for Public Affairs' goals are to be part of decision-making and not finding out after implementation. She wanted to know how people were perceiving the work in their own communities? She asked how hierarchical power can be shifted to grassroots concerns. She explained short term tactics vs. long-term strategizing and began a discussion of disability rights and relatable content that could improve outreach.

The time was 1:30 and the minute-taker had to exit the meeting at this time.

Adjourned

SCRIBE: Annemarie Frohnhoefer

Next Meeting: 3/4/2021