



## City and County of San Francisco YOUTH COMMISSION

### MINUTES

Monday, April 17, 2023  
5:00 p.m.

#### IN-PERSON MEETING with REMOTE ACCESS

**Members:** Emily Nguyen (Chair, D11), Ewan Barker Plummer (Vice Chair, Mayoral), Steven Hum (Legislative Affairs Officer, Mayoral), Raven Shaw (Legislative Affairs Officer, Mayoral), Gabrielle Listana (Communications & Outreach Officer, D6), Astrid Utting (Communications & Outreach Officer, D8), Chloe Wong (D1), Allister Adair (D2), Reese Terrell (D3), Maureen Loftus (D4), Hayden Miller (D5), Ann Anish (D7), Yoselin Colin (D9), Vanessa Pimentel (D10), Yena Im (Mayoral), Tyrone S. Hillman III (Mayoral).

**Present:** Emily Nguyen, Ewan Barker Plummer, Steven Hum, Astrid Utting, Chloe Wong, Allister Adair, Reese Terrell, Hayden Miller, Ann Anish, Vanessa Pimentel, Tyrone S. Hillman III.

**Absent:** Raven Shaw (excused), Maureen Loftus (excused), Yoselin Colin (excused), Yena Im (unexcused).

**Tardy:** Gabbie Listana.

The San Francisco Youth Commission met in-person with remote access, and provided public comment through teleconferencing, on April 17, 2023, with Chair Nguyen presiding.

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call for Attendance

Chair Nguyen called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

On the call of the roll:

Roll Call Attendance: 11 present, 5 absent.

Chloe Wong present  
Allister Adair present  
Reese Terrell present



Maureen Loftus absent  
Hayden Miller present  
Gabrielle Listana absent  
Ann Anish present  
Astrid Utting present  
Yoselin Colin absent  
Vanessa Pimentel present  
Ewan Barker Plummer present  
Steven Hum present  
Raven Shaw absent  
Yena Im absent  
Tyrone S. Hillman III present  
Emily Nguyen present

A quorum of the Commission was present.

Director Esquivel Garcia confirmed which commissioners let staff know in advance of their absence, and that Commissioner Im no longer has any excused absences for the full Youth Commission meetings and this absence will be unexcused.

Commissioner Miller, seconded by Officer Utting, motioned to excuse the absences of Commissioners Loftus, Listana, Colin, and Shaw. The motion was carried by the following voice vote:

Voice vote: 11 ayes, 5 absent.

Chloe Wong aye  
Allister Adair aye  
Reese Terrell aye  
Maureen Loftus absent  
Hayden Miller aye  
Gabrielle Listana absent  
Ann Anish aye  
Astrid Utting aye  
Yoselin Colin absent  
Vanessa Pimentel aye  
Ewan Barker Plummer aye  
Steven Hum aye  
Raven Shaw absent  
Yena Im absent  
Tyrone S. Hillman III aye



Emily Nguyen aye

Action: absences excused for Commissioners Colin, Listana, Loftus, and Shaw.

## **2. Communications**

Alondra Esquivel Garcia, Director of the SFYC, shared communications and meeting announcements with Commissioners.

## **3. Approval of Agenda (Action Item)**

No discussion, and no public comment.

Vice Chair Barker Plummer, seconded by Officer Utting, motioned to approve the April 17, 2023 full Youth Commission meeting agenda. The motion carried by the following voice vote:

Voice vote: 11 ayes, 5 absent.

Chloe Wong aye  
Allister Adair aye  
Reese Terrell aye  
Maureen Loftus absent  
Hayden Miller aye  
Gabrielle Listana absent  
Ann Anish aye  
Astrid Utting aye  
Yoselin Colin absent  
Vanessa Pimentel aye  
Ewan Barker Plummer aye  
Steven Hum aye  
Raven Shaw absent  
Yena Im absent  
Tyrone S. Hillman III aye  
Emily Nguyen aye

Action: Agenda Approved.

## **4. Approval of Minutes (Action Item)**

- a. April 3, 2023 (Packet Materials)



No discussion. No public comment.

Officer Utting, seconded by Commissioner Adair, motioned to approve the April 3, 2023 full Youth Commission meeting minutes with the updated attendance count. The motion carried by the following voice vote:

Voice vote: 11 ayes, 5 absent.

Chloe Wong aye  
Allister Adair aye  
Reese Terrell aye  
Maureen Loftus absent  
Hayden Miller aye  
Gabrielle Listana absent  
Ann Anish aye  
Astrid Utting aye  
Yoselin Colin absent  
Vanessa Pimentel aye  
Ewan Barker Plummer aye  
Steven Hum aye  
Raven Shaw absent  
Yena Im absent  
Tyrone S. Hillman III aye  
Emily Nguyen aye

Action: Minutes Approved.

**5. Public Comment on matters not on Today's Agenda** (2 minutes per comment)

No public comment. Commissioner Gabbie Listana entered the meeting at 5:16pm.

**6. Hearings** (discussion and possible action)

- a. Hearing to discuss and understand what is happening with Juvenile Hall since its closure in 2021, as well as what efforts are presently being made to secure the intended closure of Juvenile Hall, and services being offered to support the youth inside.
  - i. Presenter: Board of Supervisors District 10 Office
  - ii. Presenter: San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department
  - iii. Presenter: San Francisco Close Juvenile Hall Work Group
  - iv. Presenter: San Francisco Public Defender's Office
  - v. Presenter: San Francisco District Attorney's Office



Commissioner Colin and Commissioner Pimentel introduced the hearing and its presenters, as well as the reasons why the hearing is taking place.

Tracy Brown, BOS Legislative Aide for District 10, discussed the history and the efforts of those who advocated for the closure of San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. Brown stated that the District 10 Office is still in support of the closure of Juvenile Hall, regardless of the increased amount of barriers that they didn't know beforehand. Brown recommends that there still be a plan for alternatives to incarceration, stronger diversion protocols, and that they need a better system for unaccompanied youth. Brown encourages the Youth Commission to push for solutions that will best support these youth. Brown wants the SFYC to (1) monitor where all of the funding goes towards JJC, (2) monitor how many mental health beds are available to youth, (3) let the youth tell the adults what they need to be truly successful, and (4) how we as the City of San Francisco can make sure that we have public safety and youth that are supported where they are.

Chief Katy Miller, Chief Probation Officer for the Department of Juvenile Probation, discussed the goals of the Juvenile Probation Department. Miller went over the 39 recommendations on how to transform the Juvenile Justice Center and the policies that are affected by those recommended changes. Miller discussed the current alternatives to incarceration that currently exist, some of which are fully funded by JPD's and the overall City budget. Miller explained how they're also expanding current or new programs to better address the needs of youth that they don't currently have. Miller discussed the DJJ realignment and how that legislation significantly shifted the responsibility of the youth justice system from the state-level to the county-level. Miller went over the process that youth go through after they're arrested. Miller went over the requirements for the City and County of San Francisco by statewide policies. Miller said that they're now sitting down with an architect to discuss redesign of the current set-up of the Juvenile Justice Center, but have no official funds for any type of construction.

Patti Lee, Public Defender's Office, went over the summary of the ordinance and said that the Public Defender's office still fully supports the closure of Juvenile Hall. Lee said the funding that goes towards Juvenile Hall needs to be reinvested into the alternatives to running the center. Lee mentioned the very low numbers of youth in Juvenile Hall and that they should not be higher, but that the current number of available beds (~150). Lee went over their Facilities Subcommittee and the work that they've been doing thus far, and she hopes that the Youth Commission can help dispel the belief that these youth are dangerous, when in reality they are unhoused youth who are overwhelmingly nonviolent and struggling. Lee said that they've seen a change in the prosecution with more young people being arrested and put into jail with the increased hard-on-crime rhetoric and current District Attorney Brooke Jenkins, especially compared to former District Attorney



Chesa Boudin. Lee mentioned the disparities that continue to exist within the Juvenile Justice Center. Lee said there should be no more than 20 beds in Juvenile Hall, and there should be no Juvenile Hall for girls.

Emily Goldman, Public Defender's Office, explained the work of what the San Francisco Public Defender's Office does, which means that they defend the public and those going through the criminal justice system. Goldman introduced Aimee Ubas, who went through the youth justice system. Aimee Ubas introduced herself, and is 19 years old. Ubas has gone through the Juvenile Justice Center a few times, the first time when she was 15. Goldman asked Ubas what the JJC was useful for, to which Ubas said that she ended up growing up there. Ubas said that there were some useful resources, but that the support really ended when she was 18 years old. Ubas said there were fights, but the worst were often mental health battles. Ubas said that there could be better support for youth from the staff who work at JJC, and there's a disparity between those who are there for detention and those who are there for long-term sentences. Ubas was born in the Philippines and was raised in the Tenderloin, but spent the majority of her time in group homes or in jail. Ubas also said that she really wants people to see how they live and what they have to go through before making any decisions on their behalf. Ubas said that it was her POs, attorneys, and supporting folks who helped her start going to college and build a life for herself. Ubas said that helping youth with their mental health while they're in JJC needs to happen, especially since it's so easy to get lost while serving time, and it's easy to be cast aside by other incarcerated youth at the center.

Tiffany Sutton, District Attorney's Office, said that they hope to keep youth safe and that the DA's office doesn't want to detain youth, but that the state law demands that they do have to have the Juvenile Hall open. Sutton said the DA's office hopes to prevent youth from committing crime or even going in front of a judge, that would be preferred. Sutton said the numbers that the Public Defender's stated in regard to the population of Juvenile Hall are correct and show that they are reducing the overall population. Sutton said that DA Jenkins' leadership pushes for diversion programs that currently exist, or for ones that they might want to expand into to create a greater support net for youth. Sutton said that they hope to work with community-based organizations to ensure that youth have the support that they need to stay out of the justice system altogether. Sutton said that misdemeanor offenses are mostly sent straight to diversion programs, but there are some crimes that they do address that pertain closer to public safety. Sutton said the expectations for youth are that they live healthy lives and do not come into contact with the justice system in the first place.

Commissioners then moved onto their questions towards the presenters. Commissioner Pimentel asked what mental health support is available to youth in Juvenile Hall, to which Chief Miller said that the Department of Public Health might be better to ask that,



but that they're one of the only JJC's that have 24-hour support for mental health and medical support.

Commissioner Anish asked for clarification on how the Youth Commission can best monitor the funding that goes towards the Juvenile Justice Center and how safe spaces should be created when the system usually already pushes back. Brown said that the Youth Commission can ask for reports on how many referrals were made and how many youths had their issues addressed, and Brown said that there were not many referrals made through the DCYF process; Brown said that with law enforcement making decision on behalf of youth, especially since they have implicit bias, and therefore the youth need to be asked what they need to be successful; Brown talked about her personal experience with her sons and how she tried her best to keep them safe. Brown said that it's the Youth Commission's responsibility to be the voice of those youth who do not have those voices or opportunities to speak for themselves, and she encourages them to be the leaders youth want them to be. Sutton added that there should be different spaces or platforms to uplift youth, and they invite them to the DA's office to help also have the conversation. Miller added that they always try their best to go back to what the youth are saying, especially to have to have them constantly repeat themselves.

Commissioner Hum asked what examples of collaboration to support the partnership between SFUSD and advocacy groups have had. Brown said that there were schools that have community programs integrated into SFUSD schools to best support these collaborative efforts.

Vice Chair Barker Plummer asked why it was difficult to find those challenges and barriers in the legislative process. Brown said that they weren't in an open collaborative relationship with the former Chief Probation Officer at the Juvenile Justice Center, and then built collaboration with community organizations to push for the ordinance. Brown also said that there was no connection with the Superior Court, and they were not told that the courts also had a decision-making process in that effort. Barker Plummer asked what they mean and envision by "non-institutional". Brown said she envisions there being a facility for those that don't have to be detained, and having a college-like center for those who do have to be contained. Miller added that her vision is one that doesn't look like a secure facility, and one that makes youth feel safe and not that there is a carceral facility.

Chair Nguyen asked the DA's Office to clarify whether or not the youth incarceration and prosecution rate are increasing or reducing, since the presentations have conflicting information. Sutton said certain crimes have remained the same, but that they did go down during the pandemic. Sutton added that now that they're out of the pandemic, that crimes like property or assault are now beginning to increase. Sutton said that there has



been an increase in arrest, but that doesn't mean there's an increase in crime proportionally. Goldman added that she has a different answer and that there is an increase in arrests and cases going to the District Attorney's office, and that there's a lower rate of forwarding cases to diversion. Goldman said she hopes that those cases are dismissed and sent straight to community programs without being filed in the DA's office. Chair Nguyen asked for clarification on the competing information from the DA and PD offices. Chair Nguyen asked Brown what should be done in the meantime with state law needing to be changed first. Brown said that while a few youth need to be at JJC, many of the youth in Juvenile Hall don't need to be there and can be helped through alternatives to incarceration. Miller said that there's certain restrictions that they can't avoid, but that they're doing their best to make the JJC accommodative while also respecting the jurisdiction of the judges.

Officer Utting asked which programs were lacking in support and funding, to which Brown said that they can ask DCYF for that information. Utting asked what other examples can be used to compare on what to change locally, to which Miller said that many of the examples are in other countries and not in the United States. Miller said that there's currently no plans on how to explore those other nation's solutions.

Officer Listana asked how involved the Public Defender's Office is in client's cases and how successful their programs are. Goldman said that they support youth throughout the entire process and it can depend on the youth and what their case specifics are.

Vice Chair Barker Plummer asked how the savings of not having a Juvenile Justice Center can be reallocated towards programs and services that can better support the incarcerated youth. Brown said that information can be found in the ordinance itself and in many of the recommendations presented. Barker Plummer asked what would happen if there were more than 20 incarcerated youth, how those youth would be both housed and accommodated. Lee said that there are youth who don't need to be detained, and she believes that there are alternatives that must be developed to see the number of youth who are incarcerated to be diverted to alternatives rather than be in the JJC. Lee said the community, if given the tools, can be creative in creating those solutions. Lee said she is comfortable saying that 20 beds in the JCC is enough.

Commissioner Colin asked if there's any way for youth in the JJC to be able to discuss the way they are being treated by staff. Chief Miller said that this is where they disagree with the Public Defender's office since she does have to look after and care for those incarcerated at the JJC, and that 20 beds is not sufficient. Miller added that they also need wiggle room to ensure that each youth who is incarcerated at times doesn't feel safe with one another. Colin asked for clarification on the staff complaint, to which Miller said that they can move forward with the grievance process to address any issues with





staff. Colin asked if they were able to make an agreement with the courts, to which Brown said that they have not been able to reach any agreement.

Commissioner Adair asked if there's preferential treatment at the Juvenile Justice Center, to which Miller said that they do their best to support youth, especially during any crisis.

Chair Nguyen handed the gavel to Vice Chair Barker Plummer at 7:28pm. Vice Chair Barker Plummer handed the gavel back to Chair Nguyen at 7:36pm.

#### Public Comment:

Speaker 1: speaking as a foster youth and its negative effects on youth; they ask the Youth Commission to stand with the community.

Speaker 2: speaking as an SF resident; SF voted to close JJC; community was against the incarceration of youth; if the basic needs of youth are met, there is no need to put youth in jail; the average of youth in JJC was significantly lower during the pandemic; schools reopening saw the rise in youth incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline lives on; schools are underfunded; we should not be discussing reforms but whole-scale change.

Speaker 3: people should be making decisions based on those who have lived here; she wants to see that the trauma is addressed directly.

Speaker 4: third-generation affected by incarceration; they should have those seats open for people who have been through the system; also asked for the DA's office to respond to their emails and calls for help.

Speaker 5: works for Larkin but here to support the community; here to voice for the closure of JJC; says that youth 12-17 do not have a voice and can't talk for themselves in this current system; says that there was no support for her when she was in the system; there are changes that have needed to be made years ago; create a platform to support family and the youth.

Speaker 6: part of the YMFC; a community member who has been part of this coalition building in the City; wants us to invest in solutions that will uplift the people who've been affected by these issues; they believe in creating a new long-term vision that will care for youth and invest in prevention; the community must reclaim its power from the institutions that have taken it from them; the youth need things that can reinvest in them directly.



Speaker 7: talked about her experience in Juvenile Hall and believes that every youth deserves an opportunity; the youth are the future of this City; they should have the education to be on a commission, lawyers, doctors, etc.; ask for more housing and basic needs.

Speaker 8: thanked the YC for holding the hearing; talked about how many of the youth who spoke are frustrated at the system and not directly at the Commission, and that these issues are directly personal to them; asks the YC to stand in solidarity with the community.

Speaker 9: wants to emphasize what the YWFC is saying and supports young people; they don't want any Juvenile Hall to exist; they have been reaching out to the DA's office for a response and haven't heard anything; people are hurt and frustrated.

Speaker 10: he was put into group homes; all of the discussion taking place are band-aid solutions; he said that he knows a lot of the Youth Commission don't understand the personal experiences of incarcerated youth; preventative things work.

Speaker 11: can't see what's happening but understands the pain and frustration of the youth organizers in our community, with people in positions of power shutting them out of the conversation; gives props to those who've started the conversation; thanks the Youth Commission to have this conversation, especially since there's been little to no conversation from these institutions.

## **7. Staff Report** (discussion item)

Staff will be sending their reports over email. No public comment.

## **8. Announcements** (this includes Community Events)

No announcements or community events. No public comment.

## **9. Adjournment**

There being no further business on the agenda, the full Youth Commission adjourned at 7:42pm.

