CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, October 18, 2011
11:00 a.m.
Legislative Office Building, Room 1B
Hartford, CT

Members In Attendance: *Mike Lawlor (Committee Chair), Hon. David Borden, Vivien Blackford, Thomas Ullmann, Kevin Kane, Judge Carroll*

Also Participating: *Andrew Clark (Acting Executive Director), Sarah White*

MINUTES

I. MEETING CONVENED

Mike Lawlor called the meeting to order at approximately 11:25 a.m.

II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF AUGUST 16, 2011

Upon a duly made and seconded motion, the minutes were **approved by a unanimous voice vote.**

III. COMMITTEE CHARGE & HISTORY OF AD HOC STEERING SUBCOMMITTEE

The purpose of the Steering Committee and the previous work of the Ad Hoc Steering Subcommittee were reviewed.

IV. DISCUSSION: ROLE OF SENTENCING COMMISSION ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In order for the committee to better understand of the role of the executive director, Andrew Clark distributed the job descriptions for Pennsylvania and Minnesota's executive directors. In both states, the executive director is critical to the coordination of research projects between committees and working groups, the allocation of staff and resources, and the solicitation of grants. The Steering Committee noted the Commission has been functioning well with Andrew Clark serving as Acting Executive Director and has benefited greatly from the University Partnership with CCSU and Quinnipiac Law School. It was acknowledged by the committee that the role of the executive director will be especially important when the Commission begins to regularly produce legislation.

The question was raised as to whether the job of the executive director should be part-time or full-time. The committee agreed that due to the scope of the executive director's responsibilities a full-time position is needed. It was also agreed that the Commission will need other full-time staff to complement its efforts. A full-time executive director would be especially important for facilitating the research needed by the Commission to make

evidence based recommendations. The question was also raised as to who would hire the executive director. One option is that the Commission could work out a deal to have OPM hire an executive director. After further discussion, the committee agreed that the executive director needs to hired by and work solely for the Sentencing Commission to mitigate perceived conflicts. The committee recognized that legislation could be introduced to ensure that the hiring of an executive director is the sole responsibility of the Commission.

V. PROCESS ISSUES:

A. Inter-Committee Communication & Collaboration

The issue of inter-committee communication and the need to clarify the process for committees reporting back to the Full Commission was discussed. The general consensus was to keep the process informal for the time being. Vivien Blackford thought that the IMRP should continue to attend meetings and assist with coordination of the committees. She also suggested that committee chairs and co-chairs communicate with each other when working on research projects to avoid overlap. It was agreed that the role of the Commission chair is to facilitate a general direction of the Commission and in consultation with the chairs to help coordinate work between the committees.

B. Mission Statement

A formal mission statement was determined to be unnecessary at this time. Thomas Ullmann felt that the Commission needs a "feeling out" period for the committees to establish a clear direction. The development of a formal mission statement could be the responsibility of the executive director in the future.

C. Guidelines for Selecting Non-Commission Members to Join Committees (Member vs. Support role)

Justice Borden reminded the committee that at the last Full Sentencing Commission meeting a quorum was approved as being three members of the Commission. Discussion then moved to adding Non-Commission members to committees. The general consensus was that Non-Commission members who actively participate at committee meetings and are approved by the Commission chair should be able to vote with the exception of Sentencing Commission staff. One consideration of the committee was that the number of Non-Commission members serving on a committee not exceed the number of Commission members. Ultimately, the committee decided that the number of Non-Commission members on committees should be at the chair's discretion. The committee decided against requiring "terms" of service. The only requirement to join a committee is to submit a resume for consideration. Formal decisions about committee membership and voting structure were postponed.

D. Policy Regarding Public Comment Protocol

The committee agreed formal guidelines regarding public comment are not needed at this time. It should be an item on the agenda and scheduled at the beginning of all Full Commission and committee meetings. The time allotted for public comment shall be at the sole discretion of the chairs.

VI. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. Report Highlights

The committee decided that the annual report should include a formal budget request highlighting what the Commission has been able to accomplish in the past year and the need for additional resources. The Commission's legislative proposals should be discussed in detail. Additionally, the report should outline the Commission's future work plan.

B. Time-line for Completion

The committee acknowledged that the deadline for the report is January 15th, 2012.

VII. DISCUSSION: SENTENCING COMMISSION DATABASE

Andrew Clark initiated the discussion by asking who would oversee the development of a Sentencing Commission database. Justice Borden felt this would be a task for the Research, Measurement and Evaluation Committee. He suggested the committee seek the help of individuals like Chris Reinhart and Brian Hill because they know what data would be useful in creating a Sentencing Commission database.

VIII. NEXT STEPS

It was decided the Steering Committee should meet as needed prior to the Full Commission meeting on January 26, 2012 to further discuss issues such as funding and the annual report. Mike Lawlor reminded members the next meeting Full Commission meeting is on November 10, 2011.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was introduced. It was agreed that there would be no additional meetings before November 10th Full Sentencing Commission meeting.

X. Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.