

**Tennessee Community Resource Board
Riverbend Maximum Security Institute
January 18, 2019**

TCRB Representatives:

Rev. Michael Rickenbaker, Chairman / West TN Representative	(P)
Mario Allen, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
Vinessa J. Brown, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
Paul Hensley, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
Thurston S. Smith, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
J.R. Davis, Member / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Joan Evrist, Secretary / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Tom Hallquist, Treasurer / Middle TN Representative	(A)
Ronda Waters, Member / Middle TN Representative	(A)
Tommy Mathis, Member / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Sean Driscoll, Member / East TN Representative	(A)
Raeanne Hance, Member / East TN Representative	(P)
Lee Ragsdale, Member / East TN Representative	(A)
Brian Bishop, Member / East TN Representative	(P)
Rep. William Lamberth, House Representative	(A)

TDOC Representatives:

Reverend Brian Darnell, Director of Religious Services	(P)
Cindy Sword, Assistant to Reverend Darnell	(P)
Eric Qualls, Director of Reentry	(A)
Ed Welch, Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services	(P)
Chaplain Rocha	(P)
Warden Lewis	(P)
Jody Khan	(P)

Guests:

Vicki Helgesen, Leaving The Cocoon

Call To Order – Michael Rickenbaker

Prayer – Chaplain Rocha

- For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Welcome & Introductions – Michael Rickenbaker

Review and Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Motion made by Thurston Smith
- Seconded motion by Vinessa Brown
- All approve

TDOC Presentations

- Ed Welch
 - We are all family and we are trying to find our allies. I'm asking you to extend our family and help identify who can help us. We are trying to fight evil and bring out the best in people. What is your key strength? What can you bring to us that no one else can? What is your special gift? For example, my gift is hope and optimism. We are in a great season here in Tennessee. Why do we refer to those in prison as offenders? Are we not all offenders? They are people. Let's humanize them not ostracize them. We have been blessed to be here right now to change people's lives. There are some folks unwilling to change who we don't want to let go, but there may be 90% we can help and change. My goal is to reduce prison population by 25% in the next five years. Everyone has a weapon against this war called evil. Everyone at this table has something to do and bring to this. Prisons don't work they incapacitate. After five years, we stop having influence because inmates become adapted to prison culture. We need to light that spark again to get them back on track. Treat the addicts up front not at the end of their sentence. They are addicts and they have a disease. Treat that and show respect to everyone! Texas and Connecticut did it. They built the infrastructure. Faith base, non-profit, profit... 25% is 6,000 people! So many more children and family members. TDOC has \$125M budget. Teach them how to swim in the rough ocean of the world not just behind bars. Give them real jobs. We do a lot of good things in TDOC but we need to do much more. We work together to change the atmosphere of the prison. Let's save \$125M a year and let 6,000 people go. Only 19% make parole. 55% are non-violent drug offenders. Let's look at each individual situation. We first and foremost have to protect our community. Let the people out who are going to be safe. It will take all of us. We want to empower you (as the TCRB).
 - Vanessa Brown – We need help in Memphis. We need TDOC to listen to us, they don't listen to us. I have a long list of things I believe need to be done. Tomorrow we have a new Governor who has been very supportive in Memphis.
 - Mario Allen – Thank you for your heart for returning citizens.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – Thanked Ed Welch for casting a wonderful vision, and reminded the TCRB that it would be impossible for Mr. Welch to go to every volunteer in Tennessee to cast that vision, but that as a Board we could assist in that mission. "We as a Board have an incredible opportunity to cast this vision to our LCRBs. Identify each other's strengths and release one another. Together we can do this. We are generals in Gods Army. Ed Welch, please speak your voice – it's very important. We need to pray for Governor Lee." Always treat people the way you want to be treated. That doesn't always happen on the inside. Dignity and respect shapes a person's identity.
 - JR Davis – Thank you Commissioner Ed for your big vision. Can we as a State Board make an initiative?
 - Brian Darnell will work on this.
 - Commissioner Welch's vision is that we all take this back and do what we can do. We need influencers (here on the Board) with the Judges, DAs, Legislature, etc.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – Recommendation that we form a sub-committee.

- Ed Welch – Everyone at this table has a representative, talk with them personally and educate them on prison reform and your perspective! Help our elected officials to see thru the fog. The criminal system is a system of silos. We need to all talk. Let's have alternatives to incarceration. It has severe limitations. Let's treat the mentally ill, etc. Alternatives to incarceration – halfway houses, re-entry, behavior health, peer education, peer observers. Let's reduce restrictive housing. How? Having sanctions and ways to deal with unruly people. Having more activities to reduce the level of isolation.
- Take One Report and Discussion
 - Chaplain Darnell – We matched 260 folks so far. Hopeful for 800 by next year. One church take one offender is the theory, but doesn't work. There are 20,000 folks locked up. We have been training people in groups. Been asking denominations to get on board and have them enlist their pastors/leaders. In the state there are 92 religious affiliations. They have to represent all of them. They have to have those services as well. No one in a parole hearing gets asked how many church services they attend. They ask if they have a take one mentor, and if are they in the room. We have a new Governor coming in and Ed Welch is a great partner. It's a new day in the department.

Grand Division Reports – East TN / Middle TN/ West TN Grand Divisions

- West TN
 - Vinessa Brown – Re-entry is now open in Memphis. They are partnering with non-profits. Pray for educational system in this area. Most students are not at their level of reading. They are using ex-offenders to help with the reading programs. 40% of inmates don't have a high school education.
 - Mario Allen –
 - Chaplain Baxter returned citizens and volunteers fellowship (resource, information and networking for the men that are out). The commissioner, volunteers and returned citizens honored chaplain Baxter. Also, two of the oldest prison volunteers – Barbara Dycus and Ernestine Clemons – were honored.
 - We also finished a fatherhood class at the day reporting center.
 - Pastors in the Memphis Area have opened up new area for returned citizens to get jobs.
 - Paul Hensley (written report) –
 - I was the MC for the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet at NWCX. Brian Darnell was our guest speaker. It was well attended by Volunteers and TDOC staff.
 - Attended the Take One Meeting at NWCX. Tommy Mathis, of Men of Valor, was the guest speaker.
 - I taught the Certification Class at NWCX. Also had supper with Chaplain Gross, Jack Bryan, and one of the Staff from Miracle Lake.
 - Had a phone meeting with Chaplain Gross concerning staff allowing inmates to change location of church services. Chaplain Gross sent an email to the decision makers (AW Steve Jones, Chaplain Bolden, and Unit Manager Tarver) who were unaware of the situation. The situation was rectified.
 - I met with Tyler Tracer, West Region Public Officer. She was very nice and represented TDOC very well.
- Middle TN
 - Joan Evrist – TPFW had a wonderful Christmas season filled with generous gifts and food. We were able to give out 900 gift bags filled with special toiletries and snacks for

the women. We served all the women and officers a Chick-Fil-A meal and had a special Christmas service. We also had a sweet celebration at our Kids Party where we gave out toys, stockings, candy and Chick-Fil-A meals and ice cream, in addition to providing face-painting and games. These times of celebration are meaningful for the women, and deeply minister to them. I am so thankful for all the many generous TPFW volunteers. I am also thankful for Chaplain Walker who continues to be a great support for all the positive volunteer and religious services that we provide such as The Best Program, Lipscomb, God Behind Bars, New Song Nashville, Domestic Violence Recover, Mt. Zion Church, Belmont Church, Anger Management, Shelter from the Storm, Boundaries, Prison Fellowship, Jonah's Journey, United Methodist, United Pentecostal, Hands of Grace, Catholic Ministries, First Church of the Nazarene, mentoring programs, choir, and there are many more programs all doing their part to encourage and empower women to a new and productive way to live.

- Ed Welch – Introduced Assistant Warden Lockwood at Riverbend.
- JR Davis – I have spoken and brought in speakers for the BEST program. Would like to start an initiative with the LCRB I'm a part of.
- East TN
 - Reanne Hance – Had wonderful Christmas programs. God Behind Bars is getting ready to start a new educational program.
 - Brian Bishop – Starting to work at the local jail in Johnson City. Churches are not very involved, they are scared of working with the ex-offenders but I am starting with my home church and hopefully can help other churches in my area to catch the vision to help.

Education Update

- Michael Rickenbaker – Reported that Tom Hallquist was not able to attend this TCRB meeting, as he was presently presenting in Washington on the new Prison Reform Bill... Taking empty prisons and turning them into educational facilities. Tom will bring an updated report on Education at our next meeting.
 - Ed Welch – Senator Lamar Alexander is wanting to pass a bill on education reform in the prison system.

TCRB Retreat / Faith in Corrections Conference / Committee Report

- Mario Allen – The Board brought in people from all around Tennessee to speak in the past.
- Continuing the conversation for future retreat.

Public Affairs Committee Report

- Thurston Smith – Back in July we discussed the Boards' vision. We need a Facebook page for TBRC. A Facebook page would allow us all to communicate with each other and our partners and TDOC, as well as exchange info.
- Michael Rickenbaker – Is there a motion for a Facebook page?
 - Paul Hensley made a motion.
 - Brian Bishop seconded the motion.
- Rev. Darnell needs to check with TDOC about TCRB having a Facebook page.
- Ed Welch recommends us to contact the appropriate person at TDOC (Rev. Darnell will let us know who).

TCRB Membership Positions

- Michael Rickenbaker – We all serve a numbered position as Board members. Michael Rickenbaker, Paul Hensley and Brian Bishop have ending terms. Is there a motion for them to continue their terms?
 - Motion made by Joan Evrist
 - Seconded motion made by Mario Allen
 - All in favor

Other Business / Old Business

- Ed Welch – Asked that each TCRB member do five things to extend the mission of the TCRB prior to our next TCRB meeting? Mr. Welch stated that he would ask each member in turn what five things they have accomplished at the next meeting. In-reach, education, mentoring, Take One. He would like a report from each of us at the May 3 meeting.

Announcements

- Next meeting will be May 3 instead of April 19 because of Good Friday.

Meeting Adjourned – Michael Rickenbaker

Next Meeting: Friday, May 3, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at Riverbend