

Correction Advisory Committee
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 23, 2023
7:00 PM via Zoom

The meeting was called to order by co-chair Melinda Johnson at 7:05 PM.

The following committee members were present:

Melinda Johnson
Tadhg Dooley
Kyisha Velazquez
Reena Kapoor
John Cipolli
Daryl McGraw
Melvin Medina
Andrew Giering
Ben Howell

The following committee members were absent:

Scott Semple
John Bowen

Welcoming remarks were made by co-chair Melinda Johnson.

Chair Johnson set ground rules for the meeting, explaining that the chairs will be monitoring the chat and the public will have the chance to make comments after members of the committee discuss the issues.

Chair Dooley shared that there has been a delay in receiving approval and classification for the new position. He also expressed concerns regarding the appropriations for the office and shared unexpected obstacles that have been encountered.

He explained that the job description was approved at the last meeting on March 27th, which was subject to the recommendations and revisions made by committee members during that meeting. The description was finalized by the chairs of the committee and submitted to Aminah Marshall. Additionally, the job description was submitted to the Department of Administrative Services liaison on April 12th. After that, the committee made multiple check-ins, but the response received indicated that the submission was pending with the Office of Policy and Management.

Chair Dooley expressed that the most concerning issue is the appropriations portion.

Chair Johnson pointed out that SB 957, currently advancing through the session, proposes additions to the existing position. She explained that these additions diverge from the duties outlined in the approved job description. The amendments introduce new requirements that were not initially considered in the statutory language or in the job description crafted by the committee. She stated that

the primary concern arises from the lack of budgetary provisions to accommodate the expansion of the position, even if the committee were to entertain incorporating the new language into the job description.

Chair Johnson explained that the appropriations suggested for the office were approximately \$670,000, as stated by the Office of Fiscal Analysis; they indicated that this amount would be required to fund an ombudsman and six staff members. The committee sought clarification regarding the specific salary for the ombudsman but have not received a response yet. The amount appropriated was \$400,000 in the 2023 revision.

Chair Dooley shared information regarding appropriations amounts for similar offices in different states and expressed his concern as the amount appropriated seems to be significantly lower compared to other states, as they have appropriated around one million dollars.

The committee will attempt to contact the Senate/House to express their concerns regarding the bill. Andrew Clark made recommendations on how the committee should proceed.

A motion was made to send a letter to the Senate and House leadership regarding the need for the Appropriations from 2023 to be carried over to 2024 and 2025 and distributed evenly and to set forth the dissatisfaction of the amount that was appropriated for this office. The motion was approved.

Chair Dooley volunteered to write the letter and will share a draft with the committee members.

A motion was made to send a letter regarding SB 957; the committee wants to express an objection to the amendment to move forward. The argument presented is that the scope of the work is not in the original context of the position, and the committee has had the opportunity to establish neither the office nor the position to be able to consider an expansion. The motion was approved.

Chair Johnson volunteered to write the letter and will share a draft with the committee members.

A motion was made by Dr. Reena Kapoor, and seconded by Melvin Medina to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.