

NEW MEXICO SENTENCING COMMISSION

JUVENILE COMMITTEE

11:00 a.m.
September 4, 2018

Desert Hills
5310 Sequoia Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM

Committee Members Present	Committee Members Absent	Others Attending	NMSC Staff
Bob Cleavall (NMSC), Chair	Marron Lee (NMSC)	Rick Hernandez (Desert Hills)	Linda Freeman
Cindy Aragon (State Bar)	Mark Donatelli, (Speaker)		Amanda Armstrong
Hon. Marci Beyer (DMCJA)	Sheriff Manuel Gonzales III (NMAC)		Douglas Carver
Jim Cowan (for CYFD)	Jason Rael (LOPD)		Conner Tuttle
Diane Garcia (NMDAA)			
April Land (UNMSOL)			
Traci Neff (NMAC)			
Angela "Spence" Pacheco (Speaker)			
Judge William Parnall			
David Schmidt (Pro Tem)			
Hon. Marie Ward			

Welcome. Bob Cleavall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m. Committee members, guests and staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes for the July 26, 2018 meeting. The minutes for the previous committee meeting were approved by consensus.

Staff Report. Staff thanked Rick Hernandez of Desert Hills for his help in organizing the Committee's visit to Desert Hills.

Tour of the Desert Hills facility. Rick Hernandez, Director of Business Development, Desert Hills, and Lee Farris, Principal of the school at Desert Hills, gave a presentation on the Desert Hills facility to the Committee. Mr. Hernandez then led a tour of the facility. After the tour, Brock Wolff, Chief Executive Officer, Desert Hills, met with the Committee to answer questions.

During the initial presentation, Mr. Farris discussed some history of the development of treatment centers for youth in the state. He noted that Desert Hills had been in the city for 30 years, and that given the many needs in the state, the need for Desert Hills was acute. Some of the kids that Desert Hills works with have situational problems, but others have chronic issues. He then discussed the educational programs at Desert Hills. The education is provided through Albuquerque Public Schools; a public charter school, La Academia de Esperanza, provides the education. One location is on the Desert Hills campus, a small school for at risk children who can be treated at Desert Hills, and a larger school of 250-300 children is on a separate campus.

Mr. Farris noted that treatment worked for about one third of the children, meaning that they will go on with their lives and be productive citizens; another third will be in and out of the mental health and correctional systems and be stuck on public benefits; while a final third will look back on their time at Desert Hills as the best time of their lives because life will be incredibly hard for them.

Members of the Committee asked about non-Desert Hills children at La Academia de Esperanza, how many children were from the juvenile delinquency system, and the transition of records from prior schools of the children.

The tour of Desert Hills took the Committee through the complex, including the classrooms, the activity yard, and the residential treatment facility.

Mr. Wolff, who only recently took the helm at Desert Hills, discussed his background, and some of the recent problems Desert Hills has been through. He noted that the parent company of Desert Hills had invested \$500,000 into the facility, with the monies going towards more staff, increased salaries, and evidence-based, trauma informed care.

Members of the Committee asked about the new programs at Desert Hills, the differences between a residential treatment program and a group home program, the need for psychiatric care, the need for case managers for the children, the speed at which juveniles in detention can be placed into Desert Hills, the screening process for admission, out of state placement for juveniles, access to Federal funding for care for children, programming for young children, and the possibility of satellite locations.

Next meeting. The committee scheduled its next meeting for October 24, 2018.

Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 1:24 p.m.