



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SHERIFF CIVILIAN
OVERSIGHT COMMISSION MEETING HELD
ONLINE AT: <https://bit.ly/3CXGbAh>
coc.lacounty.gov**



Thursday, October 21, 2021

Attachment: [Video](#)

Present: Chair Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Casimiro Tolentino, Robert Bonner, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Sean Kennedy, Lael Rubin, and Executive Director Brian K. Williams

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS & CONSENT CALENDAR

- **Call to Order**

Chair Ocen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and advised the public to submit written public comments for the official public record by visiting coc.lacounty.gov. Following the announcement Chair Ocen moved to the Consent Calendar.

- **Approval of Consent Calendar**

No members of the public commented on this item. Chair Ocen called for approval and there being no objection, the [September 23, 2021 meeting minutes](#) were approved. Chair Ocen moved on to item 2a.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

2a. Family Impact Remarks

Chair Ocen introduced Christine Vasquez, the wife of Marco Antonio Vasquez Jr., who provided Family Impact Remarks. The family of Andrew Joseph Perez was called on but was not unavailable. Chair Ocen thanked the Vasquez family for sharing their comments, she noted public comments would be heard during general public comments, and then moved to item 2b.

2b. Efforts to Reduce the L.A. County Jail Population

Chair Ocen recalled the conversation addressing COVID-19 conditions in the jails during the September COC meeting, which prompted further discussion of jail population. Chair Ocen acknowledged guest speakers from the L.A. County Department of Health Services' Office of Diversion and Re-Entry Judge Peter Espinoza, Rohini Khanna and Michelle Newell, Dignity and Power Now's Ivette Alé and Million Dollar Hoods' Danielle Dupuy.

Judge Espinoza provided an overview of the [development of the Jail Population Review Council](#) and advised they were tasked with “continuing to build on policy and practice changes of the justice partners led by the Superior Court that work to achieve significant decreases in the jail population that took place in the first few months of the pandemic.” Judge Espinoza highlighted jail population data, pre-pandemic to present. He reported the jail population was reduced to under 12,000 during the first few months of the pandemic and is now over 14,000 with approximately 2,000 inmates awaiting State transfers. He explained that they monitor jail population to identify what is or is not working, with emphasis on alternatives to incarceration. He discussed collaborations with various partners including the Jail Closure Implementation Team to identify solutions by ensuring treatment, housing and services are provided first.

Judge Espinoza advised State prisons and hospitals stopped accepting inmates and patients during the pandemic, which contributed to the population increase. He reported the jail population reached 17,500 at one point, and despite the reduction in the numbers to date, “significant race and health disparities have not improved.”

Rohini Khanna then recapped the responsibilities are to “track, analyze and publicly report on a monthly basis, data on bookings and releases, and who remains in custody.” Khanna reported a significant increase in pre-trial and partially sentenced inmate population as a major concern. Ms. Khanna provided statistics on inmates by gender, race and mental health, and she noted disparities among black and brown inmates. Khanna further discussed recommendations and advised that State prisons are beginning to accept inmates and anticipates a jail population reduction.

Michelle Newell then provided an overview of the proposal and implementation plan to alleviate jail overcrowding and meet the jail population mandate. Newell noted the committee identified that both the “Expansion to Community System of Care” and “Pretrial Services Agency” need urgent attention.

Chair Ocen asked staff to take attendance, and then Dignity and Power Now’s Ivette Alé from the [Gender Responsive Advisory Committee](#) expressed concern over the women’s jail population and LGBTQ+ people in Sheriff custody. They highlighted alternatives to incarceration and advised that based on a RAND Corporation analysis, “76% of women in CRDF [Central Regional Detention Facility] have mental health needs and could be safely diverted.” They discussed the racial disparities among black and brown women and LGBTQ+ people in the jails and highlighted pretrial recommendations. Ivette uplifted the importance of data collection to better understand the needs of the population and the best way assist them.

Next, Danielle Dupuy of Million Dollar Hoods gave an overview of [Million Dollar Hood data collection efforts](#) on law enforcement. She highlighted data on arrests and bookings dating back to 2010 and reported most arrests are from low-income areas and many bookings are related to drugs and mental illness. She suggested reallocating funds and investing resources in low-income communities.

The final guest speaker, James Kilgore of Challenging E-Carceration Project at Media Justice, discussed [pre-trial electronic monitoring](#). He shared the requirements for release from jail with electronic monitoring, and the potential number of incarcerated people who could be released pending trial. Mr. Kilgore provided specific examples to show the reliability of electronic monitors and the impact it has on individuals.

Following Mr. Kilgore's comments, Chair Ocen opened the floor for Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Rubin referenced the Rutherford case, almost 50 years ago, that set the standards for the jail population and is still prevalent today. She inquired about expectations of the information presented and asked if any implementation is expected soon. Judge Espinoza advised he anticipates the Board of Supervisors and Chief Executive Office will identify funding for greatly needed additional resources. He expressed concern over the increase in the mental health population and reported working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) and their Community Transition unit.

Chair Ocen advised that Sheriff Alex Villanueva had arrived at 9:00 a.m. She postponed her questions and moved to public comment, allowing one minute per person. There were three members of the public who commented on item 2b. Chair Ocen then moved to item 2c.

2c. Discussion with Sheriff Alex Villanueva regarding RAND's Report on Deputy Cliques

Chair Ocen recalled ongoing discussions with the Sheriff regarding efforts to rid the Department of gangs and discipline deputies known to participate in the deputy gangs, subgroups or cliques. Ocen inquired with the Sheriff's representative if the Sheriff would return, as his communications to the Commission stated he would voluntarily attend at 10:00 a.m.

Sheriff Villanueva's Chief of Staff, Gorge Valdez advised the Sheriff would not return due to other obligations and offered to read a statement on the Sheriff's behalf. Chair Ocen requested Mr. Valdez wait to read the statement until a later time in the meeting.

Chair Ocen stated "deputy gangs go to the core of the operation of the Sheriff's department and the allegations regarding the continued and pervasive existence of deputy gangs in the sheriff's department are deadly." Ocen stated that the Sheriff failed to adhere to the subpoenas issued for his appearance in July, August and October, and she reported the Sheriff provided correspondence stating "he would voluntarily appear" at today's meeting at 10:00 a.m. but arrived at 9:00 a.m. Ocen stated "the Sheriff has refused to comply with the lawful subpoenas and to testify under oath."

Chair Ocen then called on the Deputy Subgroups Ad Hoc Committee Chair, Commissioner Rubin, who noted the [RAND report](#) would be heard in its entirety at the next COC meeting. Rubin reported meeting with LASD captains from three stations identified in the RAND report to see how the Sheriff's policy was being implemented to eradicate deputy cliques. Rubin reported the Commission was tasked by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to get feedback on the RAND report and asked the public to submit their written comments at coc.lacounty.gov.

Chair Ocen then opened the floor for Commissioner comments. Commissioner Giggans inquired about updates from the ad hoc committee on feedback from the public regarding the RAND report, and Commissioner Rubin reported the comments would be compiled and a report would be developed and presented to the full Commission prior to the BOS. Chair Ocen advised that the next COC meeting will be dedicated to the issue of Deputy Gangs and RAND Corporation would present on their report, along with other experts on the issue.

Chair Ocen called on Inspector General Max Huntsman, who reported that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has also made attempts to question Sheriff Villanueva about deputy gangs. He advised that the Sheriff's statement is not a sworn declaration, nor a substitute for testimony and recommended not allowing the statement to be read. Chair Ocen agreed the statement should not be read into the record and called for any objections.

Commissioner Harris agreed the Sheriff should honor the subpoena to answer questions under oath, and he stated that he is not opposed to hearing the statement. Commissioner Kennedy stated that 73% of the public voted for subpoena power to have the Sheriff appear to answer questions under oath, and he advised the statement should not be heard. Commissioner Kennedy expressed concern over the Sheriff's refusal to honor a lawful subpoena and the lack of respect he has shown for the COC.

Chair Ocen then thanked Mr. Valdez for his presence and advised the statement would not be heard. She suggested he advise the Sheriff to attend the COC meeting and make statements under oath, and she said the statement could be emailed to the Executive Director.

On the motion of Commissioner Rubin, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the motion requests to have County Counsel pursue all legal remedies to have Sheriff Alex Villanueva appear at the November COC meeting to answer questions about deputy gangs. Chair Ocen requested a friendly amendment to request County Counsel to enforce the October subpoena utilizing all legal means available, and request that OIG serve a new subpoena to Sheriff Alex Villanueva under Measure R authority to attend the next COC meeting on November 18, 2021 to answer questions, under oath, about how the Sheriff is responding to the existence of deputy gangs within the Department. Commissioners Rubin and Harris agreed to the friendly amendment. Following the vote to amend the motion, Chair Ocen moved to public comment.

There were 16 members of the public who commented on this item.

Following public comment, Chair Ocen asked for a roll call vote on the motion to request "County Counsel enforce the October subpoena utilizing all legal means available and to request that OIG serve a new subpoena to Sheriff Alex Villanueva under Measure R authority to attend the next COC meeting on November 18, 2021 to answer questions about how the Sheriff is responding to the existence of Deputy gangs within the department and to answer questions under oath." The motion passed unanimously, with Commissioners Bonner and Thompson being unavailable.

Chair Ocen then called for a 10-minute recess., which began at 11:28 a.m. and open session reconvened at 11:38 a.m. Present were Chair Priscilla Ocen, Vice Chair Casimiro Tolentino, Patti Giggans, James P. Harris, Sean Kennedy, and Executive Director Brian K. Williams.

2d. Discussion with Undersheriff Timothy Murakami regarding special LASD Investigative Unit and other related matters

Chair Ocen shared details about the subpoena issued to Undersheriff Timothy Murakami to appear to answer questions related to the special LASD Investigative Unit, and she called on Executive Director Brian K. Williams to provide an update on the response. Mr. Williams advised that Undersheriff Murakami's office provided correspondence stating he was unavailable.

Commissioner Kennedy made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Tolentino, to request County Counsel pursue all legal remedies against Undersheriff Murakami for failure to appear per the subpoena and to have OIG issue a subpoena to Mark Lillienfeld to appear at the November COC meeting to discuss the LASD Investigative Unit. Following the motion, Chair Ocen moved to public comment.

There were eight members of the public who commented on item 2d.

Following public comments, Chair Ocen asked for a roll call vote on the motion to request County Counsel meet and confer with Undersheriff Murakami regarding his failure to comply with the subpoena and seek all legal remedies, including filing a petition with the Los Angeles Superior Court for an order to show cause as to why Undersheriff Murakami should not be held in contempt for his failure to appear, and authorize OIG to issue a subpoena for the testimony of Mark Lillienfeld regarding the public integrity. The motion passed with Commissioners Bonner and Thompson being unavailable.

2e. Discussion regarding LASD Deputy Presence in Antelope Valley Schools

Chair Ocen provided an overview of the topic and introduced speakers Inspector General Max Huntsman, CANCEL the Contract's Christian Green and LASD Captain John Lecrivain.

Mr. Huntsman explained OIG's monitoring efforts related to School Resource Officers (SRO) in Antelope Valley (AV) schools, and he advised that BOS tasked OIG with monitoring SRO renewal contracts. Huntsman referenced an incident involving use of force against a female student and expressed concern over LASD's lack of cooperation when body worn camera footage of the incident was requested. Mr. Huntsman shared other instances of racial injustices by LASD resulting in settlements and advised that OIG will continue to monitor as directed by the BOS.

Mr. Green then provided an [overview of Cancel the Contract Antelope Valley](#) and expressed concern over LASD's treatment of black and brown students in AV schools. Green discussed

the history of racism in the AV and provided statistics showing that “Black and Latino students were searched more than any other race and ethnic group combined.” Mr. Green highlighted recommendations, which included calls for Districts to develop clear policies on when students should be arrested and address who should authorize the removal of a student from campus.

Cpt. Lecrivain then explained how LASD was requested to join the AV School District Administration through a private entity contract to guarantee immediate law enforcement services. Chair Ocen requested Cpt. Lecrivain describe the contract between AV School District and LASD, to which he reported that LASD provides police services on campuses as well as normal patrol. Cpt. Lecrivain stated deputies with specialized training are assigned to a campus fulltime and for the entire school year to allow relationship building with staff and students.

Lieutenant Medrano stated many concerns expressed by Mr. Green are relevant and a concern of LASD as well, and he told Mr. Green that he is open to meeting to discuss his concerns. Lt. Medrano stated that the main priority of the LASD is to keep the students safe. Chair Ocen inquired about the number of deputies assigned to the schools. Cpt. Lecrivain confirmed the contract has 15 positions - eight deputies assigned to high schools, one to a continuation high school, three to Lancaster School District, and three to AV College. Cpt. Lecrivain said many statements shared by Mr. Green were false, and he described how and when the deputies operate within the schools. Cpt. Lecrivain stated that due to confidentiality he cannot comment on the incident involving the female minor, and he noted at some point the Inspector General will have access to the body camera footage and advised that decision is beyond his authority.

Following comments from LASD, Chair Ocen moved to Commissioner questions.

Commissioner Ocen inquired about the training for deputies assigned to schools. Lt. Medrano referred the question to Sergeant Charles Duncan. Sgt. Duncan reported that deputies complete a 40 hour training course and described the subjects covered. Chair Ocen questioned if deputies receive cultural competency and gender responsiveness training, if there is a separate use of force policy and how a school disciplinary matter is determined over a criminal matter. Cpt. Lecrivain advised there is no separate use of force policy and that the current policy has been updated to meet State requirements. Cpt. Lecrivain also reported that when an incident occurs, the school contacts the SRO who conducts a preliminary investigation to determine if a crime had been committed.

Commissioner Giggans inquired about the relationship between the deputies and the school community. Cpt. Lecrivain again highlighted that SROs are assigned to the same school fulltime to build relationships with students and staff, and he noted deputies only get involved when a crime is committed.

Mr. Green stated the information reported was retrieved from multiple sources and expressed concern over not having a separate use of force policy for the youth. Cpt. Lecrivain requested

to meet with Mr. Green and stated “I do agree with Mr. Green that there is a systemic problem in behavioral issues but that has little to do with the School Resource Deputy Program.”

Following comments on item 2e, Chair Ocen moved to public comment. There were nine members of the public who commented on item 2e.

Chair Ocen requested the Use of Force Ad Hoc Committee meet with LASD to discuss the issue and submit a report on racial profiling allegations in the Antelope Valley School District. She thanked the presenters and the public and stated the Commission will continue to monitor.

Following public comments, Chair Ocen moved to item 3c.

3. REPORTS & POSSIBLE ACTION

Due to time constraints, the following items were not discussed: 3a. Chair’s Report, 3b. Executive Director’s Report and 3d. Commissioner Comments/Ad Hoc Committee Updates.

3c. Inspector General’s Report

Inspector General Huntsman discussed the [letter to the City of West Hollywood regarding Fraud Allegations](#) and stated that in March of this year, the City of Compton also sent complaints of fraud in involving contract city billing. Mr. Huntsman advised that OIG requested to review records to determine the validity of the allegations, but LASD denied them access. Mr. Huntsman highlighted [a letter informing the Sheriff that OIG was denied onsite review of the evidence](#), and he advised that due obstruction from LASD, the OIG is unable to determine if fraud was committed. Chair Ocen thanked Mr. Huntsman and called for a full report on the allegations from both Compton and West Hollywood.

Following the Inspector General’s Report, Chair Ocen called on moved to item 3d.

3d. Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Update

Chair Ocen called for a LASD update, however there being no LASD representative in attendance, Chair Ocen moved to item 4.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were nine members of the public who provided general public comments. View the [written public comments for the October 21, 2021 meeting](#).

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ocen announced next COC meeting would be held on November 18, 2021, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.