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Norfolk Reentry Council Minutes January 15, 2021

- I. **Introductions** – Co-convener Kathryn Hall (VADOC) and Madonna Flores (DHS) introduced themselves and thanked attendees. Instructions were given to place phones/computers on mute and use the chat box to give their name/office for attendance and to ask any questions.
- II. **Presentations:**
- Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia & the Eastern Shore: Zach Nissen gave a presentation on services provided including information on receiving food through ‘OrderAhead.org’ and the mobile food pantry (2nd & 4th Fridays at 645 Church Street.) More specific information can be found on the website: www.foodbankonline.org. Candace Weather with the Foodbank also participated.
 - Norfolk Community Services Board – Brandi Whitman discussed the process for receiving services for intake, mental health staffing and emergency housing. A tent is set up in the parking lot at their building on 7447 Central Business Park Drive (behind the Walmart on Tidewater Drive.) In response to a question about clients needing to request a W-6 form, that can be requested online, using 4 of the 6 digits of their PIN. If the PIN has been forgotten, contact may be made with a case manager.
 - Social Security Administration: Liz Ohdwani reviewed extensive handouts on the services available through their website. Handouts on accessing information were previously sent, which were very beneficial. Ms. Ohdwani also send monthly updates and information on webinars. One question was asked about obtaining a replacement card for a juvenile online. That is not currently possible because of additional information needed on parents.
 - Virginia Veteran’s Family Outreach: Johanna Winters shared information on accessing services through the online portal. Virtual appointments are also available. Mark Cummings shared information on assistants with benefit. Crystal Sanderfer was introduced as the new justice involved veteran case manager.
 - Virginia Employment Commission: Melissa Cooke covered the new method of applying for services, GovToGo.com. Additional jobless benefits were shared.

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- ❖ Community Involvement Committee
 - ❖ Hampton Roads Reentry Employment Committee
 - ❖ Juvenile Reentry Committee
 - ❖ Planning Committee

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III. Council Event Updates:

- Attendees were advised that the Reentry Summit is tentatively scheduled for Monday, 9/20/2021 at ODU Constant Center. We will continue to explore a different format if necessary, considering public health recommendations.
- The Planning Committee released an Art Solicitation with a theme of “Change” to VADOC and Norfolk City Jail. There were approximately 30 submissions that were reproduced and distributed to inmates as coloring pages to help encourage positive mental health/wellness during this time. We were also exploring having these pages bonded to put together coloring books.
- The annual Town Hall was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic. The Planning Committee had previously explored hosting this event at a local DOC facility and planned on covering “myth busters” and/or important topics to highlight factual information about resources and assist returning citizens with better understanding what to expect upon release. We will reconvene planning this event for 2021, with a date in the Spring if feasible. We may have to explore a virtual platform for this event and if so, will attempt to record presentations to make the information available to Council partners.

IV. Committee Updates:

- **Employment** – Alan Dorrough provided an update on their most recent meeting to discuss moving forward with meetings in 2021. They will explore how to engage employers virtually but also how to reduce digital barriers that limit client’s ability to secure employment. Anyone interested in attending meetings can contact Jason or Alan for information.
- **Community Involvement and Juvenile** – Both of these committees will remain on hiatus until we can resume meeting and proceed with initiatives that were currently underway prior to the pandemic.
- **Planning** – The Planning Committee meets virtually monthly to look at events and needs. Usually new members are recruited in January, however with the pandemic limitation, new members will not be solicited at this time.

V. **2021 Reentry Council Meetings** – we will continue to host meetings virtually, log-in credentials will be emailed prior to the next meeting.

VI. **Next Meeting:** March 19, 2021 –

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 - ❖ Hampton Roads Reentry Employment Committee
 - ❖ Juvenile Reentry Committee
 - ❖ Planning Committee