

**Tennessee Community Resource Board
Riverbend Maximum Security Institute
January 31, 2020**

TCRB Representatives:

Rev. Michael Rickenbaker, Vice 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, Chairman / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Joan Evrist, Secretary / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Tom Hallquist, Member / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Ronda Waters, Member / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Tommy Mathis, Member / Middle TN Representative	(A)
Sean Driscoll, Member / East TN Representative	(A)
Raeanne Hance, Member / East TN Representative	(A)
Lee Ragsdale, Member / East TN Representative	(A)
Brian Bishop, Member / East TN Representative	(A)

TDOC Representatives:

Robert Hill, Director of Volunteer & Religious Services
Jody Kahn, Re-Entry

Guests:

Vicki Helgesen, Leaving the Cocoon
Angela Martinez, Guest with J.R. Davis, Men of Valor
Joyce Johnson, Guest with Thurston Smith
Lindsay Holloway, Return Citizens Committee
Jordan Davis, Return Citizens Committee
Robert Sherrill, Return Citizens Committee
Representative Michael Curcio
Rudy Kalis, Men of Valor

Call To Order (9:08 a.m.) – J.R. Davis

Prayer – Paul Hensley

Welcome & Introductions – J.R. Davis

TCRB Membership
TDOC
Guests

Review of Purpose of the TCRB – J.R. Davis

- According to the TDOC website: <https://www.tn.gov/correction/tennessee-community-resource-board.html>

- The Tennessee Community Resource Board (TCRB) is a non-profit organization that was established pursuant to the legislative authority granted in Tennessee Code Annotated §41-10-105. The purpose and goals of the organization are to coordinate with and assist the Tennessee Department of Correction and the Board of Parole in developing and utilizing volunteer resources and services in assisting formerly incarcerated individuals, parolees, probationers, and soon to be returning citizens in reintegrating into society and our communities as productive, law-abiding citizens.
- TCRB is composed of seventeen (17) volunteer board members. The speakers of the House of Representatives and the Senate each appoint a member to serve on the board. The remaining 15 members are appointed from each grand division of the state.
- The TCRB is scheduled to meet each quarter.
- J.R. Davis: I'm hoping today we can establish and agree upon some initiatives – that we can develop and pass along to the legislature, then Commissioner, then implement in LCRBs. Our desire is to throw a broader net, the more we put in the more we can accomplish for the sake of productive return citizens. I often get asked what are the reasons people end up back in prison. I say that it's if they let go of their faith (this is primary), return to their addiction or to a toxic relationship. If we can walk away with five or ten initiatives today, that would be ideal. If we can see the possibilities, change is possible. Nationwide, prison reform is a big deal. Change is taking place. Exercise your faith – as we are feeding people, be sure that we are being fed. Stick with the mission at hand. Our governor is our biggest advocate – one of his top priorities is mentoring.

Open Items Review – Michael Rickenbaker

- Michael Rickenbaker: Thank you to J.R. for taking a great lead in starting out this new year and new decade. This board has an incredible history. According to TN code, we are an advisory board. TN Corrections Advisory Board to TN Community Resource Board. We are not merely here to do bidding for TDOC; we are here to hear the concerns and we are here to engage and advise and make recommendations to help and assist TDOC to see productive citizens in society. I'd like to read the recommendations that were made April 5, 2017 from TCRB by TDOC – they were developed by this board and have not been altered from that time. In the memo there are six recommendations.
 - *Note: See the enclosed document for specific recommendations from April 5, 2017*
 - TCRB/LCRBs help in resourcing TDOC
 - Termination of volunteers
 - Bring awareness and ask TDOC to alleviate pressure concerns regarding mobilizing volunteers
 - Adequate training of churches and matching volunteers with Take One in a timely manner
 - Volunteers being badge in timely manner
 - Board members be given some form of official identification or badge (this has been accomplished)
- Michael Rickenbaker: There are three others that have come up over
 1. TDOC take advantage of TCRB and offer of experience and expertise in the areas of development of training materials and volunteers
 2. Long wait time for assignment to a Take One mentors
 3. Concerns about drug activity within facilities

4. TCRB offered to host website to promote the positive accomplishments of the TDOC, and this was placed on hold by the TDOC
- J.R. Davis: Thank you, Vice Chair Rickenbaker. We have all been fighting for these things and hopeful about working with a new team towards these concerns.
 - Thurston Smith: The Board needs to operate with more administrative prowess and professionalism to utilize the access we're given to make change. Sometimes you have to take risks.
 - Paul Hensley: How we carry ourselves is how people perceive us. If we don't respect ourselves we won't be respected. If we aren't confident in ourselves and know who we are, we will not receive confidence from others.
 - Tom Hallquist: We have to be risk takers, but we also have to earn it.
 - Mario Allen: We have to think about the people we serve mirror what we do. The same challenges we go through on this board, those we serve go through the same thing. I also think we need to meet more than four times a year in order to accomplish what we set out to accomplish.
 - J.R. Davis: I think what we're addressing is a start of what we can build on (the recommendations that Michael Rickenbaker mentioned). Here's what I see has changed since last year – we have some Legislators who you'll meet later today who I believe are more bought into what we're trying to accomplish. I believe we'll be able to direct these issues to them with their blessing – I've talked with them about most of these. Also, one of the things I'd like for us to do is to look at establishing some type of budget and go ahead and get a non-profit status back. There are a number of ways we might be able to do that, in addition to fundraising within the community. I'd like to address that in the next meeting.
 - Thurston Smith: I would first reach out to the commissioners and regional counselor to let them know we would like the non-profit status and possible funding.
 - J.R. Davis: Thurston, if you would write something up to send to me that we could forward on regarding non-profit and funding that would help.
 - J.R. Davis: From our informational session in July, our mentors are just now going into the prison this week. I know many of you have the same concerns. Those are items we will put as initiatives. We have a group coming in called our Return Citizens Committee. They have some initiatives that they would like to present and then we can ask questions.

Return Citizen Committee

- *Note: See enclosed action items document from Return Citizen Committee*
- Feedback:
 - Tom Hallquist: We also need to focus on changing the mindset of the legislative body.
 - J.R. Davis: That's what we're going to do.
 - Michael Rickenbaker: I want to commend this committee and what they're advocating. We believe in what Christ, love and support, and potential of a life can do for someone. I make a recommendation required of the TDOC to attend these TCRB meetings. This TCRB is to be made up of both TCRB volunteers, TDOC and Legislators.
 - Mario Allen: I've been out of prison 22 years. In Shelby Co., ex-offenders are able to get badged and be in the prison.
 - Michael Rickenbaker: I'd like to make a recommendation that we would go through the Legislative liaison over the sheriffs departments in TN to make sure that we are moving under recognized ministries that there would be a push for these people to get to go

back in at the county level. This is going to help to be a motivator to help move this ship of the state around.

- J.R. Davis: When we have our idea sessions lets talk about how to recommend that we are able to vet our return citizens – come up with criteria that would prove that we've had a vetting process and this board could make recommendations.

Presentation from Representative Curcio

- Rep. Michael Curcio: I representative Dickson, Hickman and Murray Counties – Middle TN is home to me. It's a joy to work on issues that are impacting so many Tennesseans. Our efforts this year are focused on recidivism and the technical violations that drive the recidivism rate. Look for things on alternative sentencing, particular rural TN. Also look for initiatives the would streamline that probation and parole process. Long term goals would include things like revamping the adult sentencing code, and looking at how our parole system is set up and what needs to change there.
- Feedback:
 - Tom Hallquist: I applaud what you're doing and these initiatives. Could you add one other thing? Consistency of policies throughout the system within the TDOC?
 - Jody Kahn: Regarding the parole board changes, is there going to be any talk of an oversight board that's over the parole board? It's happened several times that there are those who are up for parole and are denied, even though there aren't any violations on the inmates part.
 - Michael Curcio: I don't know that adding another layer to the board is going to help, versus that all options are on the table. For example, I would like to see a lot more documentation in that process.
 - J.R. Davis: And that's what part of the responsibility of this board is as well.
 - Lindsay Holloway: Are you speaking about people who can get credit on their parole for the parole time they've already served (if they get caught on a violation)?
 - Michael Curcio: That is a hotly debated topic. There are a lot of people who recognize that credit for street time makes a lot of sense. I want to get back to where we can properly resource judges and then trust them to make an informed decision.
 - Thurston Smith: Thank you for coming (Rep. Curcio). Do you foresee either Gov. Lee or other states enacting similar policies and legislature that work in tandem with First Step Back or other Federal programs that have been adopted?
 - Michael Curcio: There is an effort (multi-year) to look at truth in sentencing and mandatory minimums. But we really want to start from the beginning and revamp the entire system. But it will have to be built one block at a time. I want to be careful not to speculate on what the solution is that would then cause us to back into that preconceived notion. Versus starting from a blank canvas and gathering the data to begin to build. Our hope is that the date will lead us to a solution.
 - Vicki Helgesen: I'd ask you to look at the difference between men and women sentencing. There's a big difference – the women are often times sentenced longer.
- Michael Rickenbaker: I'd recommend we pursue our representatives to be here more than once a hear to give us information and input.

Lunch presentation

- Rudy Kalis – Men of Valor Volunteer of the Year

Break-out Groups and Presentations

- TOP CHALLENGES
 1. Communication between the board and TDOC/volunteers
 2. Volunteer Access
 3. Volunteer Certification
 4. Return Citizen Panel
 5. Honor those who have served - Mario would like to help with honoring different
 6. Badging
 7. Speakers Bureau
- JR
 - We want to talk about the issues and then look at what we can do to remedy the situation.
 - Let's work on some positive initiatives.
 - Musical programs + speakers who aren't necessarily Faith Based
 - So that it gets the broader population involved
 - National Speaker - George Medley
 - Was a drug king pen in CO
 - Runs a \$20million business in CO
 - Bring in educational speakers
 - Come in 4x a year – Kirsh
 - The Speakers Initiative
 - Qualified/Certified Volunteered Trained - ask

Meeting Adjourned (3:00 p.m.) – J.R. Davis

Next Meeting: Friday, April 17, 9:00 a.m. – Location is TBD