

TO: Professors Andrea Armstrong, Nishi Kumar, and Rob Harrison

FROM: Caroline Raymond

RE: “Better Know a Jail” Memo

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Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center

Introduction

The Florida Parishes Juvenile Detention Center (FPJDC) is a facility located at 28528 Highway 190 Covington, Louisiana 70433.¹ The name of this facility might strike readers as odd, but native Louisianians might recall that “The Florida Parishes” refer to those parishes east of the Mississippi River—the Louisiana Purchase only included those territories west of the Mississippi—as they were still part of western Florida through the early 19th century.²

In 1986, the Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice District was established through law: “The Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice District is hereby established as a political subdivision of the state, with a territorial jurisdiction throughout the Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Judicial Districts, including the parishes of Livingston, St. Helena, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Washington.” La. Rev. Stat. § 15:1094 (2022). The Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice Commission was created, which then shortly thereafter established the FPJDC in 1992.³ Because the FPJDC’s jurisdiction extends to many parishes, the FPJDC accepts juveniles from 32 different arresting agencies.⁴

Jail Oversight and Leadership

As mentioned above, the FPJDC is overseen by the Florida Parishes Juvenile Justice Commission. The Commission consists of an appointed Board, including President George Coxen, Jr., Secretary Michael Forbes, Treasurer Alton Lewis, and 5 other commissioners.⁵ Each appointee to the Commission must be approved by the Louisiana State Senate.⁶ The Board of Commissioners are not paid for their services.⁷ The Board of Commissioners works closely with the FPJDC’s Executive Director, Joseph “Joey” Dominick, to manage the facility.

Joey Dominick has been involved with the FPJDC for many years, working his way up to executive director in March of 2016.⁸ When Tom Jarlock, the FPJDC’s former executive director, resigned in late 2015, seventeen candidates applied to fill the vacancy.⁹ Following his appointment, Joey became the first employee to have been promoted to every rank within the FPJDC.¹⁰ He started out working with the FPJDC as an entry level officer back in 1996.¹¹ The

¹ <https://fpjdc.org/contact-us/>

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https://www.louisianafolklife.org/lt/virtual_books/fla_parishes/book_florida_overview.html#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20region%20comprises%20eight,the%20state%20as%20a%20whole

³ <https://fpjdc.org/the-center/>

⁴ <https://fpjdc.org/visitation-information/arresting-agencies/>

⁵ [https://app.la.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/10F59F304A2230B7862589650073AA3E/\\$FILE/00000DBE2.pdf](https://app.la.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/10F59F304A2230B7862589650073AA3E/$FILE/00000DBE2.pdf)

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ <https://fpjdc.org/administration-departments/joseph-dominick/>

⁹ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/communities/joseph-dominick-chosen-to-head-the-florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center/article_3dcf1ffb-4ab4-5dc1-9e17-e588d69303b1.html

¹⁰ <https://fpjdc.org/administration-departments/joseph-dominick/>

¹¹ *Id.*

Commission hoped that Joey’s appointment would serve to boost staff morale,¹² as there had been over a dozen lawsuits filed against the FPJDC and/or the Commission by 2015.¹³ The majority of these lawsuits were Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) claims, stemming from alleged sex-based employment discrimination.¹⁴ The most recent lawsuit against the Commission involved alleged pregnancy discrimination, but was ultimately dismissed in March of 2019.¹⁵

The FPJDC is a member of the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA). Further, the FPJDC is a member of Performance-based Standards, which is a national program developed by the CJCA. Additionally, the FPJDC maintains memberships with the following local chambers: West St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce, East St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce, Hammond Chamber of Commerce, Bogalusa Chamber of Commerce, and Livingston Parish Chamber of Commerce.¹⁶ The current sheriffs in the FPJDC’s jurisdiction are as follows: Jason Ard (Livingston), Nathaniel Williams (St. Helena), Randy Smith (St. Tammany), Daniel Edwards (Tangipahoa), and Randy Seal (Washington).¹⁷

Jail Characteristics

The FPJDC first opened on January 3, 1994.¹⁸ Just two weeks after its opening, the FPJDC accepted its first juvenile on January 18, 1994.¹⁹ After initially opening with a 31-bed capacity, the FPJDC underwent an expansion five years later to include 74 additional beds, 4 classrooms, and a gym area.²⁰ It wasn’t until after Hurricane Katrina that the FPJDC was inundated with an influx in population; thus, the facility underwent its most recent expansion to a 133-bed maximum capacity.²¹ The FPJDC spans 23,000 square feet, which includes an outside recreational area.²²

As of November 20, 2023, there are 90 juveniles in custody at the FPJDC,²³ which means the facility is housing 67.67% of its maximum bed capacity. Of those 90, there are 74 males and 16 females. The majority of the population at the FPJDC is pre-trial, but the facility also has youths who are adjudicated delinquent—meaning a juvenile court judge has found that the youth violated criminal law.²⁴ There is no ICE population at the FPJDC, however, the facility does accept approximately one to three undocumented noncitizens per year, when they have been arrested for primary offenses.²⁵ Absent population data, we do know that the facility houses children ages 10 to 17 accused of committing misdemeanor or felony offenses. When asked what

¹² https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/communities/joseph-dominick-chosen-to-head-the-florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center/article_3dcf1ffb-4ab4-5dc1-9e17-e588d69303b1.html

¹³ Docketbird; https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/communities/discrimination-retaliation-claims-create-big-problems-for-florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center/article_aa4732fb-c9a2-5b2d-91ee-6e032491fceb.html

¹⁴ Docketbird

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ <https://fpjdc.org/accreditations-affiliations/>

¹⁷ <https://www.lsa.org/sheriffs-directory>

¹⁸ <https://fpjdc.org/the-center/>

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ [https://app.lla.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/10F59F304A2230B7862589650073AA3E/\\$FILE/00000DBE2.pdf](https://app.lla.state.la.us/PublicReports.nsf/0/10F59F304A2230B7862589650073AA3E/$FILE/00000DBE2.pdf)

²² <https://rycars.com/rycars-completed-project-florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center-re-roof/>

²³ Email with Joey Dominick on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:51am.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Id.*

types of crimes the majority of the FPJDC population are charged with, Joey Dominick replied “[v]iolent, this is a byproduct of the implementation of detention screening instruments (DSI) statewide.”²⁶

The FPJDC has limited visitation times available to parents, stepparents, legal guardians, and grandparents.²⁷ The FPJDC’s website provides that “residents are granted 30 minutes to 1 hour of visitation based upon their living unit residency.”²⁸ The only days visitation is allowed are Saturdays and Sundays. There is one full hour slot occurring both days between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm (Delta & Echo Living Units, North & South Living Units) with an additional full hour slot occurring on Saturday between 2:30 pm and 3:30 pm (Fox & Golf Living Units).²⁹ The only half hour slot occurs after the full hour visitation ends on Sunday from 7:30 pm to 8:00 pm (Orientation Living Unit).³⁰ Among other dress code restrictions, any visitor wearing a tank top or frayed jeans may be denied visitation by the facility.³¹

Interestingly, the FPJDC provides that all outgoing mail from its youth residents is uncensored.³² During their free time, the FPJDC youths may write letters but the number of letters allowed hinges on what position within the level system they are assigned.³³ The FPJDC assigns behavior levels to each of its residents—a Level One position is automatically assigned upon admission—with level changes occurring every two weeks.³⁴ The higher the level, the more privileges someone at the FPJDC may receive, including longer visitation time, ability to send out more letters, additional phone calls, a later curfew at night, and allowance of additional items in their room.³⁵ Joey Dominick shared that as FPJDC juveniles “demonstrate good behavior and adherence to expectations, they [may] move up in level.”³⁶ The levels at FPJDC are Level One, Level Two, and Level Three.

Educational services are also provided to the juveniles housed at the FPJDC. As the FPJDC sits on the line between St. Tammany Parish and Tangipahoa Parish, it is within the Tangipahoa Parish School System. Teachers within the TPSS are assigned to the FPJDC, and the incarcerated students rotate between classes—much like any regular public school.³⁷ Together with the Commission, Joey Dominick developed a post-adjudicated program for juveniles that had been adjudicated delinquent.³⁸ As of November 2021, thirty-three students earned their high school diploma while participating in the program.³⁹ Recognizing the increasing success of its students with the high school program, the FPJDC partnered with Northshore Technical Community College to create opportunities for incarcerated students to earn certifications and skills training at a collegiate level.⁴⁰

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ <https://fpjdc.org/visitation-information/>

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² <https://fpjdc.org/youth-mail/>

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Email with Joey Dominick on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:51am.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ <https://fpjdc.org/education/>

³⁸ <https://www.northshorecollege.edu/news/1726980/partnerships-that-build-stronger-futures>

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

Additionally, the FPJDC's budget for the fiscal year ending on September 30, 2023 was approximately \$10,505,137.⁴¹ The following year's budget increased nearly one million dollars, with the budget approaching \$11.5 million for the fiscal year ending on September 30, 2024.⁴² Joey Dominick revealed the chief reason for the budget increase was "[c]apital projects and a recent increase in [FPJDC staff] pay grades."⁴³ Absent significant capital improvements, the FPJDC's annual budget totals around \$10 million; however, rising inflation will likely continue to increase this number. The cost of care per day per youth at FPJDC totals between \$320 and \$360.⁴⁴

Public Records Request and Inmate Mortality

The FPJDC's website can be accessed at <https://fpjdc.org/> but it does not contain a live database. This makes sense as there are statutes protecting the identity of juveniles, so the FPJDC is not authorized to disclose whether someone is currently or has previously been incarcerated there.⁴⁵ Further, the facility's website does not provide access to a Public Records Request form. Anyone who seeks a Public Records Request through the FPJDC should call the facility at (985) 893-6292 and ask to speak with a point of contact regarding the request. In my experience, sending an email to the Executive Director (2023 - Joseph Dominick jdominick@fpjdc.org) and the Director of Human Resources (2023 - Amy Fulcher afulcher@fpjdc.org), coupled with a follow up call proved to be a successful method of obtaining the records I sought. The FPJDC responded in a timely manner and provided the appropriate records without any issues.

I received a Zero Deaths Letter (ZDL), which means that the facility did not encounter any deaths in custody for the requested years. The FPJDC's ZDL indicated that the facility did not have any deaths in custody during the years I requested, which were between 2022 and 2023. In fact, since its inception in 1994, the FPJDC has fortunately never encountered any deaths in custody.⁴⁶ Because the FPJDC is a juvenile facility, it does not submit a Form CJ-9/9A or Form CJ-10/10A.

Jail News Coverage and Transparency

As of November 20, 2023, the FPJDC is undergoing "implementation of a new electronic case management system and working on data field queries."⁴⁷ Therefore, certain population data points—such as race, age, and sex—of the juveniles housed at the FPJDC are not available to the general public. It is unclear whether the new system will allow the FPJDC to include relevant population data on its website in the future.

Each month, the FPJDC conducts a public meeting, in which members of the public are invited to the facility to hear reports from the Board of Commissioners, Executive Director, and other various directors including, but not limited to, the Director of Operations, and the Director of Health Services. At these public meetings, there are monthly financial and budget reports that detail court costs, tax revenue, and findings from the FPJDC's CPA. The President of the Commission chairs the public meeting, also acting as moderator for public commentary addressing concerns after the meeting concludes. Each public comment is limited to 3 minutes

⁴¹ <https://fpjdc.org/budgets/>

⁴² Email with Joey Dominick on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:51am.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ <https://fpjdc.org/visitation-information/arresting-agencies/>

⁴⁶ PRR - Zero Deaths Letter- Caroline Raymond (2023).

⁴⁷ Email with Joey Dominick on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:51am.

per person.⁴⁸ Information about the FPJDC monthly public meeting can be found at <https://fpjdc.org/notice-public-meeting/>.

In August of 2023, the FPJDC was awarded the PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award.⁴⁹ This award is annually awarded to a detention center that “best exemplifies PbS’ commitment to treating all young people as one of [their] own and used the PbS improvement model to achieve positive outcomes for young people, staff, and families.”⁵⁰ PbS detailed that the FPJDC took home this award in 2023 due to its commitment to decreasing gang activity, assaults, and fights within the facility by implementing PbS’ Facility Improvement Plan.⁵¹ A video PbS posted about the FPJDC can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMRmjug0xQ8>. Additionally, the FPJDC has previously been named the recipient of the PbS Barbara Allen-Hagen Award in 2016 and 2020. On top of that, the FPJDC has been a finalist for this award every year since 2015.⁵²

⁴⁸ <https://fpjdc.org/notice-public-meeting/>

⁴⁹ <https://pbstandards.org/blog/posts/2023/august/florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center-wins-2023-pbs-barbara-allen-hagen-award/>

⁵⁰ <https://pbstandards.org/awards/barbara-allen-hagen-award/>

⁵¹ <https://pbstandards.org/blog/posts/2023/august/florida-parishes-juvenile-detention-center-wins-2023-pbs-barbara-allen-hagen-award/>

⁵² Email with Joey Dominick on Monday, November 20, 2023 at 11:51am.