

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH

House Human Services Committee

February 5, 2021

Presented by:

Sean Brown, DCF Commissioner

Jennifer Myka, DCF Legal Counsel

Jennifer Herbert, DCF Clinical Director

BACKGROUND

- The last youth left Woodside on August 27, 2020 with no further admissions to the facility.
- FY 21 Restatement Budget (Act 154) authorized AHS to permanently cease operations at the Woodside facility on or before October 18, 2020.
- The facility permanently closed on October 17, 2020.
- DCF submitted its Legislative Report on DCF's Long-Term Plan for Justice-Involved Youth pursuant to Act 154 of 2020, Sec. E. 316 on October 29, 2020.

https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Leg-Report_Long-term-Plan-Combined_V3.pdf

BACKGROUND

On November 12, 2020, the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight and Child Protection Oversight Committees unanimously voted to approve DCF's proposal to contract with the Becket organization to operate a secure treatment facility for justice-involved youth with the following conditions:

- Work with the local government of Newbury and hold community meetings regarding the use of the facility;
- All juveniles in state's custody shall reside and receive treatment in the least restrictive setting;
- Only justice-involved youth shall be placed at the facility which will use a "no eject/no reject" policy;
- A person with PhD level clinical experience will have oversight of facility and program; and
- In negotiating the lease, DCF will ensure the state's financial investment in the facility be recaptured if the plan for the facility falls through.

BACKGROUND

- The Legislative Joint Fiscal Committee met on November 20, 2020 and voted to approve DCF's long-term plan for justice-involved youth with the five recommendations of the Joint Justice and Child Protection Oversight Committees.
- DCF submitted its report on the status of FY21 appropriations for Woodside pursuant to Act 154 of 2020, Sec. 316(e).

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/Woodside-Leg-Report-on-FY-21-Appropriation-due-12.15.20-FINAL.pdf>

STATUS OF PROPOSED COVERED BRIDGE TREATMENT CENTER (CBTC)

- DCF, BGS, Becket, Studio Nexus Architects and consultants from the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators (CJJA) have tentatively finalized a design plan for the Newbury facility subject to engineering and town approval.
- Becket has engaged Newbury's Select Board and a virtual community presentation is scheduled for February 11, 2021 on the design plan and to respond to Select Board and community members questions and concerns.
- BGS and DCF have begun negotiations on the lease and renovations to the building/facility.
- DCF's Clinical Director Jennifer Herbert, CJJA consultant Penny Sampson, and Executive Director of the Becket's Vermont Permanency Initiative Laurae Baker, PhD are collaborating on the facility's clinical treatment program (see Program Description).

THE COVERED BRIDGE TREATMENT CENTER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The program was designed by Dr. Laurae Baker and Jeff Caron, M.Ed., Vice President and President of the Vermont Permanency Initiative.
 - Collaborative approach to ongoing development with input and feedback from CJJA, DCF Clinical Director, and DRVT
- A comprehensive framework for assessment and treatment intervention that is evidence-based, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and allows adaptation to the individual needs of youth.
- A foundation facilitative of meaningful connection, protective factors, youth and family engagement, and transition planning.
- A parallel process: organizational development that is supportive of staff wellness and a growth-oriented culture.
- Ongoing program evaluation, and oversight and quality assurance that is trauma informed on both an individual and organizational level.

NEXT STEPS

Tentative schedule going forward:

- January: Finalize floor plan, completing schematic design phase
- February: Complete schematic site plan by civil engineer
- Feb/March: Generate construction drawings and specifications
- Late Feb/early Mar: Submit application for local zoning permits
- April: Submit plans for State building permits
- Late April: Bid project, establish guaranteed maximum price and award construction contract
- May: Construction begins

(This assumes no delay from wetland issues, permitting or agency reviews)