

**COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes – August 4, 2026
Via Zoom**

Commissioners Present: Marcie Bellicitti, Chair
Howard Pomerantz, Vice Chair
Heidi Schmittel, Secretary
Nora Manchester
Andrew Cain
Deryk Clark
Kevin Rudich
Michelle Wu (virtual)
Susan Bates
Lisa Macias
Cruzsilla Gutierrez (virtual)

Commissioners Absent: Neha Parthasarathi
Diana Traub

Also Present: Jessica Gamez, Superior Court
Honorable Julie Emede, Superior Court
Honorable Andrea Flint, Superior Court
Mayra Vargas, BHSD
Rachel Talamantez, BHSD
Jennifer Pham, BHSD
Etelvina Alvarez, Probation Department
Ashanti Hayes, Probation Department
Trina Gauthier, Probation Department
Ignacio Carriles, Probation Department
Melissa Garcia, Probation Department
Frank Nesci, Probation Department
Daniel Cortez, Probation Department
Mark Camilleri, SCCOE
Dr. Patrick Hefflin, SCCOE
Steve Sanchez, SCCOE
Ana Reyes, SCCOE
Alex Adams, DAO
Cesilia Fernandez, PDO
Lana Kreidle, IDO
Anita Dhanvanthari, LACY
Melissa Suarez, DFCS
Shelley Aggarwal, VMC
Michelle Wu, JJC
Cruzsilla Gutierrez, JJC
Matt Cammann, Seneca
Stephen Betts
Victoria BurtonBurke
Ciara Soraghan
Tiffany Hayes

Call to Order & Introductions: Chair Bellicitti called the meeting to order at 12:15pm.

Agenda Approval: The agenda was approved by all Commissioners present.

Swearing In: None.

Public Comments/Oral Petitions: None.

Approval of Minutes: June 2, 2026 Minutes approved by all Commissioners present.

REPORTS

PRESENTATION: Blue Ridge High School – A Refurbished CTE (Mark Camilleri & Steve Sanchez)

- ▶ Revitalized career tech education
- ▶ Transformed existing facilities and programs into innovative career pathways
 - Preparing for success in education and life
- ▶ Throughout the early years of the Ranch CTE was mostly clearing debris and fire abatement activity. In 1988 focus shifted to construction and welding
- ▶ Blue Ridge High School has a robust music and arts program
 - Focused on post-production career opportunities
 - Art is community focused
- ▶ Culinary arts first CTE offering in 38 years
 - During a remodel at the Ranch, a new kitchen was built
 - In 2018 a culinary arts instructor was hired and one year later the kitchen was converted into a teaching space
 - Students did tours of local culinary programs while waiting for formal cooking space
- ▶ Construction: Then & Now
 - Always been an integral part of the rehabilitation goals from the earliest days
 - Over the years the program devolved for many reasons
 - The Ranch is a great location for a construction program
 - Limited spaces and tools
 - Team teaching was effective way to reach kids
- ▶ Construction: Keeping pace with industry
 - Took an adult 6-week, 8 hour a day pre-apprenticeship and elongated it to a 12-week, 4 hour a day class that fit into K12 space
 - Adjusted to Cohort model; collaborated to select students based on their wants and compatibility
 - Collaboration between LiUNA and Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation now working and sustainable
 - Purchased state-of-the-art welding equipment.
 - Welding to obtain certification
 - Purchased a real forklift to train the kids on. Remote shut-off switch utilized
 - 2-week cohort
 - Virtual simulator used
- ▶ Goal is to have skillset transferable to real world application

Chair's Report: Chair Bellicitti reported on the following:

- Planning meeting – new fiscal year; new committees

Presiding Judge: Judge Emede had nothing new to report.

Dependency Court: Judge Flint had nothing new to report.

Legal Advocates for Children & Youth (LACY): Anita Dhanvanthari had nothing new to report.

Behavioral Health: Rachel Talamantez reported on the following:

- Department has gone through reorganization; will be Rachel's last meeting.
 - Jennifer Pham, divisional director, will be supporting Juvenile Justice Clinic work
 - Mayra Vargas will continue as manager overseeing Juvenile Hall and James Ranch
 - Veronica Robles has transitioned to different role in youth substance work

Medical Services: Shelley Aggarwal reported on the following:

- Peer Health Program is a collaborative project. Will be highlighted by the Board of Supervisors
 - Trusted messenger model

Law Enforcement Agencies: No one present to report.

District Attorney's Office: Alex Adams had nothing new to report.

Public Defender's Office: Cesilia Fernandez had nothing new to report.

Alternate Defender's Office: No one present to report.

Independent Defenders Office: Lana Kreidle reported on the following:

- 2 new lawyers with IDO juvenile panel.

Dependency Advocacy Center: No one present to report.

Alternative Schools Department: Mark Camilleri reported on the following:

- Welcomed new director, Patrick Heflin, Ed.D
- New principal for Osbourne and Sunol – Garret
- August 6 final day of summer session at court schools
 - August 7 – 11 staff development
 - Welcome back students August 12
- Every opportunity is to provide confidence and develop skills to prepare students for success in classroom and work

Department of Family and Children's Service (DFCS): Melissa Suarez reported on the following:

- Hired Assistant Director to begin in September
- Finished reclassing employees from social workers to residential counselors
 - Ability to hire 12 more employees
- This fiscal year started contract with HOPE center.
- Another provider finishing licensing and hopefully coming on board soon to assist with transitional housing for older youth 16–17-year-olds

Probation Department: Ashanti Hayes reported on the following:

- Intern chief Alex Villa
- Jill Ugalde to Professional Standards
- Ashanti is the deputy chief over institutions

Trina Gauthier reported on the following for Juvenile Hall:

- Hosted Annual Youth Olympics last month
 - 5 units competed in events
 - SYTF unit won for 2nd consecutive year
- Participated in creative bookmark project in collaboration with library staff
 - Final design will be distributed to all youth
- Current population: 65 (2 female, 23 SYTF)

Frank Nesci reported on the following for the Ranch:

- Opened a fitness studio similar to CrossFit room
- Youth advisory council working with Peer Health and custody health services for peer health training sessions

Etelvina Alvarez reported on the following for Services:

- Education Services Unit participating in National Night Out in Gilroy
- Hosted Bring Your Kid to work day event.
 - Total of 80 kids attended

Announcements/Correspondence:

- None.

Adjourn to Executive Session: Chair Bellicitti adjourned to Executive Session at 1:12p.m. The next meeting will take place on September 1, 2026 via Zoom. Participants are also welcome to attend in person in the Independence Conference Room on the ground floor of 353 West Julian Street, San Jose.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Gamez