

Justice Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

October 23, 2020

9:00 am

VIA WEBEX EVENT

I. Meeting Called to Order / Roll Call of Members

Rev. Phillip Duvall - present

Dr. Timothy D. McBride - present

Mr. Jeff Smith – present

Dr. Alexander Garza - absent

Ms. Twyla Lee – absent

Ms. Spring Schmidt - present

Ms. Mary Zabawa Taylor – present

Others present:

Doug Burris – Acting Director of Justice Services

Darby Howard –Deputy Director of Justice Services

Tricia Rodgers – Corrections Compliance Supervisor

Penny Martin – Office Manager

Ray Barnes – Security Electronics Administrator

Valerie Nelson – Corrections Medicine, Chief Operating Officer

Beth Orwick and Steve Capizzi– County Counselor’s Office

Anthony Weaver – Change Management Coordinator

Aaron Levin – DJS Research Statistician

Dr. Emily Doucette – Director of Public Health and Primary Care Integration

Andrea Beahm – Senior Data Analyst (Performance Management & Budget)

Tena Johnson – Superintendent of Community Corrections & Re-Entry for Justice Services

Major Paul Jett – Special Operations for Justice Services

Major Charles McKnight – Support Services for Justice Services

II. Approval of September 11 and 25, 2020 meeting minutes

Rev. Duvall motioned to approve the minutes from the September 11 and 25, 2020 meetings. Ms. Schmidt seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Introductions of all present.

Acting Director Burris was introduced by Rev. Duvall. Mr. Burris introduced himself and shared his professional background and goals with the board.

III. Corrections Medicine Dashboard, COVID Update, Flu Vaccine Update, Operational Metrics, Update on Strategic Planning Sub-committee, Discussion on draft Standard Communications.

Valerie Nelson presented a COVID update and the Corrections Medicine Dashboard.

Valerie Nelson stated that we have conducted nearly 4,500 COVID tests since March, 2020 with a total of 89 unique individuals that have tested positive for COVID.

Dr. Emily Doucette informed all about the testing protocol within the jail. She also shared the protocol for those who test positive for COVID within the jail.

Dr. Emily Doucette shared with the board the staffing issues the Justice Center is having. She shared some of the different ideas they are implementing to solve their short staffing issues.

IV. DJS Dashboard

Aaron Levin presented the DJS Dashboard.

V. Jail Census Status – 909 total inmates, 857 male, 52 female

Federal Inmate Count – 115

Mr. Burris stated that we are seeing some petty increases. He said we had someone here for a broken windshield and he will be reaching out to the Chiefs of Police in departments that have a habit of doing this.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Burris how many people are being surveilled electronically. Mr. Burris responded that on the EHawk system we have approximately 1,200 and he does not have the data on the ankle bracelets but, he will provide that information at the next meeting.

VI. Use of Force Policy

Mr. Burris gave a quick summary on the Use of Force Policy. He stated our current policy is a very traditional correctional model. He stated there is not a lot of emphasis on soft skills or verbal skills. Typically under the current model commands are issued under the threat of punishment and he believes this is not the most effective

method to get compliance. He shared that there is a program that was developed that is being seen as best practice out of Nashville where the emphasis is on soft skills, verbal skills, interacting with people and trying to establish dialogue as opposed to just issuing threats. He stated that we sent two of our staff, Major McKnight and Major Jett, to a training seminar on this program.

Major McKnight stated we felt there was a need to better enhance the way we respond to problematic behavior in the inmate population. The program focuses more on confrontation avoidance skills. He stated they try to get to the root of the problem, find better ways to deescalate the problem and less constrictive ways of using Use of Force.

Major Jett shared that they try to draw in Healthcare professionals and Case Workers to add to their options to deescalate the situation.

Mr. Burris stated that we sent out the policy to the Advisory Board that is used at the Nashville jail. He would like the Advisory Board's advice on whether this is something we ought to implement. He believes it would be a more humane way of working with the clients that we serve.

Rev. Duvall stated that the board would review the information and we will have more discussion at the next meeting.

VII. Trinity food services provider update

Mr. Burris shared that there have been some problems with the Trinity food contract to include issues with shortages of supplies and food. Mr. Burris said with the help of our legal department and procurement he sent a letter of Notice to Correct to the corporate office. He stated that three days after they received the letter Matt Stimson, their regional vice president, flew in from their corporate office in Florida and met with us. He stated they had a lengthy and productive meeting to correct these issues. He believes they are dedicated to making things right.

He shared that they are in the process of implementing a vocational training program. This will be a formalized training program where the inmates would receive two separate training certificates.

Major McKnight shared that while they were in training on Use of Force in the Nashville jail Trinity is the food service contractor there. They found the staff to be pleased with the quality they receive from Trinity food service.

Rev. Duvall requested that we touch base with the Nashville jail and inquire about how they are seasoning their food and serving those with dietary restrictions. He

would like a list of their menu items and compare those with what we are receiving. Mr. Burris said he would get that done.

VIII. Employee and Volunteer Survey

Andrea Beahm and Mary Taylor have been working on a volunteer survey for Justice Center volunteers. Andrea Beahm shared a power point presentation. She shared the goals of the volunteer survey which are to assess the degree of satisfaction volunteers experience, identify any issues or areas of concern to enhance the volunteer experience and identify a profile of Justice Center volunteers.

Ms. Taylor shared that she feels the volunteer program has been ignored. She said there are no newsletters, no emails, no place for concerns, and no reliable email distribution list. She said we should support our volunteers and hear their voices.

IX. Phone Contract

Mr. Burris shared that with the increase in the jail population and due to COVID restrictions that we are placing on inmates, the current phone communication system is not meeting our needs. He stated a more modern system can expand the family visitation and allow them access to the law library. Mr. Burris made a request that we start the RFP process for a new communication system. He said he considers himself under the cone of silence since the process has started and we just need to let the process play out.

X. Volunteer Program

This was covered under VIII.

XI. Programming – Interviewing and Cognitive Skills

Mr. Burris stated that this is two-fold. The first is a cognitive skills training that includes getting people to stop and think before acting inappropriately. This is part of a program that also teaches resume building and interview skills for jobs. It would be taught remotely and there is an organization that is recognized by the Department of Labor as best practice.

Tena Johnson in charge of setting this program up. Ms. Johnson shared that this program is called “Connections to Success”. This is a non-profit organization that is committed to helping individuals achieve economic stability. Ms. Johnson stated this program is unique in that it provides services during and after incarceration. This program is a 60 hour evidence based curriculum facilitated by certified trainers and the program is specifically geared to adults transitioning from incarceration. They

help with mock interviews, a resume workshop and provide them with clothing for the interviews that they can take with them. They also offer a fathers in training program which teaches absentee fathers their importance and teaches them how to be involved and function as fathers in their children's lives.

Ms. Johnson will attend a virtual training session in November. Ms. Johnson has reached out to them to begin to explore what we can bring to our facility. Ms. Johnson encouraged everyone to go to the Connections to Success website to learn more about the organization.

Mr. Smith shared that he has personally worked with this organization and is very impressed with them. He stated he could not be happier with the selection of them as a partner.

XII. Staff Shift Changes

Mr. Burris shared that we are looking at how we schedule staff shift changes and the impact this has on overtime and forced overtime. Mr. Burris stated that he will have a more lengthy report at the next meeting.

XIII. New Business

Acting Director Burris shared that the Justice Center is going to start a Coat Drive for the inmates that are released now that cold weather is approaching. Details will be forthcoming.

Ms. Taylor shared that on August 26, 2020 she sent an email to Rev. Duvall and the executive chairwoman of the County Council asking for an independent external investigation in response to allegations and testimonials about corruption and abuse at the jail. The Post-Dispatch reported it and the County Executive said he supported it. Ms. Taylor stated that 8 weeks ago at our board meeting a recommendation was made to the County Executive and the Council that the investigation should occur, stated our reasons for that recommendation on the record and then met several times with the County Council committee on Justice, Welfare and Safety. The County Executive asked us to submit a description of what we considered to be the scope of the investigation. The Advisory Board quickly submitted that after reviewing all of the information that had been sent to us, by current and former staff and the community and from our own experiences on the board. We then asked for a meeting in person to present it. Ms. Taylor stated that 7 weeks ago, on September 3, 2020 three of the board members did meet with some of the Executive staff and two Council members. Ms. Taylor said the County Executive told them he anticipated hiring a consultant to develop the scope of the investigation and an RFP and assured them that they would

have input. Ms. Taylor stated they expressed their concerns for the safety of some of the whistleblowers who had been threatened and also asked for more open communication so that this request would not fall into a black hole and disappear. Ms. Taylor stated that there may be work behind the scenes but, we certainly haven't heard anything about it. Ms. Taylor stated we have fallen back into old patterns of no communication with this board. Ms. Taylor stated that she feels the board has been very active, spending lots of hours listening to staff and former staff, developing the scope, attending Council committee meetings and responding to Council members who have reached out. Ms. Taylor stated that direct and ongoing communication from the County Executive seems to be the very least we might expect as a respectful response to our efforts as community representatives. Ms. Taylor stated that one month ago at our board meeting and asked for follow up. She stated there was no representative from the County Executive's office as they generally do not attend meetings. Beth Orwick was present at that meeting and Ms. Taylor asked Ms. Orwick to follow up and there has not been any follow up to that request.

Ms. Taylor made a motion that the County Executive office provide to the Justice Service Advisory Board a detailed update as to their efforts to obtain an external investigation and further designate someone from that office as a delegee of the County Executive with a timeline for accomplishing that which the board recommended and the County Council committee on Justice, Welfare and Safety affirmed.

Ms. Orwick responded that she did follow up as asked but, felt that it would be inappropriate to address in a public setting because this is not necessarily a legal update. She stated that she did talk to Dr. Page about this and he asked me to speak about this if asked at the meeting today. She went on to assure the board that the investigation has not fallen into a black hole or been waylaid. There is a legal personnel investigation going on right now, it is ongoing and it would be completely inappropriate for her to speak on that. While the investigation is ongoing Dr. Page has decided that there will be no details on the second investigation or the more global investigation until the first investigation is done but, he does expect to take a deeper dive but, it is not the appropriate time right now as that first investigation is ongoing.

Ms. Taylor responded that her motion still stands. Ms. Taylor stated that she did not know that the investigations were concurrent or that one needed to follow the other and that would have been nice information for the board to have from the County Executive's office. Ms. Taylor stated she thinks we could turn over a new leaf by having clearer communication from the County Executive's office. She feels the board needs to be communicated with as a board.

Jeff Smith stated that he supported Ms. Taylor's effort. Timothy McBride questioned whether the motion stated that the board would get a report at the next meeting? Ms. Taylor stated no, but that is a terrific idea.

Timothy McBride seconded the motion. All in favor.

Rev. Duvall recommended that it be added on at the top of the agenda of next month's meeting to elect a new chair. Ms. Schmidt stated that Rev. Duvall had asked the board for some relief and some grace from his role as chair. Ms. Spring stated that electing a new chair should have been on this month's agenda to be responsive to his request. Ms. Schmidt offered to take on additional roles in the next 30 days until Rev. Duvall is replaced. Jeff Smith stated he will also be willing to help in the next month.

XIV. Hear Visitors

There were no submissions for this month's meeting.

XV. Set next Board Meeting

Next Board meeting was tentatively set for November 20, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

XVI. Adjournment

Rev. Duvall motioned to adjourn. Ms. Schmidt seconded the motion.

