

Justice Services Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

December 18, 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 - present

Ms. Twyla Lee – arrived late

Ms. Spring Schmidt - present

Ms. Mary Zabawa Taylor – present

Others present:

Doug Burris –Director of Justice Services

Darby Howard –Deputy Director of Justice Services

Valerie Nelson – Corrections Medicine, Chief Operating Officer

Beth Orwick – County Counselor’s Office

Tricia Rodgers – Corrections Compliance Supervisor

Aaron Levin – DJS Research Statistician

Jeff Siler – DJS Integrity Unit Manager

II. Election of New Advisory Board Chairperson

Rev. Duvall made a motion to elect Jeff Smith as the new Advisory Board Chairperson effective beginning with this meeting. Dr. McBride seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Mr. Smith praised Rev. Duvall for his service and dedication for the past year and a half. Mr. Smith shared that his perspective has been shaped by the fact that ten years ago he came home from serving a prison sentence. He stated the last thing he told people that he served time with was that he would not forget them or the other 2.2 million people incarcerated in our country. He would like to see the Justice Services Center recognized as the most humane correctional facility in the country. Mr. Smith

stated a prison cannot be humane unless the people protecting prisoners and caring for them are also treated well. He feels that it is critical that our correctional staff and our healthcare staff are well paid, well supervised and well respected. Mr. Smith stated that he views our mission as a twin mission to care for everyone in this facility.

III. Approval of November 20, 2020 meeting minutes

Jeff Smith motioned to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2020 meeting. Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

All in favor.

IV. Expanding Partnership with St. Louis County Library, Guest Kristen Sorth, Director and CEO of St. Louis County Library

Kristen Sorth spoke about the partnership between the St. Louis County Library and the DJS that began about a year ago. The kickoff event began with a program to issue library cards to individuals who were leaving the Justice Center. The partnership took a bit of a pause due to COVID. The St. Louis County Library still actively delivers library materials on a regular basis. A process has been developed to begin giving out the library cards again. Mr. Burriss shared with the library challenges faced at the Justice Center due to COVID and the fact that families are not allowed to visit right now. There was discussion of how to get Chromebook hotspot bundles to the families of inmates. This would make it easier for children and loved ones to keep in touch with those incarcerated. Ms. Sorth stated it is definitely in the library's strategic plan to assist the Justice Center. There has been discussion of many additional ways the library can assist including book discussion kits and access to GED programs. Mr. Burriss shared that he is particularly excited about the tablet program to assist in family visits.

Ms. Taylor inquired if a person could get a library card without a permanent residence. Ms. Sorth replied that she was pretty sure the library had a fix for that but, she said she would double check on the application process.

Mr. Burriss shared that Ms. Tricia Rodgers and Ms. Jennifer Banes have taken on the tablet project as an extra assignment and have done a fabulous job and are continuing to work on it. Ms. Rodgers stated that the schedule for family visits is filled up for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Mr. Smith stated that decades of research has shown that only two things are likely to reduce the rate of recidivism and those are facilitating close contact with loved ones and educational advancement during incarceration and with this partnership we are working on both of them.

V. Corrections Medicine Dashboard, COVID Status and 2021 Strategy, EMS Operating Model, Trauma in the Workplace Project, Standard Board Communications Model

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

Ms. Nelson shared that currently there is a critical staffing shortage. She shared the details of steps being taken to address this problem.

Dr. Garza added that he thinks Valerie Nelson and her team have done an exceptional job during COVID and it is just a model program for the country. He said thank you for continuing to do an excellent job.

Rev. Duvall inquired as to how soon our medical staff will receive COVID vaccinations. Ms. Schmidt answered that they will receive the vaccine the day that we receive the vaccine. She stated that we are just waiting on our shipment to arrive.

Ms. Lee joined the meeting.

There was discussion among the board members about community engagement as the vaccine becomes available to the jail population. Ms. Schmidt shared that it is time to listen and learn, ask for their ideas and concerns, ask what questions would they like to see answered. She stated that the message can't come fast enough that the vaccine will not be mandatory.

VI. Requesting Ideas for Staff Recruitment

Mr. Burris informed the board that the DJS is having trouble getting applicants for corrections officers. Currently the department does not have enough staff for a January class. Mr. Burris stated that he has reached out to the directors of criminal justice programs at five colleges and universities in the area and four have responded back that they will try to help with this. He said he is also going to reach out to directors of the social works programs at colleges and universities and he feels like frankly that is what we need more. He stated that Valerie Nelson ran the numbers and out of the 912 that are currently in the jail 250 are on psychiatric medication. Mr. Burris stated that having correctional officers with a social work background would be a blessing. An additional problem he shared is that we have a jail within this region that pays more than what we have as a starting salary and we have staff that get trained here and then move over there. Mr. Burris stated that we are really trying to widen our net and bring in qualified applicants and he asked the board for help and ideas to get more applicants that want to help us evolve this facility.

VII. Department Audits

Mr. Burris stated that he requested this item on the agenda. He would like to take a look at every department we have. He shared that he has reached out to the Director of the St. Charles Jail, Mr. Daniel Keen, and asked him if he would be willing to do an audit of our internal affairs department and our transportation department. Mr. Keen agreed and would like to schedule those in January.

Dr. Garza responded that he thought that was an excellent idea. He stated that anytime you can have a fresh set of eyes come in and give you some thoughts and considerations for how you can improve practices it is a good thing.

VIII. DJS Dashboard

Aaron Levin presented the DJS Dashboard

IX. Jail Census Status

The information was included in the DJS Dashboard.

X. Booking Incident

Mr. Smith stated that there was booking incident that we all read about a couple of weeks ago and he asked Mr. Burris to provide additional information. Mr. Burris informed the board that the inmate involved in the incident was booked in correctly by the Justice Services staff. The inmate's name was not transposed. Mr. Burris stated that this is not something that we can have happen again. Mr. Burris said this was a great opportunity to get creative and come up with a way to fix it and make sure it doesn't. He stated that Tricia Rodgers met with Regis, our criminal justice system information provider, and Tricia Rodgers and Regis have developed a program where if Doug Burris was entered into the system and nothing comes up it would automatically transpose the name and search again in the system. Mr. Burris stated that this hopefully should fix this and it would not happen again.

In addition, Mr. Burris had Jeff Siler, Integrity Unit Manager, run an investigation. Mr. Siler shared his investigation findings. He stated that when the judge came to arraignment for the inmate he asked for the person by his first name as his last name. After searching, the lobby clerk stated to the Brentwood judge that the person was not in our custody and had never been the DJS custody. The judge reported that he had to check his information to see what was going on. There was no further contact from the judge. Mr. Siler stated that there was some miscommunication, some tools that we can use better for the searches as Mr. Burris explained and the lobby clerks do not have the search tools that most supervisors have. It has been recommended that if someone comes in and that person cannot be located that person will be referred to the bonding clerk supervisor and they will have the tools to do a more thorough search.

After further discussion by the board it was decided that two items would be provided at the next meeting. The first item would be a copy of the redacted final version of the investigation report and the second item would be to have our Change Management Coordinator, Anthony Weaver, speak about a root cause analysis template at the next meeting.

XI. New Business

Mr. Burris reported that the staff survey that was put out two weeks ago closes today. The information will be reviewed. Mr. Burris shared that after talking with staff he believes we will have a very good turnout on it. He stated that he looks forward to the employees having a say on how the facility is run and how we can improve.

Mr. Burris stated that although the coat drive has officially ended we are continuing to get some in and we are more than stocked if we were to have a very bitter winter this year and will probably have some left over for next year. He thanked the Clark Fox Family Foundation for spearheading the drive.

XII. Hear Visitors

There were no submissions for this month's meeting.

XIII. The Board will consider a vote to meet in closed session pursuant to RSMo Sec. 610.21 (1) (3) (5) (13) and (14) and SLCRO Sec. 114.020.1 (1), (3), (13) and (14)

Due to technical difficulties the Advisory Board was not able to go into closed session.

XIV. Set Next Board Meeting

The next Board meeting was tentatively set for January 22, 2021.

XV. Adjournment