



**Criminal Justice Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Tuesday, March 29, 2022**

**Members Present:** Deborah Williams, Ben Haas, Lao Rubert, Satana Deberry, Dawn Baxton, Eric Johnson, Tom Cote, Ben Rose, Melinda King, Syretta Hill, Robbie Breitweiser, Nida Allam, Walter Tate, Celeste Kelly, Gudrun Parmer

**Members Absent:** Judge O’Foghludha, Jesse Battle, Omar Taylor, Shamioka Rhinehart, Mayor O’Neil, Rod Jenkins,

**Guests:** Patrice Andrews, Ryan Smith

**Staff:** Roshanna Parker, Marc Strange, Kelley Waggy

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Ben Haas called the meeting to order and asked that all members take a moment to introduce themselves.

**Review and Approve Jan Minutes**

Vice-Chair Deb Williams asked those in attendance to review the minutes. Gudrun Parmer made a motion to approve the January minutes, Dawn Baxton seconded, and an unanimous vote approved the minutes.

Ben Haas referred to Gudrun on the appointment of Robbie Breitweiser to the position of Legal Aid Representative. Gudrun introduced Robbie Breitweiser to the committee. Deborah Williams moved that Mr. Breitweiser be appointed to the position. The committee voted unanimously.

**CJAC in 2022**

Chair Ben Haas shared that he has been reaching out individually to ascertain what each member brings to the committee and what CJAC means to them. Ben also informed the group that there are several vacancies and as they move forward, they will be actively trying to fill these. Gudrun shared that these individuals must be citizens of Durham County and be current on their county taxes.

Deborah shared that she had been a member of CJAC since 2019 and her desire is to represent our neighbors accurately, provide opportunities, and ensure that we are successful as a community and a committee. Deborah also voiced a desire to give attention to the 18–30-year-old age group in an effort to prevent them from becoming justice-involved.

**Criminal Justice Resources for Mental Health and Substance Use: Covid & “After”**

**TASC:** Melinda King, the Area Supervisor, shared that TASC stand for Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities. There are TASC services in all 100 counties in North Carolina. The Department of Public Safety breaks these counties into 4 regions, Coastal Horizons holds the contract for Regions 1 and 2. Individuals who are on Adult Probation or Parole are referred to TASC for various reasons and TASC provides a screening and assessment to establish initial treatment with referred providers. TASC also meets with the individuals monthly and acts as a bridge between the justice system and the

mental health systems. TASC was not set up to work virtually prior to COVID. When the pandemic hit, systems were put in place to continue to facilitate care for their clients. Melinda shared that the relationship with CJRC was a blessing throughout COVID as they were able to assess the clients and refer them “in house”.

TASC staff continued to work throughout the pandemic. Prior to having functional virtual options, TASC staff contacted all clients via phone and did wellness checks to ensure clients were not left to struggle on their own. It is currently taking 45-60 days to get to their initial treatment appointment and many providers are being forced to move back to in person as funding for virtual services is ceasing. This has been a major barrier and TASC is continuing to push forward and provide the best care possible. Melinda shared that virtual options had been extremely successful and moving clients back to in person has been a hurdle. TASC continues to navigate this new environment and ascertain the potential of continuing to provide virtual options.

Deborah Williams asked Melinda if the lengthened wait time has led to more issues with their clients and whether being virtual resulted in more consistency and interaction from clients. Melinda shared that the no-show rate has remained the same both pre- and post-pandemic. TASC quickly discovered that a large portion of their demographic lacked the basic needs to be virtual and these were hurdles they had to overcome early in the pandemic. Melinda did note that virtual service was extremely beneficial for individuals that work as they were able to attend without needing to take leave to attend. TASC has found that the lengthened time for referrals has not made a drastic difference. Melinda shared that they have an expedited assessment pilot in 4 counties starting and she looks forward to seeing the outcome. It was also noted that due to TASC and CJRC operating as a “one stop shop” that Durham is not seeing this lengthened wait time.

CJRC: Marc Strange, CJRC’s Clinical Services Manager, shared that primarily all referrals for SUD (substance use disorder) treatment come from TASC. Assessments determine the level of care needed and place clients into the appropriate groups within SUD. There are 2 groups, one looks at the thought process and building skills to heal, recover and be productive. The second group looks at basic recovery skills and how is this effecting the client’s life. Marc shared that SUD struggled early on with COVID, in previous years they were averaging 388 referrals a year from TASC and throughout COVID they averaged significantly lower numbers. Some of this is due to the policies implemented to minimize risk which resulted in lower numbers coming into the system. MARC noted that in the last year, numbers have been on par with those prior to COVID.

SUD utilized 2 different platforms (MS Teams and Go to Meeting) to provide virtual services to clients. While they had the same issues as TASC due to lack of services for connectivity, they did find that overall clients were present and virtual helped limit issues. Now that clients are back onsite, they are finding that there is still a need for virtual classes and are working to provide one virtual class. Marc shared that SUD is working towards recognizing both mental illness and addiction.

SUD saw 3 staff positions come vacant during the pandemic. While difficult, this has allowed them to focus on hiring an individual with a background in mental health. Marc shared that he did not see virtual going away. Virtual allowed working individuals to attend their required groups and function in society.

Commissioner Allam shared that Durham County is planning a presentation for potential use of ARPA funds for community broadband.

### **Board of County Commissioners Person-First Language Resolution: Next Steps**

Commissioner Allam praised Gudrun Parmer and former GM Jodi Miller for introducing and facilitating this resolution. This has been widely accepted and they have received much interest in utilizing and understanding Person First Language.

Ben shared that he saw many positives in the questions that have been raised and is excited by the interest in this resolution. Ben asked the committee what it would look like to take a resolution like this and create spaces inside of our current work to test our practice against our aspirations.

Melinda shared that TASC has initiated rewording the verbiage in all documents and moving towards embracing Person First Language. TASC is very cognizant of language used both in writing and in person and the importance and effect language has.

Gudrun Parmer took this time to lift Melinda in her efforts to create a ripple effect and start to facilitate changes in additional counties. Gudrun shared her hope that this ripple continues throughout our everyday workings, as something as seemingly innocuous as language can create a stronger and more connected community.

### **Local Reentry Council Update**

Roshanna Parker shared that Demetrius Lynn has taken a new position at DUKE with the Violence Recovery Program. His position has been posted and until it is filled Roshanna will be the point of contact. Ben shared that while we are sad to lose Demetrius, we are excited for his new role and the benefit he will provide.

Roshanna reported that LRC receives around 25 referrals a month, they conduct 8-10 intakes per month, refer 10 clients a month for employment with clients averaging \$16.00 an hour, and support 10 clients in housing. Roshanna shared LRC experiences more outreach and growing numbers as the community reopens post COVID.

Roshanna stated April is Second Chance Month, NCDPS will host a Reentry Conference April 26-27, 2022. Roshanna promised to send information out to those interested. Additionally, April 25-29, 2022 has been designated as local Reentry Week and several events have been planned.

### **Brief Member Updates**

Commissioner Nida Allam shared that Durham County just hired the new Racial Equity Officer, Dr. Yesinia Moreno.

Syretta Hill shared that the Guaranteed Income Program had faced some issues connecting all selected individuals. However, since the number of individuals participating was lower than planned, they were able to provide \$600.00 per person. The first payment went out March 15, 2022. Syretta shared her gratitude in the committee's help in getting this information out to the community.

Ryan Smith shared that the Community Safety Department is still moving towards launching pilots at the end of June. They have hired 2 clinical managers, an operations manager and are working towards filling crisis response roles by the end of April.

Lao Rubert shared that the LRC has been holding conversations about previously incarcerated individuals still struggling to acquire housing and requested that CJAC reach out with support and advice in regard to this conversation.

### **Remaining Meeting Dates for 2022**

May 31, 2022

July 26, 2022

September 27, 2022

November 29, 2022