



Justice Services Department

Criminal Justice Advisory Committee Minutes Tuesday, November 28, 2023

Members Present: Lao Rubert, Elaine O'Neal, Dave Crispell, Robbie Breitweiser, Ben Haas, Michael O'Foghluha, Walter Tate, Eric Johnson, Dr. Angeloe Burch, Dawn Baxton, Satana DeBerry

Guests: Ryan Smith, Irene Lawrence, Abena Bediako, Dwane Brinson

Staff: Roshanna Parker, Marc Strange, Ontario Joyner, Kelley Waggy, Christie Long, Beth Steenberg

Welcome and Introductions

Chair, Ben Haas called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. Ben asked that all in attendance take a moment to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Ben Haas asked that the minutes be reviewed. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Setting CJAC's 2024 Agenda

Themes from CJAC during 2023

Ben Hass shared that looking back over the past year there was a noticeable focus on membership and reflection of members who have passed, Peer Services, diversion courts and long running programs that have become fully operational entities. In noting this, Ben shared, there is a clear direction for CJAC to move in 2024.

Roshanna Parker, Director of JSD, shared their desire to hear from the committee on their preference in moving forward in 2024. Public Defender Dawn Baxton shared that the group could champion and pursue funding for Family Court and DWI court. These are areas that would make a vast difference in the community for those who are justice involved and are losing their family units. Dawn asked the committee to share their feelings/views on the focus moving forward.

Identifying Opportunities & Focus Areas for 2024

D.A. Satana Deberry shared that she was in full support of championing DWI Courts and that this is something that many in Durham County are talking about.

Eric Johnson stated that given the current rising violence in county Juveniles he was curious if the committee would be interested in pursuing this. Roshanna shared that traditionally CJAC has not entered that arena. CJAC lends its support to the Durham County JCPC and their ongoing efforts to combat the issues among Juveniles.

Dr. Angeloe Burch asked if CJAC has considered helping individuals in the system to build trust with those working in the system to assist them. The lack of trust in the justice system can be problematic. Roshanna shared that this makes sense, and we are open to discuss further and discover how we might make a difference in that space. Roshanna additionally shared that the LRC already works to strengthen partnerships to help build relationships between justice involved individuals and the criminal justice system.

Ryan Smith asked Roshanna where she sees the intersection between Familiar Faces Initiative and CJAC as there is overlapping interest. Roshanna shared that there is clear overlap and as they start to develop initiatives and figure out what they need for Familiar Faces Initiative, CJAC would have a place in supporting the different initiatives and receiving report-outs from this group.

Ontario Joyner, LRC Coordinator, inquired about Durham County ever having a Veterans Court. Dawn and Roshanna shared that they had never had one but, there was some interest several years back.

Ben Haas asked, in speaking about specialty courts, is there another county with the number of specialty courts in Durham County or is this unique? Judge Michael O’Foghludha shared that this was unique to Durham County.

Roshanna asked Assistant County Manager Dwane Brinson if there is anything from the county managers office that CJAC could focus on. Dwane shared that he looks forward to talking to Roshanna in the coming months to discuss potential collaborations.

Lao Rubert shared that in 2023 we made significant progress in the Housing arena, and she hopes that the committee keeps this on the agenda moving forward. Roshanna shared her agreement with this and plans to keep the momentum going.

Ben Shared that it is clear that the committee as a whole is on the same page and is excited to see what CJAC will accomplish in 2024.

Lao Rubert asked for an update regarding Opioid funds. Dwane Brinson shared that the county is in the process of determining how this will move forward but, Justice Services Department will be heavily involved.

Membership & Officers for 2024

Roshanna Parker shared that as we move into 2024, we will be developing a slate and will present that at the next meeting. Currently CJAC has 7 vacancies and will be reaching out to the Mayors office as Mayor Elaine O’Neal transitions out of office. The current vacancies are as follows: Community College designee, Substance Use Provider or Providing Agency, Formerly Incarcerated Individual, Formerly Justice Involved, and a Specialty Court Judge.

Roshanna asked the committee to start to think about potential candidates for Chair and Vice Chair positions. There will be an email sent in early January asking for nominations.

Partner Updates

Ben Haas shared that Gudrun Parmer was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine from Governor Roy Coopers Office.

Local Reentry Council- Ontario Joyner shared that the LRC has received 65 referrals and has completed 44 intakes. 18 Clients gained employment with an average salary of \$16.86. Currently there are 6 Clients enrolled in the GED class through Durham Tech. On October 27, 2023, 4 Clients completed the forklift certification class which is a one-day class and at the end of the completion of class they receive their certification. Ontario shared that they are excited to start the next cohort for this class. 1 Client completed the welding course at Durham Tech and received his welding certificate. Ontario shared that the ARPA Grant has helped tremendously with housing. LRC will host their first quarter Resource Fair on January 10, 2024, 1:30-4:30 here at JSD. This Resource Fair will focus on employment. The next LRC meeting will be held on January 17, Ontario shared his hope that all would attend and get to hear about the work they are doing firsthand.

HEART- Ryan Smith shared they have expanded city wide (city limits) and have had a 200% increase to call response.

D.A. Satana Deberry shared that her Office was part of the Sexual Assault Kit initiative and Durham County was the first to complete this initiative. This was completed about 1 year ago and as such her office has received a one-million-dollar grant from the Department of Justice to continue this work locally. They are expanding their work with the Durham Crisis Response Center and Mental Health Court.

Ben asked if anyone was able to provide any information on LIFT. Ontario shared that they are partnered with Go Triangle and only provide services in Northern and Eastern Durham. As a pilot program it shows promise if they can expand coverage area.

Roshanna shared that she had the opportunity to join Ryan Smith and Leigh Mazur at a week long training at Harvard Kennedy School for Alternative Responses to 911 which featured the City of Durham HEART program and allowed them to strengthen their relationship and partnership with the city.

Meeting Adjourned 5:05pm

Future Meeting Dates

January 23

March 26

May 28