

Criminal Justice Advisory Committee Minutes February 25, 2020

**Members Present:** Omar Taylor, Ben Haas, Councilor Vernetta Alston, Eric Johnson, Gudrun Parmer, Kristen Rosselli, Joseph Laizure, Syretta Hill, Lao Rubert, Celeste Kelly

**Members Excused:** Don Baker, Jodi Miller, Commissioner Wendy Jacobs, Rodney Jenkins

**Members Absent:** Alexander Williams, D.A. Satana Deberry, Judge Shamieka Rhinehart, Tamario Howze, Deborah Williams,

**Guests**:

**Staff:** Roshanna Parker, Marc Strange, Christie Long**,** Kelli Egnaczak, Kelley Waggy

**Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting was called to order at 4:00pm, CJAC Vice Chair Vernetta Alston welcomed everyone and asked those present to introduce themselves.

**Review and Approve June Minutes**

Vice Chair Vernetta Alston asked the committee to review the minutes. Gudrun Parmer made a motion, Omar Taylor seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Mental Health Housing Unit in Detention Facility-**

Kelli Egnaczak shared that the Mental Health Pod opened in October 2017 for severely mentally ill detainees who often would not leave their cells due to fear and bullying in traditional settings. The pod provides individuals a safe space. Assignment to the Mental Health Pod is determined by the clinical team and based strictly on someone’s mental health issues for any level of offense. Moving individuals suffering from psychotic breaks has been found to help prevent decompensation, self-harm and suicide. Inmates in the MH Pod are managed in a different setting via daily rounds and a clinician assigned every week. Staff makes rounds like in a hospital setting with double rotations. Detention staff is consistently assigned to the pod with no rotations which has helped to establish relationships. Males on suicide watch are also admitted into the pod. Inmates in the pod are assigned colors: red rounds daily, yellow twice weekly, green twice a month but in practice everyone is seen daily. The clinicians complete a pass-on sheet as shifts change. Group therapy is held weekly as well as a social skills group. Clients are rewarded with prizes for games. Kelli shared that everyone gets a prize, but the winner gets the first pick. They utilize time outs instead of actual write ups in the pod. As a result of these practices, write ups have gone down and moral has gone up, which gets the staff out of being punitive. Some clients can be moved out of the pod into general population, but some will remain in the pod as long as they are in the facility.

Since opening the pod has housed 453 detainees. The pod’s occupancy rate is 77.7% in FY20.

The length of stay in 2018 was 21 days. During the 2018-19 year, 31 were moved to General Population, 19 were moved to Safekeeping and 48 left the facility.

The key is coordination of care once released. Once the release date is determined, the peer support person and the discharge planner assure the client has a 30-day supply of medications via a contract with Gurley’s Pharmacy. Clients are set up appointments with community providers through Alliance. Clients are transported to appointments and reminded of future dates. Bus tickets are provided via Jail Mental Health. The peer support person also calls to verify the client’s attendance at the appointment. If they did not attend, staff will attempt to locate the client. Peer support staff also takes them to SSI appointments, Medicare appointments and utilizes warm handoffs at local halfway houses.

**Pretrial Services, PSA Implementation Update-**

Christie Long, Pretrial Services Supervisor, provided an update on the implementation of the Public Safety Assessment. She shared that the program began using the PSA on February 1, 2020 and will use the next few months to make adjustments to the decision matrix and other local decision points if needed. The official switch to PSA is scheduled for July 1, 2020.

**Committee Updates**

**Local Reentry Council -** Roshanna shared that a new contract was received from NCDPS in December which is renewable for two additional years. LRC has had 670 referrals which resulted in 438 intakes and 148 active clients. To date, 91 persons have become employed at $11.50/hr average salary, 74 placed in housing, 342 received transportation assistance, 30 received vocational training (24 - fork lift operators, 1 - CDL, 3 - Heavy Equipment operators, 1 - peer support). In December 2019, LRC hosted a Re-Entry simulation with over 80 participants. It was a successful event with substantial interest in hosting another simulation in April. The goal is to host 120 participants in April with the help of a Mini Grant in the amount of $2,000 that was received from NCDPS. LRC is in the process of updating the website which should be completed in March. The next LRC meeting is Wednesday March 18 at 3:00pm.

**Stepping Up Committee -** Marc Strange shared that the Stepping Up Committee was working on finalizing the Sequential Intercept Map and the Data Subcommittee was developing various data merges to identify recidivism and what adjustments are possible as individuals move through the system. CJRC is in the process of hiring the last person for the federal Second Chance Act Grant and is in the final stages of program implementation. CJRC is also part of a larger group meeting to review the current status of the MAT Program with Phase 2 (induction) coming soon.

**NACo Peer Learning Network -** Gudrun shared that Durham County was selected as one of 13 in the country to join the Peer Learning Network hosted by the National Association of Counties. This will consist of technical assistance to implement solutions to provide support for justice-involved individuals with mental illness using a racial and ethnic disparities framework. This will be an 18-month engagement.

**DEAR Project Update -** Joseph Laizure shared that DEAR had finished its first year recently, during which 51,000 traffic charges were dismissed, $6,000 in fines and fees were waved, and 1.2 million in uncollectable debt was forgiven. 35,000 persons benefited by this assistance. DEAR doesn’t provide individual representation but helps clients understand how to move forward. DEAR offers individualized Expungement Services. The record is reviewed and the petition is filed by mail; if it is out of the county it is referred to Legal Aid NC. In 2019, there were 960 expungements. In 2018 there were 543. Of those 960 expungements, DEAR is responsible for 600. DEAR consists of 1 full time paralegal, 1 attorney at 80%, 3 attorneys at 20%. Legal Aid is looking to hire 1 more attorney. The Durham City Council will vote on a contract to move DEAR to formally become part of Legal Aid at its next Council meeting. Once approved, the transition should happen over the next few months. Joseph also shared that Greensboro sent a delegation to replicate DEAR and plans to call it GEAR.

**Election of 2020 Officers:**

Kristen Rosselli made the motion and Omar Taylor seconded, all approved and Lao Rubert was elected Chairperson.

Omar Taylor made the motion, Lao Rubert seconded, all approved and Councilor Vernetta Alston was elected Vice-chair.

Gudrun Parmer made the motion, Eric Johnson seconded, all approved and Ben Haas was elected Secretary.

All officers will serve a one-year term.

**Partner Updates:**

Ben Haas invited everyone to attend the Annual Vigil Against Violence. He also shared that the Religious Coalition would co-host the Reentry Homecoming for the 3rd year along with the Local Reentry Council.

Councilor Alston invited everyone to attend the City’s second budget retreat the following Friday.

Meeting adjourned at 5:21pm.

**2020 Meeting Dates**

28 April 2020

30 June 2020

25 August 2020

27 October 2020

**Next Meeting: April 28, 2020**

**4:00-5:30pm**

**Criminal Justice Resource Center**

**326 E Main Street**