

Criminal Justice Advisory Committee

Tuesday July 25th, 2017

**Members Present:** Lao Rubert, Jodi Miller, Roger Echols, O’Mar Taylor, Marcia Owen, Gudrun Parmer, Ann Oshel, Jackie Brown, Clarence Birkhead

**Members Excused:** Wendy Jacobs, Kristen Rosselli

**Members Absent**: Anthony Marsh, Adam Clayton, Lawrence Campbell, Celeste Kelly, Charlie Reese

**Guests:** John Witcher, Joseph Laizure, Peter Wooldridge, Judge Shamieka L. Rhinehart

**Staff:** Peter Baker, Roshanna Parker, Celia Jefferson, Lourdes Garcia, Karen Shaw

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chairperson Roger Echols, Durham County District Attorney, opened the meeting with a welcome and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

**Review and Approve May 23 Minutes**

Roger Echols asked the committee to review the minutes. Gudrun Parmer moved that the minutes be accepted as presented. Jackie Brown properly seconded and minutes were approved unanimously.

**Innovation Fund – Court Reminder Project Update**

Gudrun shared that CJRC received an Innovation Fund grant from the MacArthur Foundation/ Urban Institute to reduce the overuse of the jail. In partnership with the courts, it was decided to reduce the number of individuals in jail due to a failure to appear in court. They implemented a court reminder system. Signs have been created and people can sign up online for the service. The system went live June 19, 2017 and about 300 people have registered thus far. People can choose to receive reminders via text, phone or email. Interested parties can also sign up for the service. Staff has established a baseline for the number of people who are called and failed in court (10-12%). Gudrun noted that ultimately, they hope to reduce the number of people who go to jail due to a failure to appear. The court reminder system can potentially be used by any county in NC.

Judge Rhinehart asked if at some point they will expand to child support court date reminders.

**RCND Initiative: Restorative Justice**

Marcia Owen announced that the Religious Coalition for a Nonviolent Durham’s (RCND) board president, Effie Steele, had passed away on July 21, 2017. Marcia shared that RCND is developing a Restorative Justice initiative. Restorative Justice is different from Criminal Justice. Instead of asking “what law has been broken”, they ask “who has been harmed and what happened?” Next comes the critical question “how do they repair people and have an outcome of transformational justice”. RCND is fortunate to have John Powell, Professor of Law at Campbell University, Roger Echols’ office and CJRC as partners. They have many opportunities to help people restore. They also are reaching out to business owners and are being successful. Shoplifting is a tremendous problem. What is the effect of stealing? What happened? Stealing normally happens in large corporate stores such as Walmart, Target, etc. Marcia noted that they could not do the work if it was not for CJRC or the District Attorney’s Office. A free training is scheduled for August 16, 2017 and lunch will be provided. She extended the invitation to all CJAC members.

**Appointment of CJAC Members**

Gudrun stated that a number of positions on CJAC represent specific sectors in the community and are appointed by the committee. Everyone directly appointed by CJAC has to meet the qualifications as BOCC appointees: reside in Durham County and have up-to-date county taxes. Several positions are currently vacant: representatives from Legal Aid, Community College, Specialty Court Judge, Employment and Training Provider, and Local Mental Health or Substance Abuse Treatment Provider. Additionally, several current members are up for re-appointment: Kristen Rosselli, Jackie Brown and Marcia Owen. Gudrun asked the individuals who are new to CJAC to introduce themselves and share their interest in why they would like to be part of CJAC.

**Joseph Laizure**, employed at Legal Aid, NC, has served at Legal Aid since he graduated from law school in 2013. His caseload focuses heavily on expungement, domestic violence and some housing issues. His interest in being a part of CJAC is to inform the committee how various proposals will affect the population of legal aid and all individuals in Durham.

**Judge Shamieka L. Rhinehart**, Durham District Court Judge, has been in office for seven months, before that, she was a prosecutor. Currently she presides over child support, abused children and domestic violence court. Her interest in being a part of CJAC is that she brings the background and impartially of been a judge to various courts and has the perspective of being a prosecutor. She also knows the resources that are available.

**Peter Wooldridge**, Durham Tech’s Vice President for Corporate and Continuing Education, and Public Safety Services. He is stepping into Candace Rashada’s role on CJAC. He noted that Durham Tech is the primary training provider in Durham, his vision is short term training for those who have had some involvement in the criminal justice system and to support folks in Durham who need training and jobs. He noted that he understand the issues that people face.

**John Witcher** works with the behavioral health team at Lincoln Community Health Center and more recently in the Medication Assisted Treatment Program.

Gudrun stated that **Syretta Hill,** who could not be present, is Step Up Durham’s Executive Director. She has been with Step Up Durham for 2 years, 60% of Step Up’s clients are justice involved. Step Up Durham is an Employment and Training Provider.

Jodi Miller moved that they approve the proposed slate as presented. Gudrun properly seconded and the slate was approved as presented.

Gudrun noted that the struggle to find an interested party for the seat “Member of the Business Community”. She asked committee members to reach out to someone they knew who was a business person. Additionally, due to Umar Muhammad’s passing, the position for a formerly incarcerated person is open.

**Subcommittee Updates**

Peter Baker reported on the ***Stepping Up Initiative***. The subcommittee meets to reduce persons with behavioral health concerns in the jail and to assist them with accessing care in a variety of ways. The goal is to create more treatment or better treatment options and care. One of the areas targeted was 24 hour holds in jail. Often police officers bring a person that is inebriated to the jail to keep for up to 24 hours which becomes a challenge for the jail because the person is not officially booked. Diverting the individual to the Recovery Response Center is a win/win situation: instead of spending 45 minutes at the jail, the officer will only spend 5-10 minutes at the recovery center.

Peter shared that the Mental Health Court Diversion Program, one of the initiatives they had pushed for some time, had a court session just before the CJAC meeting and accepted their seventh client. The program connects clients to treatment. It is a pre-adjudication program where individuals that comply with the conditions of the court for approximately six months can have their charges dismissed. The committee also recommended a mental health pod in the jail which was funded by the Durham Board of County Commissioners in FY17. The pod can house more challenging, mentally ill inmates in one area. The mental health pod will open for males the first week of October. The detention facility is looking at other options for females. The police department continues to be a participant on the subcommittee and is moving closer to replacing a mental health clinician embedded with law enforcement. This is a position that existed previously. The clinician will respond or follow up on certain calls alongside law enforcement.

Roshanna Parker reported on the ***Local Reentry Council.*** Criminal Justice Resource Center received a contract from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety to oversee the creation of the Local Reentry Council. The contract came with two positions: a full time LRC Coordinator who has already been hired and a part time Job Placement Specialist who will begin within 30 days. The Reentry Council has two subcommittees: housing and employment. Staff will start interfacing with some of the facilities that DPS has designated as transitional facilities. The team is in the process of building a LRC website and identifying additional partners for the council.

Roshanna announced a kick-off event will let the community know that Durham has a LRC that is up and running. The event will be held on Monday, August 7, 2017 from 4-6 pm.

Gudrun shared that Sherry Everett was no longer a member of the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. No update was available from the Domestic Violence Subcommittee. Joseph Laizure will reach out to Sherry Everett for an update at the next meeting.

**Member Updates**

CJRC: Gudrun noted a small group is continuing to look at Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) for opioid users. They will meet again in August expanding the core group to include someone from Lincoln, RRC, and the magistrate’s office.

Alliance: Ann Oshel shared that Alliance took a hard financial hit on their last budget from the General Assembly. This will be the third year in a row they have to absorb several million dollars reduction in services. Alliance’s portion this year is almost 20 million dollars. At the same time, they were informed that they will have to continue with maintenance of efforts at 2015 level of services. Alliance is in a slightly better position than their counter parts. Alliance will continue with the same services that they currently offer, but there will be no expansions or new services. Some populations that they are serving will have to be put on a waiting list. They are maintaining all their crisis services and they received a two million dollar grant to start a tier case management program for kids in foster care. Alliance was also able to preserve all the housing funds, and maintained the opening of their child crisis facility. Ann noted that the second thing that happened in the General Assembly is proposed legislation regarding the future of Mental Health in NC. It is anticipated it will be taken up in the long session. Ann is asking for advocacy around House Bill 403. Ann suggested that she prepare a short presentation for the September meeting on the specific services Alliance offers in Durham, and the capacity of those services.

Meeting adjourned.

**Next Meeting – September 26, 2017 @ 4:00 pm.**