

Dutchess County
Criminal Justice Council
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2021

Present: Mary Ellen Still, Chair, Director of Probation
William O'Neil, County Executive's Office
Dr. Gary Christensen, CJC Consultant
Jon Heller, D.C Probation, Special Populations Chair
Tom Angell, Office of the Public Defender, Re-Entry Co-Chair
Shirley Adams, Community Involvement Committee Chair
Karen DeSimone, D.C. Probation, Juvenile Justice Chair
Matthew Weishaupt, D.C. District Attorney's Office
Kelly Bunt, KB Forensics, Victims Committee Chair
Austin "Brud" Hodgkins, Citizen Appointment
Debra Long, Family Services
Ken Roman - Police Reform & Reinvention Collaborative
Alisyn Gaffney, D.C Probation, Justice-Involved Women's Co-Chair
Honorable Frederick Romig, East Fishkill Town Justice
Bridget Goddard, DCFS
Hon. Jessica Segal, County Court Judge
Pastor John Perez, Citizen Appointment, Faith Temple Church
Hon. Denise Watson, Dutchess County Family Court
John T. Gildard, Citizen Appt.
Barrington R. Atkins, DC Legislator
William Grady, D.C. District Attorney
Loren Petrella, County Executive's Office
Jean-Marie Niebuhr, Deputy Commissioner, DCDBCH
Irma Machado, DOCCS, Re-Entry Committee Co-Chair

Guests: Dr. Daria Hanssen, Marist College
Tom Morris, Dutchess County Probation
Molly Shanley
Talent Davis
Jay Herman
Jeffrey Schneider

1. Approval of July 13, 2021 minutes

The minutes of July 13, 2021 were approved on a motion by Shirley Adams, seconded by Ken Roman.

2. Victims Committee Survey Results—Dr. Daria Hanssen, Marist College and Kelly Bunt

Dr. Hanssen presented the Victims Committee’s cooperative research project on the “Impact of Service Disruption--Client and Providers Viewpoints.” The Victims Committee worked with the Marist College Social Work Department, completing two surveys responded to by 48 service recipients and 48 service providers. Dr. Hanssen reviewed the demographics of the survey responders and the populations worked with as indicated by the provider responders. 70% of the providers indicated that the pandemic impacted their ability to provide services. Domestic violence and mental health were the top services disrupted. Dr. Hanssen reviewed the reasons, as per the providers’ responses, why the disruptions occurred and further indicated how service providers attempted to continue to meet the needs of service recipients. She further reviewed some of the qualitative responses from the service recipients as well as the providers. Dr. Hanssen reviewed the responses from the providers that indicated what resources would be necessary should another disruption occur. After consideration of the responses, the Victims Committee Chair Kelly Bunt summarized suggestions that included: greater access to technology, particularly with the people that are most in need or at risk, community space for free access to technology, and to work as a community to create communication channels. There were additional questions, comments, and discussion from members of the CJC. Pastor Perez indicated that many faith-based organizations throughout the county can offer resources to assist in-service delivery. Jean-Marie Niebuhr indicated that many of the curtailments of in-person services were driven by very strict state regulations. Mary Ellen thanked Dr. Hanssen and Kelly for their work and indicated how important surveys like this are in determining how to respond going forward.

3. Jail / ATI/ Safe Act report –Therese Lee, Mary Ellen Still and Jean-Marie Niebuhr

The Jail/ATI/Safe Act reports were sent electronically. There were no questions or comments.

4. Research and Planning Update–Dr. Gary Christensen

Gary reviewed a power point on DCJ Admissions by Race, Gender and Ethnicity for the period January 2016 through August 11, 2021. The data showed the impacts of bail reform. The data was further broken down by race/gender/ethnicity for crime type (misdemeanor, non-violent felony, violent felony, violations) and court of origin. Gary then presented the data on Medication Assisted Treatment at the jail, broken down by race/gender/ethnicity and court of origin. Gary reviewed the next steps for the Quality Assurance Committee based upon this data. There were many factors impacting disparities in DCJ admissions for people of different races, genders and ethnicities, and must be further differentiated and understood by jurisdiction. Conclusions that result in any change in policy or practice must be based factual analysis of actual data. The Quality Assurance Committee should engage members of the Police Reform Initiative to better understand issues that might lead to disparate incarceration and will work towards developing methodology to measure the effects of police reforms on DCJ admissions. Ken Roman indicated that his committee will collaborate with the QA committee. Mary Ellen indicated that this collaboration is the logical next step. Tom Angell indicated that the Procedural Justice training was very impactful and recommended that anyone who can attend should do so. Ken agreed with Tom’s opinion of the training. There were no further questions.

5. Committee reports:

Quality Assurance – Dr. Gary Christensen, Tom Angell, William Grady

Gary gave an update on the CUNY study on bail reform. The committee continues to work on the data request.

Police Reform and Reinvention – Ken Roman

Ken reported that the City of Poughkeepsie Police Department held a very successful National Night Out. Ken further reported that the police exam is Saturday and is the most diverse group of candidates taking the exam in the history of Dutchess County. The current academy is also very diverse. Jodi Miller has initiated hate crimes and hate speech community outreach groups and training. The initial training will be available for all first responders. Ken reported that a consultant has been hired regarding body-worn cameras and will be administering a survey to 14 law enforcement agencies in the county. Ken announced the Walk for Unity Against Hate on October 3rd in the City of Poughkeepsie. The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office will be scheduling a date to report to the committee on the progress of the executive order on police reform. There were no questions.

Victims—Kelly Bunt

Kelly indicated that she had nothing to add to her report beyond the earlier presentation and their next meeting is the 8th of October.

Juvenile Justice- Karen DeSimone

The committee met on July 22nd. Judge Egitto led a discussion on process issues with Raise the Age. There are ongoing issues with access to detention beds and there appears to be a need for more training around arraignment procedures. There were two presentations at the meeting. The first was on the Families First Court Initiative. The second presentation was on the SNUG program. At the last Partnership for Youth Justice meeting, the main topic was the rise in youth violence and how best to respond. All acknowledged that gun violence has become more of an issue for the Family Court because of Raise the Age legislation. The Mid-Hudson Regional Youth Justice Team received a grant from the state and will be distributing what is known as the ARTIC survey to determine how trauma-informed service agencies are. The Building Bridges conference is scheduled for the 22nd of October. The committee will meet on the 23rd of September.

Re-Entry – Tom Angell and Irma Machado

Tom reported that the committee met on August 19th. They had a presentation by Kelly Bunt on the intersection between re-entry and sex offender treatment services. The next meeting is the 21st of October. There will be a presentation from Erin McCloskey from Vassar College on a for-credit class that was held with both Vassar students and Exodus participants. The committee continues to work with Kevin Warwick, the Special Populations consultant, on MRT for individuals on Parole and integrating RESTART with Exodus.

CIC – Shirley Adams

Shirley reported that they are reviewing topics for a virtual public forum in November. There is interest in both police reform and the Vassar College/Exodus collaboration.

Diversion – Steve Miccio

Steve was not present.

Justice-Involved Women’s Committee—Alisyn Gaffney and Cherrell Evans-Tillery

The committee met on August 24th. They are finishing up with the re-entry guide and hope to be done by the end of October. Alisyn and Cherrell met with Marist staff to firm up the details of a survey to determine needs of women at the Women’s Center. The next meeting is to be determined.

Special Populations – Jon Heller

Special Populations met on the 13th of September. Jon gave a RESTART quality assurance update. Jenna Sarvis gave an update on DVOP (formerly IPVI). There was a discussion on mental health services. The Incarcerated Persons with Special Needs subcommittee, which had not been able to meet during Covid, will meet on the 30th of September. Tom Angell noted that Judge Segal was interested in developing or expanding programs for people with mental health issues so a small subgroup will be assembled to discuss this and related issues. Kevin Warwick gave a RESTART update and Kelly provided a sex offender treatment update. Superintendent Lee gave an update on MAT at the Jail and indicated things are going very well. Nancy Kelly noted that we recently had the highest number of individuals ever released on MAT. The next meeting is Monday, the 18th of October.

6. Old Business

Tom Morris reported on the Red Flag Law. The official name for these orders is the Extreme Risk Protection Order. According to the court clerk, Dutchess County has handled 17 ERPO matters since inception of the law. Nine petitions were granted, seven were withdrawn, and one is pending. The matters are sealed after a period of time.

7. New Business—None

8. Announcements -None

9. Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Karen DeSimone seconded by Pastor Perez.

10. Questions from Guests

Molly Shanley asked about the status of outside programs in the jail. Jon Heller responded that it is limited due to continued Covid restrictions. He recommended that Molly contact Paige Reed at the Jail directly for the most current information.

Next Meeting—November 16, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. (virtual)