

Dutchess County
Criminal Justice Council
Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2014

Present: Mary Ellen Still, Chair, Director of Probation

Shirley Adams, Catherine Street Center, CIC Committee
Thomas Angell, Public Defender
Susie Balutis, DC Probation
Onaje Benjamin, DC Jail
Bill Carlos, DC Legislative Appt.
Gary Christensen, Consultant
John Crodelle, Judge
Karen DeSimone, DC Probation
Angela Flesland, DC Legislator
Peter Forman, Judge
Greg Gale, DC Jail
Todd Gdula, Citizen Appt.
Bridget Goddard, DCFS
Margaret Hirst, DMH
Barbara Jeter-Jackson, DC Legislator
Ron Knapp, C/Pok Police
Richard Perkins, DC Legislator
Kealy Salomon, Commissioner of Planning
Marjorie Smith, DA's Office
Denise Watson, DC Family Court Judge

Guests:

Sarah Bradshaw, *Poughkeepsie Journal*
Alice Bunnell, Citizen
Fred Bunnell, Citizen
Sam Busselle, Citizen
Gayle Cromartie, Beulah Baptist Church
Bernard Daisley, Trinity Temple SDA Church
Brian Doyle, Family Partnership
Mary Haight, Project MORE, Inc.
Vernan Jordan, Trinity Temple SDA Church
Martin D. Lynch, Project MORE, Inc.
Colleen Pillus, DC Executive Office
Darrett Roberts, Citizen
Frederick D. Romig, East Fishkill Town Justice
Bill Rubin, Citizen/ENJAN
Sue Serino, DC Legislator
Mary R. Spriggs, Citizen/ENJAN

Mary Ellen Still called the meeting to order at 8:10 AM.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the November 19, 2013 meeting were approved on a motion by Angela Flesland and Bill Carlos.

2. Presentation by Project MORE - Women's Reporting Center

Mary Ellen said that a grant was received to start a Women's Reporting Center. Gender responsive programs and strategies was a need identified by the CJC. Project MORE received the DCJS grant a few weeks ago, and they are present at this month's DC CJC meeting to introduce the program and answer any questions about it. Project MORE will work in partnership with the county. Mary Ellen followed by introducing Marty Lynch, the Director of Programs and Planning, and Mary Haight, Director of the Women's Reporting Center.

Marty Lynch began by introducing Project MORE and its relationship with Dutchess County. Marty noted that Dutchess County is nationally recognized for its progressive and innovative programs and adherence to evidence-based practices. Project MORE is a not-for-profit based out of New Haven, Connecticut. They have been in operation for 40 years. Project MORE (Model Offender Reintegration Experience) was formed to meet the needs of people returning from prisons. There are about 100 full-time employees, and roughly 40 part-time. All of their work is with offenders and alternatives to incarceration programs. Marty Lynch began in the 1970s at a substance abuse facility in Millerton and worked closely with Dutchess County. In 2000, he returned to the area and began working with the Probation Department and CTC (Community Transition Center). Then seven years ago, they were awarded a contract for transitional housing on the grounds of the former state hospital. That 38-bed facility operates under a contract with the county through the Office of Probation. For roughly 14 years, they have worked with Mary Ellen and other members of the community on criminal justice needs and programming. Last fall, following numerous discussions it was determined that there was a critical need for services for women. They were awarded this grant from the state in late December 2013 as part of an RFP process. Research showed that females in Dutchess County had a higher arrest rate than average for females in New York. In Dutchess, 25% of the female inmates are housed out. The program is for females 18 years and older who may otherwise be Dutchess County inmates. Referrals may be made at various stages in the criminal justice process. Individuals are assessed for needs and service plans are developed for each person. A site has been selected, but furnishings and equipment need to be acquired before the center opens.

All of the services that will be provided are approved, recognized behavioral change programs that are evidence-based. Communication and collaboration are key elements. Mary Haight, a former probation officer, has been selected as the Director of the new program.

The center will use, and is required to use, evidence-based practices. Services will include assessment, case management, cognitive groups, employment assistance including the Ready, Set, Work curriculum and trauma informed interventions. Transportation will be available and there is a process to obtain emergency housing through the Pathways program, if needed. There are funds for 250 bed nights and there is some flexibility to increase this number if needed. They will work with other agencies in the community and collaborate wherever possible.

Richard Perkins asked how many women currently in the criminal justice system would be eligible today. Mary Ellen said that they met the week before to review caseloads, and will continue reviews to make referrals as well as screen new cases. A referral form is also being created.

This grant will complement the technical assistance grant that was previously obtained to develop a needs assessment for women in pretrial services.

Gary Christensen asked what risk levels would be primarily admitted. Marty Lynch said that the program would be primarily aimed at medium to high risk. They want to ensure that their services meet the current needs, which are more for medium to high risk. They are currently able to serve 100 women, and can expand depending on future needs. The criteria for discharge will be once the individual has completed all program components, which should be approximately 60-90 days.

William Grady noted that this program runs 60 - 90 days. The District Attorney and Public Defenders offices want to move cases faster than that time frame, and he questioned how this will work if the person(s) is no longer in the pretrial stage. Mary Ellen said that individuals could enter at any stage in the criminal justice process. If they enter at the pretrial stage, they can continue through the pendency of the case and post-disposition, if indicated. They can participate while under probation supervision.

This program is set to run for 18 months with two additional years to follow. Mary Ellen said that while this program was funded by a grant, there is the possibility it could receive more permanent funding, or be renewed for additional years, if outcomes are positive.

Mary Ellen thanked Marty and Mary for the informative presentation and wished them success with the project.

3. Jail/ATI Report - Greg Gale/Mary Ellen Still

Jail Report

The reports were distributed by email. Greg Gale said that admissions were down 530 from 2012. The average length of stay was longer in 2013, though the trend during the last six months of 2013 was for a shorter length of stay. The average daily population for 2013 was 454, and for 2012, it was 452. The average length of stay for 2013 was 50 days, and for 2012, it was 46. In 2013, admissions were 3,322, and for 2012 it was 3,852.

ATI Report

The reports were distributed by email. The average daily population was 580. Tom Angell asked if the waiting list for transitions and other programs could be included on this report. Mary Ellen said she thought they could, but it might be challenging as the numbers fluctuate throughout the month. They will try to capture this information if possible.

4. Update and Plans for 2014 - Gary Christensen

Gary Christensen began by recapping that we had looked at those released from the jail to Dutchess County over the period of one year. We were able to establish strong data regarding recidivism and average length of stay, and now have a solid baseline in which to compare data. We have been consistent with around 3,500-admittance rate in Dutchess. The average length of stay has not been consistent. Average stay used to be around 30-35, and now it is about 50 days. Therefore, in moving forward we want to look at additional jurisdictions, processing, system efficiencies, and evidence-based programming. Onaje Benjamin asked if there was a correlation with Proxy scores and housing out. Gary commented that for housing out, it is pretty even across the board. Housing out is not determined solely by risk score, but is affected by other issues such as medical needs and mental health concerns.

5. SAMSHA's GAINS Center Application

Mary Ellen said there is an opportunity to apply for a one-day workshop on the Sequential Intercept Mapping model for individuals with co-occurring disorders. The SAMSHA's GAINS Center has issued a notice that they will accept applications from jurisdictions interested in developing integrated strategies to better identify and respond to individuals with co-occurring disorders in contact with the criminal justice system. The SIM is designed to help multi-disciplinary teams facilitate collaboration and identify ways barriers can be reduced between criminal justice, mental health and substance abuse systems and to begin development of integrated local plans. Mary Ellen will work with Margaret Hirst of Mental Hygiene on this application. Gary Christensen noted that the Sequential Intercept model is good both as a foundation for planning and often leads to enhanced funding as well. The application is due February 14, 2014. The consensus was to apply for the technical assistance.

6. Committee Reports

CIC

Shirley Adams said they would have their next meeting on January 31, 2014. This will be a presentation on Part Two of Ready, Set, Work by personnel from the Community Transitions Center and the Office of Probation.

Juvenile Justice

Karen DeSimone said they would meet at the end of January. At their last meeting in November 2013, they looked at the new detention assessment tool, and its impact throughout our local system. Several members of the committee are involved with the Mid Hudson Regional Youth Justice Team, which is a statewide program that looks at juvenile justice issues. At their next meeting, they will set their agenda for 2014.

Re-Entry

Tom Angell said they met on December 19, 2013 with a focus on education. Dutchess Community College (DCC) staff presented information on the college's admission process for people with felonies. There were some concerns that were then brought to the Executive Committee with a request that a meeting be arranged with the college. Specifically, there was some concern that potential applicants might view a letter from DCC requesting additional information as a rejection letter. Tom brought these issues to the Executive Committee and Mary Ellen will arrange a meeting with the college. Anyone wishing to attend should notify Mary Ellen or Tom. Onaje Benjamin and Bill Carlos volunteered to participate in the meeting. In addition to clarifying that the letter was not a rejection, including referrals and/or resources to assist in the application process would also be discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. at Christ Church in Poughkeepsie.

Women in CJ System

Susie Balutis said that they met for the first time in January 2014. They reviewed the pretrial technical assistance grant and the grant for the Women's Center. Marty Lynch and Mary Haight of Project MORE presented. Their next meeting will be in March.

7. Old Business

Tom Angell said that they hired two new public defenders for the attorney at arraignment project. Judge Romig said that this has been working well. Tom said that overall this has been a very positive experience. Another benefit is that we are able to connect with families right away and to get information that is valuable at the arraignment. They will continue to review program outcomes.

8. New Business

None

Questions and Comments

It was asked if there are community members involved on the various subcommittees - aside from CIC? Karen DeSimone said that there are community members on Juvenile Justice, community members are welcome to attend. Susie Balutis also said that they are welcoming members from the community to their committee. Re-Entry also has community members on the committee. Gary Christensen added that the CJC website contains information for the community.

Sarah Bradshaw asked Gary if we have gotten to a point where some people are housed out the entire time of their incarceration? Gary said that stats are broken out by increments—for example, those housed out 20 or more days, or not housed out at all. Another question was if there are stats for those released regarding recidivism rates and what factors cause recidivism? Gary said that there are recidivism percentages and recidivism percentages based on the risk to reoffend. We can correlate that data. We will be looking at crimes, jurisdiction etc., and risk to reoffend.

Sam Busselle noted that the average length of stay is 50 and with the number of programs being introduced, why does the number keep going up? Are we making progress, and can we predict the average length of stay? Greg Gale said the stats are from the entire year and showed an increase in the first part of 2013, but has decreased in the last six months. Sam also asked what was happening with the pods. Mary Ellen said it is being worked on and there was no additional information to report at this time.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2014 at 8:00 a.m.

Catharine Street Community Center
Poughkeepsie, New York
(Entrance at 152 Mansion Street)