

**Dutchess County  
Criminal Justice Council**  
Meeting Minutes  
January 23, 2024

Present: Sue Serino, County Executive  
Rachel Kashimer, County Executive's Office  
Dr. Gary Christensen, CJC Consultant  
Jon Heller, D.C Probation, Special Populations Chair  
Margaret Walker, Office of the Public Defender, Re-Entry Chair  
Alex Rosen, Office of the Public Defender  
Michael Brady, District Attorney's Office  
Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, FACEP, Commissioner DBCH  
Jean-Marie Niebuhr, Deputy Commissioner, DBCH  
Hon. Susan Sullivan-Bisceglia, Town of Lagrange Court; Centralized Arraignment Comm Chair  
Hon. Frank Mora, Poughkeepsie City Court  
Hon. Tracy MacKenzie, Dutchess County Family Court  
Cherrell Evans-Tillery, Justice-Involved Women's Committee Co-Chair  
Alisyn Gaffney, D.C Probation, Justice-Involved Women's Co-Chair  
Shirley Adams, Catharine St. Center, CIC Chair  
Sandy Carroll, DC Probation, Juvenile Justice Chair  
Anthony Pica, Deputy Superintendent, D.C. Jail  
Bridget Goddard, DCFS  
John Gildard, Citizen Appointment  
Robert Faust, Legislator  
Michele Romano, Coordinator

Guests: Tom Morris, Dutchess County Probation  
Paul Spagnoli, Dutchess County Probation  
Megan Chetner, Dutchess County Probation  
Sheena Walsh, Lieutenant, DC Jail  
Molly Shanley, Community Member

1. **Introductions** - Jon welcomed Dutchess County Public Defender Margaret Walker along with Alex Rosen, Criminal Division Bureau Chief with the Public Defender's Office. Jon also extended a welcome to Dutchess County Legislator Robert Faust and Judge Tracy MacKenzie of the Dutchess County Family Court.
2. **Approval of November 28, 2023 Minutes**-The minutes of November 28, 2023 were approved on a motion by Hon. Frank Mora, seconded by John Gildard.
3. **Jail/ATI/Safe Act Report -Therese Lee, Mary Ellen Still, Jean-Marie Niebuhr** – The December Jail/ATI/Safe Act reports were sent electronically. There were no questions.
4. **Planning and Research Update—Gary Christensen**  
Gary said he conducted multiple analyses of the Dutchess County Jail population throughout 2023. He gave a brief description of the Quality Assurance sub-committee comprised of the District Attorney's Office, the Office of the Public Defender, and the Office of Probation and Community Corrections. Gary presented a PowerPoint retrospective analysis of 2023. He displayed monthly and yearly comparisons of our jail population's composition by crime type, jurisdiction, average length of stay and recidivism.

Gary discussed his findings regarding the increased number of admissions for misdemeanors and non-violent felony crimes as well as an increase in the average length of stay for violent felonies. He further stated that all past studies indicate the Proxy shows strong validation as a determinant of risk to reoffend.

During 2024, Gary continued to assist and participate as a member of the Special Populations workgroup and the RESTART Quality Assurance workgroup. He discussed the continuing challenges related to the pandemic and associated quarantines, and that many innovations or “workarounds” continued for RESTART participants during 2023 and, at times, decreased treatment dosage. The overall number of RESTART participants also remained lower due to ongoing DCJ quarantine practices. Quality Assurance efforts within the coming year will include differentiating outcomes for RESTART participants receiving program treatment within the new Justice and Transition Center vs. those who received program treatment within the old DCJ. Medication Assisted Treatment continued to be offered without pause throughout 2023.

Gary also discussed his analysis of Judicial Diversion within Dutchess County, its effectiveness, and its likely possible expansion in the future. He further discussed that data was obtained representing all potential Judicial Diversion clients considered by the court from December 16, 2011 through June 29, 2023. He did an analysis of the cohort including rates of Judicial Diversion admissions, participation, and completion by race, gender, ethnicity, and jurisdiction, as well as one-year recidivism rates for those accepted to the program. Gary findings for a one-year recidivism rate were impressively low. Data collection will continue in the future.

For 2024, the Quality Assurance Committee will remain committed to case processing initiatives and continued evaluation of the impact of Bail Reform on the existing jail population. They will monitor proposed legislative changes related to Judicial Diversion and evaluate the potential impact of increased eligibility as well as assist in the development of a data system to identify candidates eligible for Judicial Diversion and facilitate process and outcome measure on a regular basis. They will also continue participation with RESTART Quality Assurance to evaluate the impact of the Justice and Transition Center on RESTART and participate in discussions with the courts to incentivize RESTART participation. There were no questions.

## **5. Committee Reports:**

### **Quality Assurance—Gary Christensen**

Gary had nothing further to add for Quality Assurance.

### **Raise The Age Update—Hon. Joseph Egitto**

Judge Egitto was unable to attend.

### **Centralized Arraignment—Hon. Susan Sullivan-Bisceglia**

Judge Sullivan-Bisceglia reported that the Centralized Arraignment Committee’s main focus for 2023 will continue into 2024—establishing a location for Centralized Arraignment. The committee met with Dutchess County stakeholders and the Office of Court Administration and toured three locations in the City of Poughkeepsie—the Dutchess County Jail, Law Enforcement Center, and an off-site location on Oakley Street to help identify a suitable location. During their last tour of the Law Enforcement Center, which included Office of Court Administration Special Counsel

Arielle Bryant, Deputy County Executive Rachel Kashimer and Sheriff Kirk Imperati, they discussed the logistics of the space. There will be upcoming discussions regarding financial and logistical matters that will require further consideration. Once a location is identified and agreed upon, they will proceed to conduct full stakeholder meetings and a detailed plan will be drafted for submission, review, and approval by the Office of Court Administration. There was further discussion on the importance of Centralized Arraignment.

**Diversion— Steve Miccio**

Steve was unable to attend.

**Police Reform and Modernization — Shawn Castano**

Shawn Castano was unable to attend. Jon reported that in 2023 the Police Reform and Modernization Committee focused on three priorities— police body-worn cameras, community policing and police recruitment.

With the collaboration of Dutchess County Department of Emergency Response, support from the County Executive, County Legislature, Dutchess County Department of Law, and Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, they were able to successfully complete the Countywide Police Body-Worn Camera Initiative to provide law enforcement officers in Dutchess County with body-worn cameras, create clear policies to require their operation, and set guidelines for the release of footage. Offered to all city, town, and village police departments in Dutchess County, participating police agencies signed an intermunicipal agreement and a five-year body-worn camera contract with Axon, the county's selected vendor. The agencies that participated in the program are City of Poughkeepsie Police, Town of Poughkeepsie Police, Town of East Fishkill Police, Town of Hyde Park Police, Village of Wappingers Falls Police, Village of Fishkill Police and the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office with a total of 316 body-worn cameras deployed. The remaining Dutchess County cities, towns, and village police departments not listed opted to remain with their current body-worn camera vendor, seek an alternative funding source, or chose not to institute the use of body-worn cameras.

The community policing initiative aims to a) increase the number of positive non-enforcement contacts law enforcement officers have with residents b) improve community relations, c) expand their involvement in community events and activities and d) increase the diversity of the law enforcement workforce by improving recruitment tactics, removing barriers, and eliminating other unnecessarily restrictive hiring practices or policies. The Dutchess County Sheriff's Office created the Community Resource Officer Unit. The underlying goal of the specialized Community Resource Officers is to enhance the overall safety and quality of life in the community through creative strategies that help build trusting relationships and deter criminal activity. Sheriff Imperati informed the committee that the implementation of the Community Resource Officer Unit has proven extremely successful in building relationships and creating more relaxed encounters, offering opportunities for conversation and dialogue to ensue. Interactions have been educational and helpful in maintaining a safe and orderly neighborhood.

The police recruitment initiative endeavors to increase the diversity of the law enforcement workforce by improving recruitment tactics, removing barriers, and eliminating other unnecessarily restrictive hiring practices or policies. The

committee started to examine police recruitment efforts in Dutchess County and prioritized increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within law enforcement agencies. Administered by the Dutchess County Department of Human Resources, the Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer civil service exam is utilized by the county and local municipalities to hire deputy sheriffs as well as city, town, and village police officers. The committee has noticed a drastic decline in applicants. They have analyzed and communicated their observations with the Department of Human Resources and leadership from county police agencies and intends to participate in ongoing strategic planning efforts to increase recruitment and seek diverse applicants in 2024. There were no questions.

### **Victims—Kelly Bunt**

Kelly was unable to attend. Jon reported that the Victims Committee's main project for 2023 was the development of a focus group that was originally initiated in 2020 and placed on hold due to COVID. The goal of this project was to hear directly from victims/survivors about their experiences while interfacing with the criminal justice system, i.e. in what ways did participants feel supported/unsupported by the system, in what ways is the system responding well, and how can the system improve its response to victims/survivors. Throughout the year, they worked on the development and implementation of the project. They consulted with Sharon King, Assistant Director of Victim Services at the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to assist them in this endeavor. They received sponsorship from Cornell Cooperative Extension. However, they experienced several challenges including: 1) lack of privacy for potential participants with children home from school on summer vacation as well as families going on vacation 2) victims/survivors reporting a feeling of "nothing will change," regardless of their participation and 3) having healed from the trauma and feeling fearful that participation would re-open those wounds. They concluded that the project could remain open for those victims/survivors who want to provide input which would provide a platform for them to be heard and enable the committee to continually collect the data. They have scheduled January 25, 2024, for those participants to be interviewed.

Also, throughout 2023, they continued to collaborate with SART to organize a community education initiative on trauma, implicit bias and trauma responses in victims of crime, in particular victims of sexual assault (SA) and domestic violence (DV). Implementation of this initiative will continue in 2024.

For 2024, the committee will expand their membership and welcome four new members. They will also focus on trauma trainings for first responders, the expansion of advocacy programs, enhancing communication with and training for the educational system when responding to victims/survivors, and the expansion of transportation and housing access for victims/survivors. There were no questions.

### **Re-Entry— Charles Figel and Margaret Walker**

Margaret gave an overview of the Re-Entry Committee's activities for 2023. She said that in 2023 assessment services were provided to a total of 269 individuals: 78 participants completed the anger management program, 56 participants completed the Ready, Set, Work program, and 101 participants found employment. They had ten participants enrolled in the Moral Reconciliation Therapy program with no graduations yet. Margaret discussed the additional services that Exodus provides, their primary source of referrals and how they design specific programming for each identified

need that the client has. Exodus continues to meet the performance goals of its various contracts.

Margaret further stated that the committee met on a bi-monthly basis to address systemic barriers that individuals returning to the community from correctional facilities face. They had representatives from the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, social service agencies, faith-based communities, mental health and substance abuse agencies, domestic violence agencies, concerned citizens and many others attend on a regular basis. They had presentations from faith-based representatives, Clearwater Counseling Associates, ACES-VR, BOCES, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), and Project M.O.R.E. They continue to collaborate with Community Housing Initiatives for re-entry housing and with Vassar College for joint college credit classes for Vassar students and re-entry participants. The community-based supervision system continues to adapt to the broad changes in parole practice that went into effect in 2022 with the adoption by the New York State Legislature's "Less is More" initiative. After dramatic upheaval in 2022, the parole supervision system has stabilized as the various stakeholders come to understand the new procedures and practices.

For 2024, they will remain committed to using evidence-based practices to assist those who have been incarcerated to successfully reintegrate into their home communities and to lower the recidivism rate among parolees. The Re-Entry Task Force acknowledges the contributions of Public Defender Tom Angell who chaired the Task Force for many years and retired in early 2024. There were no questions.

#### **CIC—Shirley Adams**

Shirley reported that in 2023 the Community Involvement Committee presented a virtual public forum Titled, "Rising Number of Deaths: The Opioid Epidemic-Accidental Overdose Fatalities (2022) in Dutchess County" with guest presenter: Allison (Ally) Smith, Epidemiologist, DC Department of Behavioral and Community Health (DBCH). The program's support and services were provided by: Mary Ellen Still, Director of Probation and Community Corrections and chair of the CJC, Jon Heller, Principal Probation Officer, Dr. Livia Santiago-Rosado, MD, FACEP, Commissioner, DC Department of Behavioral and Community Health, Jean-Marie Niebuhr, Deputy Commissioner, DBCH and Steve Miccio, CEO, People USA and the Stabilization Center. They also had special guest: Founder, Matt Herring Foundation, named in honor of the founder's grandson, who died of an opioid overdose. Shirley announced that the presentation was recorded and is available for viewing upon request.

For 2024, the committee will collaborate with local organizations and groups to increase its outreach to the community. Topics they have under consideration for 2024 are the new Justice and Transition Center, Alternatives to Incarceration and Bail Reform. They will continue to identify and present the concerns of the community, while exploring ways to engage Dutchess County residents in discussions and activities related to the county's Criminal Justice System. There were no questions.

#### **Justice-Involved Women — Alisyn Gaffney and Cherrell Evans-Tillery**

Cherrell gave a review of the 2023 Justice-Involved Women Committee's activities. They have gained six new members. They worked with Hope on a Mission to prepare and serve meals to those in need monthly and will continue in 2024. They had several agencies attend their meetings to discuss what programs they offer and how clients can be referred. These

agencies included Hudson River Housing, Family Services, Hope on a Mission and the RESTART and RECHARGE programs. The Financial Fitness Program, which is a program through Hudson River Housing, is being presented to the women at the Women's Residence. Members of the committee also assisted the Office of Probation with Adopt a Family, a program that purchases holiday gifts for families in need. In 2024, they will continue to have representatives from different community agencies speak at meetings. In January, they are going to have a representative from the Family Services Domestic Violence program who will explain their program and how to make referrals. They will also discuss the community refrigerator program, which would be stocked with food and available to those in need. There were no questions.

### **Special Populations—Jon Heller**

Jon reported that in 2023, the Special Populations Committee was primarily focused on the opening of the new JTC. While the new facility's opening was delayed, preparation by the committee moved forward. Between April and June, the entire jail staff received 3-hour blocks of training, led by the RESTART program staff, that presented an overview of the RESTART program. Later in June, an 8-hour training was presented to those corrections officers who were selected to work the RESTART post. Trainings were facilitated by Kevin Warwick. The core of the committee's work focused on RESTART and RESTART Quality Assurance, MAT (Medication Assisted Treatment) at the jail, mental health services, and providing support to the JTC transition team.

For 2024 the committee plans to continue to monitor and guide the progress of the RESTART program. The focus of the committee will be to provide support and training for the transition to the new facility. Special Populations, along with consultant Kevin Warwick, will provide follow-up training for corrections officers who received the 8-hour block of training and will be assigned to the RESTART unit posts. In coordination with the corrections staff, the committee will develop and review new protocols and procedures for the RESTART units, identify special populations of individuals within the local criminal justice system, and continue to explore solutions to the challenges presented by these special populations. There were no questions.

### **Juvenile Justice—Sandy Carroll**

Sandy gave a review of the Juvenile Justice Committee's focus for 2023. Sandy informed the Council that the committee was chaired by herself as well as Dr. Zoe Berko until April when Dr. Berko returned to state service to assume a clinical leadership role. Throughout the year, the committee discussed such topics as Raise the Age, Juvenile Delinquency Reforms in New York State, Mid-Hudson Regional Youth Justice Team, Path to Promise, implementation of trauma-informed services at Probation, revised Order and Conditions of Probation and J-FIRE Sandy gave a summary of each.

The committee's goals for 2024 are the development of a local service matrix for youth to guide intervention planning, generating a database of community treatment providers with expertise in trauma-specific and/or trauma-informed treatment and diversification of committee membership with involvement from youth and families with lived experience of the juvenile justice system. They will launch a series of documentaries such as Paper Tigers and Resilience for members and other interested parties. There were no questions.

6. **Old Business**— Jon reminded the committee chairs that their 2023 Annual Report submission# are due on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January.

7. **New Business**— None
8. **Announcements**— Congratulations to County Executive Sue Serino.
9. **Adjourn** – Motion to adjourn was made by Bridget Goddard, seconded by Anthony Pica.

**Next Meeting- March 12, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. The meeting will be held in-person at 230 North Rd. in Poughkeepsie.**