

Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2020

Present: Mary Ellen Still, Chair, Director of Probation
Dr. Gary Christensen, CJC Consultant
Honorable Frank Mora, Poughkeepsie City Court
Jon Heller, D.C Probation, Special Populations Chair
William O’Neil, County Executive’s Office
Tom Angell, Public Defender, Re-Entry Chair
Bill Eckert, DBCH
Shirley Adams, CIC Chair
Kelly Bunt, KB Forensics, Victims’ Chair
Loren Petrella, County Executive’s Office
Honorable Gerald Hayes, Citizen Appt
Honorable Frederick Romig, East Fishkill Town Justice
Hon. Denise Watson, Dutchess County Family Court
Hon. Joseph A. Egitto, DC Family Court
Steve Miccio, PEOPLE Inc., Diversion Chair
Austin “Brud” Hodgkins, Citizen Appointment
Kari Rieser, DCFS
Matt Weishaupt, DC District Attorney’s Office
Jacqueline Johnson, DBCH
Dawn Hawley, Coordinator

Guests: Martin Lynch, Project M.O.R.E.
George Escalante, Project M.O.R.E.

- 1. Approval of January 14, 2020 Minutes** - The minutes of January 14, 2020 were approved on a motion by Steve Miccio, seconded by Bill Eckert.
- 2. Jail/ATI –Lt. John Alessi and Mary Ellen Still** – The ATI and Jail stats were sent with the minutes. Mary Ellen said that we are taking a close look at the impact of bail reform which took effect on January 1, 2020. We think it will be several months before the system stabilizes. We had a reduction in the jail population. There were no questions.
- 3. Project M.O.R.E. Employment Program – George Escalante**—Marty introduced George Escalante who is the Coordinator for the Community Employment Program at Project M.O.R. E. The program is 100% funded by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services and a requirement of the program is that participants must be on probation. George has 25 years experience in this field. Marty added that he is doing an excellent job with a

challenging program. The program is a 5-week group format that meets twice a week. They utilize the Ready, Set, Work curriculum. George said his vision and Project M.O.R.E.'s vision is to help better the lives of the people he serves. The lesson plans cover resumes, job interviews, their rights, self-reflection, confidence and self-esteem. Lesson plans and audio and visual aids are used with the program. Participants have the opportunity to get business attire for interviews. Clients are introduced to Dutchess One Stop for more resources and support. The goal is to retain work and not just obtain it. George reported 84% employment for those who completed the program in 2019. A milestone is 90-day retention. Many participants stay in touch after completing the program. Mary Ellen thanked George and added that many people have difficulty maintaining employment and George focuses on that aspect. He is a mentor and coach.

4. Planning and Bail Reform Update – Dr. Gary Christensen and Jon Heller

Gary distributed a handout from the Quality Assurance committee. It compares 2020 data to the same period last year, January 1– March 3, broken down by overall admissions and crime type. There were 538 admissions in that period last year and this year the total is 199. The major decreases in the jail are sentenced misdemeanors and sentenced nonviolent felonies.

Judge Hayes, assisted by Judge Steinberg, are heading a committee to explore centralized arraignment. Tom said there is a small reduction in arraignments, but the main change is the number of people who are not being remanded to the jail since January 1, 2020. Most appear before a judge for Orders of Protections or DWIs.

Jon discussed the jail list that is distributed each week and gave an overview of the types of offenses on the list. The workgroup reviews each person in the jail and the reason they are incarcerated. The number of people in homeless shelters who are parolees has gone way down. North Hamilton house has had trouble getting admissions. Tom said he doesn't know why we have resources not being fully utilized but he will look into it.

Jon said we have been taking referrals for technical parole violations for RESTART. Larry King from the PD's office has been successful in bringing information on their progress back to the parole judges and working out a disposition that includes re-release back into the community to continue with the program connections made by RESTART. Jon said another draft of the pretrial standards has been completed and the document will be released within the next two weeks.

5. Community Reports –

Quality Assurance – Dr. Gary Christensen, Tom Angell and Bill Grady

Gary reported that bail reform takes up a lot of the committee's time, but they are also working on recidivism studies for people going through the forensic assessment process and RESTART. Judge Romig asked about discovery. The DA has received more resources. Matt said that the new discovery laws have had a tremendous impact on the system, particularly on the DA's office and law enforcement agencies. There are now detectives and police officers off the streets to handle discovery requirements. The tight time frames and amount of material is so voluminous that it eats up entire days. Mary Ellen said we will continue to review the impact of bail reform.

RTA – Hon. Joseph Egitto

Judge Egitto said new judges have been certified and trained. RTA has a meeting on March 25 and will be talking about a new administrative order with respect to PPDs (PPD is Pre-Petition Detention Application on a Juvenile Delinquency case.) Judge Egitto continued that they are seeing an uptick in the filing of petitions. Mary Ellen said that we are seeing an increase in cases since 17-year olds were included effective October 1, 2019. Judge Watson added that accessing beds is still a problem.

Judge Egitto said that Westchester is moving toward prioritizing Westchester youth; Woodfield is full now. The state kept cutting the number of beds they had planned for the new facility. The Judge said that there are no psychiatric beds for kids. We have kids with severe mental health problems and there is no mechanism in the state to deal with that. Judge Egitto said he applauds Probation and the Stabilization Center. He has called on them more than once to assist with youth who would normally be detained. The Mobile Crisis Team is also an important resource.

Juvenile Justice – Karen DeSimone

Mary Ellen reported that Karen was unable to attend today's meeting, but she reported that the committee has a meeting scheduled for the end of March. Probation is coordinating a technical assistance grant from the National Center for Juvenile Justice/RFK. Mary Ellen thanked the Family Court Judges for participating in this project. It will be a two-year project and the consultants will be looking at the entire Juvenile Justice System as well as probation.

Centralized Arraignment – Hon. Jerry Hayes

Judge Hayes reported that the Centralized Arraignment Committee consists of representatives from the Sheriff, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation, Magistrates Association and the Police Chiefs Association. The original purpose was to explore whether centralized arraignment would be beneficial. The committee has had

five meetings and gathered information from around the state. The consensus is favorable toward this initiative. However, there are issues: the present jail may not have the capability to make provisions for arraignments, judges have concerns about staffing and there are technical and logistical matters. Ultimately, the Office of Court Administration will decide on this issue. At the February 24 meeting, a representative of the administrative judge was present. She wants us to have two stakeholder meetings. Judge Hayes met with the Executive Committee and it was determined that we need to clarify the above issues before scheduling meetings with stakeholders. Bill O'Neil said we appreciate the committee's efforts. We will look at arraignment numbers. Tom has the number of arraignments in January and February and will make them available to Judge Hayes. Mary Ellen thanked everyone involved in working on this.

Re-Entry – Tom Angell and Irma Machado

Tom reported that the committee met on February 20. They had a presentation by Cheryl Roberts, Executive Director of The Greenberg Center for Social and Criminal Justice. They have a very innovative program in the Bronx helping people with psychiatric problems in the Criminal Justice System. The next meeting will be on April 16 and there will be a presentation on the recent reforms of the landlord-tenant law.

CIC – Shirley Adams

Shirley reported that they were focused on encouraging people to attend the State of the County address on social media that was held on 2/20. Tomorrow, March 11 at 5:00 p.m. is the State of the City which they have also worked to promote.

Diversion – Steve Miccio

Steve reported that there is a CIT class on March 23-27. They are reaching out to agencies that have sent fewer officers. Steve reported that Beacon, City of Poughkeepsie and Town of Poughkeepsie are 100% trained.

Bill Eckert said that the number of guests escorted to the Stabilization Center by law enforcement in February was 19. Out of those 19 officers, 15 were CIT trained. This evening is the annual forum for service needs for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Victims – Kelly Bunt

Kelly reported that since the beginning of the year, the Victims Committee has been working to start focus groups for victims of crime to get a better understanding of the gaps in the system. The group is looking to obtain volunteers from community service organizations, other practitioners and colleges. They will send out a letter and have generated a screening assessment tool.

Justice Involved Women – Mary Ellen Still

Mary Ellen reported that we are waiting for a new Director of the Women's Center. A meeting is planned for the near future. We will update everyone and move forward from there.

Special Populations – Jon Heller

The Special Populations Committee met on February 10 and had a quality assurance update. On February 19, the RESTART staff had a second retreat off-site. They reviewed the action steps from the last retreat and came up with new action steps. Jon said the new groups are going very well. One exciting new development is that COs will be permanently assigned to the RESTART Unit. Kevin will be here next week to train jail staff. Between 20 and 25 correction officers have expressed an interest in working on the unit. MAT is also going well. Jon said they are working on the last hurdles for induction and that should be happening soon. There was an update from Family Services on IPVI. The committee will meet again on March 30.

6. Old Business – Update on JTC – Bill O'Neil

Mary Ellen reported that Bill had to leave, but there is a meeting with the COC planned for April.

7. New Business- none

8. Old Business—none

9 Announcements-none

10 Adjourn – A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Miccio, seconded by Tom Angell.

NEXT MEETING—Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 8:00 a.m.