



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
Executive Committee Minutes for Monday, May 16, 2011**

Welcome & Introductions, Commissioner Garcia called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. The Commissioner asked that everyone in attendance to introduce themselves.

Dallas Morning News Editorial Board Visit,

Commissioner Garcia thanked everyone who went to the Editorial Board visit (Judge Seider, Ron Stretcher, Commissioner Cantrell, Dr. Noyes, Cristina Melton-Crain, and Commissioner Garcia). She stated that it went very well, and she felt that the Dallas Morning News (DMN) had a comprehensive vision about law enforcement and how the Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) is working together, not only to allocate funds, but also to have an effective system when it comes to public safety. Judge Patterson mentioned that he had an interview with two reporters from the DMN last week. He stated that their main focus was about posting bonds, and who was being kept in jail and who was being released. Judge Patterson was concerned that any good press given by the Editorial Board may be undone by the two reporters that interviewed him.

Presentation: Alternative Sentencing/Electronic Monitoring (ELM)/ Interlock presented by **Leah Gamble, and Rebekah Truxal**

Ron Stretcher introduced Leah Gamble, who is the manager of the Pre-Trial Release program, and Rebekah Truxal, who manages the Alternative Sentencing/Bond Supervision Unit. Both have a number of years experience with Dallas County in Juvenile and Adult probation. Leah opened with a compliment received by Judge Lena Navario in regard to the ELM/Bond program. Judge Navario stated how confident she is with the supervision provided by the program. Rebekah proceeded to give an overview of the Alternative Sentencing program with handouts and visual aids. She stated that clients in this program have misdemeanor or state jail felonies, and have been placed on house arrest with ankle monitors (ELM). Since the inception of the program in August 2009 they have had 450 clients, with only 10 that have failed. She believes this success is due to the approach. It is a specific short term sentence which is very intensive. There is contact with the client daily. Out of the 450 clients, only 3 have committed new offenses while under supervision. In June 2010 the Jail Diversion Department began taking high risk bond cases. These are cases where the defendant could normally bond out themselves, but due to the nature of the offense or circumstances the judge would not reduce the bond. On these Bond Supervision cases, the client is fitted with a Global Positioning System (GPS) device that tracks them in real time. The success of this program is also evident

in the outcome measures. Over the past year there have been 80 high risk bonds granted, only 15 have failed and only 2 have committed new offenses while under supervision. Due to the real time capability of the device, violations are able to be addressed immediately. Another program this department is handling is the bond supervision for alcohol monitoring. The Interlock program monitors alcohol use through a device installed in their vehicle that the client blows into. There are currently 1000 clients in the program and last month only 8 failed. These programs are helping to reduce jail population, but are also providing a safety net for the community by supervising those individuals who might otherwise be perceived as a threat.

Chief Robert Brown asked what offense would be excluded from participating in the alternative sentencing program. Rebekah answered that the cases have to be eligible to serve time in the County jail. Ron added that the programs are not a “get out of jail free” card, but highly structured supervision programs that are monitoring the clients released closely. He stated that an exit interview is given wherein the question is asked if the client feels as though this was a true consequence or sentence, and he said the answer has been yes. Judge Burns stated he has quite a bit of confidence in the programs. Dr. Noyes alluded to the old work release program, and Ron indicated that this is an alternative to that program, but the financial burden is transferred to the offender. The Alternative Sentencing program cost is about \$7.00 a day, and the bond program cost is \$7.00 for the ELM and \$9.00 for the GPS. The offenders tend to buy-in to the program more when they are paying the out of pocket cost.

Councilwoman Delia Jasso asked if there was additional monitoring other than ELM. Rebekah answered that a schedule is set for every minute the offender is away from home. She stated that they are restricted from going shopping, to church, or anywhere else that is not on the schedule. Also, home and job visits are conducted. The programs are working, and the community is receiving a good measure of protection. Last month the savings to the County in jail bed days was 1886 at a cost savings of \$108,426.00.

Subcommittee Reports:

Juvenile Court, Dr. Terry Smith

The Juvenile courts are working on diversion programs. They have received approval for a Mental Health Court. The court will be used as a diversionary program similar to their Drug Court, hearing cases in the evening as to not take the child out of school. The committee is also focusing on Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with community partners for diversionary programs (currently, 7 MOU's are out). An example given was the Dallas Jewish Women's Foundation who provides conflict and dispute resolution programs that provide services to youth with family violence cases. They can be sent to services like this as opposed to being locked up in detention. They are also establishing contacts with surrounding police departments to look carefully at the types of youth that truly need to come to detention. Economically, the Juvenile

Department wants to work more collaboratively to get services in place that all can participate in. They have also developed a MOU with other county probation departments to arrange mutual courtesy visits to conduct the required face to face contact with youth in placement facilities thus saving the cost of travel.

Justice of Peace, Judge Steve Seider

Office of Court Administration (OCA) provided training to all of the JP courts. The Auditor's office also participated. Starting September 1, 2011 there will be new reporting requirements. Reports will no longer be in mass, but will have to be aging reports. The current case management system (CMS) will not support this requirement. The JP's are looking at different CMS's, but might need help from CJAB. Judge Seider pointed out that with the new fine structure, about \$110.00 or \$115.00 of the court cost will go to Austin, and only the fines remain with Dallas County for Class C misdemeanors.

The JP subcommittee is working on getting conference call capability. This will allow the JP's to meet and coordinate without having to travel across the county. Ron has been helping to get this setup and it appears that this will be in place shortly. Judge Patterson indicated that he has video equipment for the JP Judges that can be set up within two weeks. Judge Seider will meeting with Judge Patterson.

One of the bills in the Legislature will create 15 additional hours of training for the civil process. Scofflaw warrant roundups are being worked, and are going well.

JP's also hear mental illness and chemical dependency warrants. They would like to identify during the intake process, if the defendant has private insurance that will keep them from going to Parkland as opposed to Green Oaks or some other facility their insurance will pay for. Judge Patterson stated that in his court they are already making the determination early and diverting those cases to facilities other than county facilities. Ron stated he would follow-up to see if the JP process could be tweaked to help.

There may be some redistricting which will cause a court in District 3 to be abolished. Judge Seider is working with other JP's to submit a plan to Commissioners Court. Commissioner Garcia suggested that they do submit their plan as soon as possible through Rick Loessberg.

Public Policy, Delia Jasso

Councilwoman Jasso thanked Ron Stretcher for handling her report last meeting. She asked Ron to give updates on issues the CJAB Public Policy Committee's legislative agenda are supporting:

HB 2735 – Blue Warrants

These are bonds for technical violations of Parole. The Governor would not support this, but it was rewritten by Rep. Madden to require TDCJ to

use the summons process instead of arrest warrants. This has passed the House but not the Senate yet.

HB 439-Sobriety Checkpoints

This bill does not look like it is going anywhere.

HB 1933- Metal Theft

This bill has passed the House and was sent to the Senate, but has not been assigned to committee.

K2 (Synthetic Drug)

This bill did pass the House and the Senate.

HB 992- ATM Theft

This bill did pass the House and the Senate.

HB 976- Video Conference

This bill did pass the House and sent to the Senate.

HB 305- Misdemeanor Enhancement

Class A Misdemeanors that can be enhanced to a State Jail Felony after one prior. This has passed the House and sent to the Senate.

HB189- DWI

The bill would allow first time offenders deferred adjudication. Dr. Noyes discussed how the bill has been rewritten and amended to sound better. This bill has passed the House. Dr. Noyes will continue to monitor this bill.

Re-Entry, Hon. Charles Terrell and Michael Lee

Mr. Lee thanked the committee for its response in helping to get the contacts needed to perform the required background checks on ex-offenders. Mr. Lee reported that neither the Governor's grant, nor the Second Chance Act grant has come out yet. He doesn't anticipate anything happening before June. The city compliance review was completed, and went well. DOORS is in the process of partnering with Dallas Social Venture Partners (DSVP). This group has been in existence since 2002. They work with groups that deal with youth. This group calls themselves "Venture Philanthropist", they don't just give money, but they become involved in the process. History shows that when DSVP becomes a partner with an organization, they increase the budget, staff, and client capacity by 300%. The first meeting with DSVP and DOORS will be next week. Mr. Lee also reported about a potential MOU with the Juvenile Department and the Diversion Court.

Courts, Judge Robert Burn

Judge Burns reported on the concerns expressed by law enforcement about the level of bonds set. He is currently working with other judges to raising the bonds

on repeat offenders. Judge Burns acknowledged that Judge Patterson is retiring after 29 years of service.

Jurisprudence, Ron Stretcher for Kevin Brooks

Ron reported in Mr. Brooks's absence, that Commissioners Court has approved additional funding to the District Attorney's (DA) office for a State Jail Felony Team. This team will be made up of five (5) prosecutors, and two (2) investigators. The focus will be to move State Jail Felony cases through the system quicker. Commissioner Garcia added that there is a list of about 460 chronic offenders in jail with state jail felonies, costing the county about \$277,600.43. The target is to reduce this population from 460 to 136 in 5 months.

Pre-Trial/Diversion, Ron Stretcher

Ron reported that State Hospital movement is at 50 people on the waiting list, down from 120. He stated that Montgomery County's facility has helped to get this number down. Ron also spoke about some of the grants that are being looked at and worked on to help with jail diversion.

Law Enforcement, Chief Mitch Bates, Garland PD

Chief Bates reported on the cost sharing MOU for transportation of inmates. He stated the MOU is out to the other agencies. Currently, only two cities will not be participating. The list should be finalized within two weeks. Dr. Noyes suggested that if the MOU's are back by the next CJAB meeting in July, approval can be requested from the committee to be presented to Commissioners Court. Chief Bates believes that all of the MOU's will be back by that time.

Corrections, Jill Reese

The jail population report is in the handout. Jill Reese stated that the jail population is stable at this time and not following its historical track.

Sheriff Lupe Valdez reported on passing the jail inspection, and depopulating George Allen. Sheriff Valdez stated that they are working hard to maintain quality assurance (QA). They are working on a woman's ward that may free up about 200 beds. She stated that they are continuing to work on QA issues. They are also managing overtime. Sheriff Valdez expressed some concerns about a House Bill that will restrict jail inmate movement. Dr. Noyes will continue to monitor the bills and give updates to the committee.

Announcements

Commissioner Garcia thanked the committee for working together and staying ahead of the issues.

Meeting Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2011 General CJAB meeting; the motion was seconded and approved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 PM.