



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board  
Executive Committee Minutes for Monday, September 19, 2011**

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

**Meeting Minutes:**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the July 18, 2011 General Membership CJAB meeting. The motion was seconded and approved.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

**Corrections (Jail Population), Ron Stretcher**

Ron reported that the stats/reports have been made a part of the packet for this meeting. Ron stated that the jail population is down to 6288 and this has been a steady decrease. He attributes this decline to two things; one being the State Jail Initiative. This unit has impacted the state jail felony cases as expected, and has also freed up prosecutors to handle other cases. David Alex agreed, and stated that from a public safety standpoint, this initiative has allowed prosecutors in other courts to focus on other cases. Commissioner Garcia congratulated the unit for the results that are being shown. Ron indicated that in August of this year 938 inmates were released to either State Jail or the State Penitentiary, this was an increase by 300 from the month before. He pointed this out to highlight the fact that there is great care being taken in determining the right people to release, and that public safety is a priority. Ron also acknowledged the Sheriff's Department for how well they process those inmates sentenced and identified for transport to TDC. Ron continued with an update on the Alternative Sentencing program stating that the unit has been able to handle about 50 cases. He stated that Commissioners Court has approved two additional staff which will allow them to handle about 100 cases. He also highlighted the Interlock program stating that the unit has been averaging about 1250 cases with very limited staff (two technicians and a secretary). The report provided shows how successful the two programs have been despite the limited staff.

Dr. Noyes asked if Ron could also give an update on the Female Inmate Initiative. Ron reported that this project was initiated as a result of the Jail Standards report which indicates that male and female inmates are required to be separated by sight and sound. He stated that the court holdover cells do not provide a way to meet that requirement, so one of the felony court judges has agreed to hold court for the females at specific times to accommodate this

requirement. Sheriff Valdez added that a couple of Judges in the misdemeanor courts have also agreed to hold a female court docket which will further help meet this requirement.

### **Jurisprudence, David Alex**

David reported that the Jurisprudence committee met on September 8, 2011, and the minutes from that meeting have been made a part of the packet for this meeting. He reported that one of the items discussed was the pilot program on indigent defense which is being conducted by the District Clerks. He stated that it was very interesting to learn about how indigent clients are currently being screened, and some of the proposed changes to that process. Another area discussed was the Electronic Monitoring (ELM), and Alternative Sentencing program. David stated that this subject matter was a great learning opportunity for the DA's office in regard to allowing offenders to be released, and the safe guards that unit has in place to assure public safety. Also discussed, was the matter of handling misdemeanor cases in addition to felony cases after the felony has been disposed. David stated that this developed into a good discussion between the attorneys in the room. They discussed the use of section 12:45 of the penal code where the misdemeanor case was filed with the felony case and time has been served. David indicated that the committee's meeting went well and he is looking forward to future meetings.

### **Presentation:**

#### **Juvenile Justice, presented by Dr. Terry Smith**

Dr. Smith, Director of Juvenile Services presented a PowerPoint presentation on the core concepts that the juvenile department is moving forward on. She stated this is a great opportunity for collaboration between Juvenile Services and CJAB. The concept will be known as "YOUTH FIRST"! The core concepts include:

- Reduce Disproportionate Minority Confinement (DMC)
- Buy-In to Climate of Culture/Shift in Paradigm
- Bilingual Staff / Peer Advisory Council
- Community Partners Program
- Educational Advocacy Program

Dr. Smith continued to expound on the Pillars of Change core concepts which are:

1. Dignity and Respect
2. Boundaries and Engaged Supervision
3. Safe Environment
4. Organization and Consistency
5. Therapy, Program and Rehabilitation

Dr. Smith stated that the key focus is on treating the clients with respect, staff understanding appropriate boundaries, and maintaining a safe environment. She stated these are not new concepts, but they have been put in writing so that

everyone is on the same page. Dr. Smith stated that she believes CJAB can be of support to the Juvenile Department, and build a collaborative effort by supporting the department's endeavors in the community. She stated that Mr. John Heath (Assistant Director) has begun communicating with a number of law enforcement agencies presenting the DMC concept, and talking about how to reduce DMC. CJAB can also help to support legislation that is in the best interest of the juvenile justice system, especially with the upcoming merger of Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC), and Texas Youth Commission (TYC). Through CJAB the Juvenile Department can foster a better partnership with Law Enforcement. Also, CJAB can help to continue to inform the community of the issues as it relates to the specialty populations, (i.e.: juvenile mental health issues, girls in trafficking, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (GLBTQ)). The mental health court has been started, and the girls esteem court will start soon at the Letot Center. Finally, CJAB can partner with Juvenile Probation in establishing the "YOUTH FIRST" initiative.

Mr. Heath added that he has been encouraged by the response he has received from the law enforcement community in regard to reducing DMC. He looks forward to establishing collaboration with those agencies and working on other areas of concern such as the intake process. Dr. Smith thanked Dr. Noyes for the opportunity to present the departments core concepts. Dr. Noyes suggested that the Juvenile Justice subcommittee be formalized and offered to be a member of that committee.

Dr. Noyes introduced the CJAB Members Handbook project that he and Duane Steele have been working on. He stated that the draft handbook would be passed around during the meeting to be reviewed. He asked that any comments, queries, and/or suggestion be addressed to himself or Duane, and to look forward to receiving a Handbook in the near future.

**Second Chance Act Grants, presented by Erica Molett**

Erica Molett with the City of Dallas Housing and Community Service Department, Offender Re-entry Division presented information in regard to the city's efforts to address prisoner re-entry. She stated that the City of Dallas has received two Second Chance Act Grants, a Family Based Substance Abuse Treatment Grant, and an Adult Demonstration Grant. The Family Based Substance Abuse Treatment Grant has developed into a program called Inspired Mothers Overcoming Mountains (iMOM). The City has partnered with Dallas County's Criminal Justice Department, Adult Probation, Parole, District Attorney's, and Public Defender's offices, and the Diversion Courts to create a re-entry council and begin work on this program. With the Demonstration Grant the City will be working with Adult Probation at the Wilmer Judicial Treatment Center. The purpose of the grants is to create evidence based pre, and post release programs. A second goal was to create the Dallas Re-entry Council. Erica explained the concept of developing a meaningful Re-entry program, and stated that the City is interested in working with Christina Melton-Crain with DOORS, and the other members of the Re-entry subcommittee to share ideas, and work

together so as not to duplicate efforts or services. Thirdly, is to implement a web based client level data collection system.

The Adult Demonstration grant (Project North) is for one (1) year, working with 120 individuals, and encompasses three main purposes:

1. Develop a program that shows this model will work (Project North)
2. Create the Empowered Case Management System (data collections software)
3. Create the Dallas Re-entry Council

Project North is separated into two categories; post release case management & support services, and employment & education. Erica stated that while some organizations attempt to combine these services, they believe both require more focused attention. The Urban League and TORI will provide case management & support services, and the Urban League and His Bridge Builders will provide services for employment & education. The Empowered Case Management Data Software is the same software used by the Bridge, and others that are HUD funded, the Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS). The population of Project North will be men and women sentenced to Wilmer Judicial Treatment Center with moderate to high risk for recidivism. The program will begin with a pre-release assessment and services which will be done by Probation, a case worker, and the contracted providers 30 to 60 days before release for transitional planning. The post-release component will include the "Thinking for a Change" curriculum. Case Management will be provided, along with up to 30 to 90 days of transitional housing if needed, employment services, and health care coordination.

The Family Based Substance Abuse Treatment Grant (iMOM) is for two (2) years, working with 75 females. This program also encompasses pre-release and post-release components. Project Mathew will work with the case manager to provide the pre-release assessments and services. The first 30 days of post-release services will be provided by Nexus in their residential substance abuse program. Transitional housing, employment services, vocational education, and family counseling will also be provided as post-release services. The focus on family services is a very important aspect of this grant.

Erica talked about the re-entry council's observation tour. The City hosted a trip to San Francisco to visit their re-entry council. The group had six (6) meetings in two days visiting with the Sheriff's Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, and the Delancey Street Foundation. Another group visited Los Angeles to observe a program know as Homeboy Industries. There will also be a group traveling to Washington D.C. to visit the Federal Interagency Re-Entry Council made up of 18 federal agencies. Erica stated that the City of Dallas wants to provide services to the people that need them. The City of Dallas looks forward to working with CJAB, and providing a comprehensive re-entry strategy for Dallas.

**Subcommittee Reports:**  
**Courts, Judge Robert Burns**

Judge Burns reported that the District Courts have adjusted bond amounts in response to the Law Enforcement community. He stated that some were raised and others were lowered, and he is not aware of any negative impact on jail population. Judge Burns also commented on the indigent screening pilot, stating that the Judges are excited about this process being implemented. Judge Burns added that currently the courts have to err on the side of appointing council based on the declaration of a defendant that he/she cannot afford an attorney, not knowing if the defendant is truthful or not. He stated having a process to vet the issue of indigence will be very helpful. Judge added that due to the Supreme Court decision made a couple of years ago, the courts have been required to appoint council if someone declares they are indigent and that has been a contributing factor in the increase in indigent defense cost. Christina asked how this process will work. Ron explained that the County and District Clerks are developing a process to meet with a defendant requesting court appointed counsel to have them fill out a questionnaire and submit to a credit and reference check to make a good determination as to whether the individual is indigent or not. Ron stated that the goal is a 10% reduction in the current cost to the County. Christina asked if this process will be expanded to other courts such as family court, and Ron's response was that it will certainly be reviewed for expansion.

Judge Burns continued his report by stating that in regard to defendants with felony cases disposed that have misdemeanor cases pending, he is available to hear those cases. He stated that he would discuss this issue with the misdemeanor judges to get a consensus to monitor the jail chain for these pending cases. Lynn Richardson Public Defender stated that this same matter was discussed during the Jurisprudence committee meeting, and the Defense Bar made a similar assertion to follow through on the pending misdemeanor cases after the felony case has been disposed of.

**Action:** Judge Burns will communicate with the other District Court Judges to see if they will also monitor the jail chain, and be available to hear these pending misdemeanor cases.

**Law Enforcement, Dr. Michael Noyes**

In Chief Mitch Bates absence, Dr. Noyes reported that 19 of 22 agencies have agreed to participate and signed the memorandum of understanding (MOU) for inmate transportation. He stated to his understanding two (2) agencies (Irving and University Park) are waiting on their budget process to be completed prior to signing. Dr. Noyes gave kudos to Chief Bates for his efforts and coordination in this process.

**Re-Entry, Christina Melton-Crain**

Christina reported that the Re-entry committee met on September 6, 2011, and the minutes from that meeting have been made a part of the packet for this

meeting. Christina thanked Erica and Suanne Durham for their presentation. She stated that the committee will start meeting bi-monthly. The committee will be revamped and made up of three key components:

1. City of Dallas (COD)
2. DOORS
3. Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)

Christina reiterated that DOORS is not a program, but a conduit for re-entry services. By working with Erica and Suanne with the COD, and Maria Brown with CSH, re-entry services and supportive housing can be addressed collaboratively. The first meeting of the Dallas Re-entry Council subcommittee as a collaboration will be in October. The meeting will focus on the main issues to be addressed over the next twelve months. Christina invited anyone interested in re-entry to please contact her. Dr. Noyes suggested that Jacqueline Dickerson with Parole be included as a member of this committee.

### **Public Policy, Commissioner Garcia**

Commissioner Garcia reported in Councilwomen Delia Jasso's absence. She stated that any legislative issues the group has to be added to the agenda for the next legislative session should be brought to Honorable Jasso's attention for inclusion.

**Action:** Dr. Noyes asked that Ron and Duane work with Councilwomen Jasso, and Lt. Gary Tittle to setup a meeting of the Public Policy subcommittee to begin planning for the upcoming legislative session now.

### **Justice of Peace, Judge Steve Seider**

Judge Seider reported that his committee has been addressing statutes that went into effect September 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated that one is the reporting requirements by the Office of Court Administration (OCA), and have requested a one year waiver to get their case management system in place that will allow them to meet those requirements. A second issue is with legislation that passed (SB469) involving the North Texas Toll Authority (NTTA) requiring the court of local jurisdiction to collect unpaid toll, administration fees, and third-party collection service fees and send to the authority prior to collecting court cost and fines. He has met with the DA and NTTA to address this issue. He believes it is unconstitutional and will be reviewed. A third issue is the Rules Committee has stated that the rules for JP Courts will be revamped under the authority of the Supreme Court beginning May first 2013. Also being addressed, are some challenges with redistricting. Some of the facilities have to be renovated to meet code standards. Lastly they are looking at the warrant issues. He stated that Precinct 3 alone has over 47,000 active warrants with only two (2) Constable Warrant Officers assigned to work them. He has been working with the Sheriff's office to look at possible solutions to address this problem. Judge Seider stated these are just a few issues being addressed by the Justice of Peace subcommittee.

Commissioner Garcia asked if there was any additional business to be addressed. Dr. Smith stated that she would like to be added to the Re-entry Council committee as the Juvenile Department often has issues with their 17 year old girls who are in need of services and housing.

**Announcements**

There were no announcements from the committee or public.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded and passed at 2:48 PM.