



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, March 18, 2019**

Welcome & Introductions, Commissioner Dr. Garcia, called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. Customary introductions were made by all in attendance.

Membership & Infrastructure:

A motion was made to approve Major Reuben Ramirez as a member of CJAB and representative for the Dallas Police Department. The motion was seconded and voted on. Motion carried out unanimously.

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the CJAB General Membership meeting held on December 17, 2018, were made a part of the packet. There was a motion made to accept the minutes as printed.

District Attorney's (DA)s Office:

Commissioner Garcia introduced the Dallas County District Attorney Judge John Creuzot as the next guest speaker. Judge Creuzot began the discussion by giving an update on the DA's Office progress on bail reform. They have hired four Assistant District Attorneys who will be working with the magistrates and the courts on making sure defendants are getting robust hearings and bail is set appropriately. It was further stated that with the new policies the DA's Office has implemented, it should help reduce jail population in Dallas County. The DA's Office will no longer accept first time marijuana offenders, and are working on doing the same for criminal trespass offenders. Defendants who are in jail on a marijuana case are spending an average of 5 days in jail while they get there cases dismissed. This has an impact on jail population and the tax payers. The DA's Office continues to work with the judges to find a way to expedite these cases and find a consistent way of processing these cases faster. Judge Creuzot stated that there is also a new policy that will affect each LEA regarding officer-involved shooting cases. The DA's office will require that the main case file be submitted to the DA's Office within 45 days of the incident, regardless of whether the investigation has been fully completed. If the file is not received within 45 days, a Grand Jury Subpoena will then be issued for the file. Once everything is received, the case will then be presented to the Grand Jury within 90 days. Judge Creuzot stated that the one thing the DA Office has never done is keep data on the effectiveness of anything the office does. Judge Creuzot stated that he is working with Commissioners Court and the Budget Office to try and get that

started. Judge Creuzot reported that he would like to see the DA's Office be more research and data oriented and see if the changes they are making are effective. Judge Creuzot reported that they will be taking another look at defendants that are in jail that have been determined to be incompetent to stand trial, and will be conducting re-assessments. If these defendants are on a medication regimen and are now stabilized to stand trial, the DA's Office will be asking the judge to release them from jail, either to Outpatient Competency Restoration or to a conditional dismissal. These are some of the things that the DA's Office is currently working on, and Judge Creuzot stated that he will continue to provide updates and policies develop.

Presentations:

Development of a Reentry Program for Veterans - Dr. James LePage

Commissioner Garcia introduced Dr. James LePage, Associate Chief of Staff – Research and Development Service at VA North Texas Health Care System.

Dr. LePage began the presentation by explaining a potential grant that he is working on putting together for the VA North Texas Health Care System. Dr. LePage stated there are over 140,000 Veterans in prison, and approximately 45,000 to 50,000 will be released from prison annually. Estimates say that approximately 84% would be eligible for VA services based on their military discharge. Bureau of Justice Statistics stated that approximately 50% have a mental health diagnosis, and 50% have a substance diagnosis and there are no statistics that indicate any overlap within these numbers. Problems encountered after discharge include: Death from violence, drug overdose, suicide, unemployment, divorce, social isolation, homelessness, social stigma, re-incarceration, mental illness, and medical diseases.

In 2010 there was 3,947 eligible Veterans leaving prison in Texas, 1,036 were discharged to North Texas VA and only 225 were seen by the VA for services, therefore missing a very large number of eligible Veterans who can receive services. The VA followed 980 veterans released from prison over a 5 year period. These 980 veterans were then matched to non-incarcerated sample of Veterans at VA North Texas by: Age, gender, racial/ethnic minority, mental illness diagnosis, substance use diagnosis and medical disease burden. Those 980 inmates at a 5-year period follow up had: 11% chance of death, 98% engaged with homelessness services, 39% had an episode of psychiatric inpatient treatment, 37% experienced medical inpatient treatment, 98% received substance use disorder inpatient treatment, 750% went to or returned to prison, and 55% had at least one negative event, than those who were not previously incarcerated.

Dr. LePage stated that what he is trying to do is get a Research Enhancement Award Program (REAP). The REAP is a VA award funded through the Office of Research and Development – Rehabilitation Research and Development service.

The REAP funds allows for the infrastructure to focus on a specific area, and at this time the area of focus needs to be rehab, i.e. the development of new methods/interventions/technologies to target an area of rehabilitation, broadly defined. The REAP also funds trainees, and pilot projects to develop new interventions and rehabilitation services.

Dr. LePage reported that a letter of intent was approved to submit a REAP application. The application due date is August 8, 2019, and the focus will be on Veterans coming out of prison with mental illness, substance abuse disorder, or medical issues. The funding at the moment is \$315,000 per year for five years which is relatively low. It was further stated that there is a good number of academic partner who support this project going forward.

Dr. LePage stated that he would like to ask for a letter of support from CJAB indicating CJAB's support of the VA's efforts to improve rehabilitation techniques and programs for released Veterans. After the grant is awarded he would like for a member of CJAB to participate in the project and serve on the Advisory Council, and lastly be allowed to give annual updates on progress to CJAB. During the questions and answers Judge Dominique Collins volunteered to serve on the Advisory Council.

Committee Project Updates:

Bail Bond:

Miguel Canales gave the update. The Bond Forfeiture Judgment Report reflected judgment totals from January – December 2018 of \$1,451,922.34 for 2,139 cases. The Account 62 reports reflected total bond forfeitures collected by the felony courts in February 2019 was \$4,000.00. For the same reporting period, the misdemeanor courts collected \$10,834.00.

Fair Defense Committee:

Paul Blocker gave the update. It was reported that the Public Defender's Office is currently working with Representative Toni Rose on legislation regarding priority appointment on capital cases in the criminal courts. Priority appointment meaning before assigning a case to another attorney the Public Defender's Office should get first priority. Lastly, on the date of the meeting, March 18, was National Public Defender Day which commemorates the anniversary of Gideon v. Wainwright.

Jail Population Update:

Etho Pugh reported on the Jail Population meeting held on March 15, 2019. Excerpts from that meeting can be found on pages 23 through 28 of the packet. Mr. Pugh stated that the jail population for this date is 4,806. The February average jail population is 4,946 and the yearly average is 4,934.

Justice of the Peace:

Judge Steve Seider gave the update. The Justices of the Peace are currently working on keeping track of any legislation that may impact them operationally and/or financially. Judge Seider further stated that he is working with Dallas County Administration, the DA's Office, and Budget Office on how cases are to be disposed of with the new changes from the DA's Office. Judge Seider reported that the Justice of Peace is working with Mr. Finney from the DA's Office on looking for an interface for how bonds are being processed, not just criminal bond, but also appeal bonds. Judge Seider reported that the Justice of Peace is looking for some guidance on how truancy courts are going to be operating in the future. Ryan Brown stated that truancy court will continue to operate as they currently do, but there will only be 2 courts. Lastly, Judge Seider reported that the Court Management System (CMS) progress has completed halted. Commissioner Garcia confirmed that as of right now, the development of a Court Management System has paused. Judge Seider further stated Dallas County continues to not be in compliance with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) reporting requirements.

Law Enforcement/Jurisprudence:

Ellyce Lindberg gave the update. A meeting was held on March 5, 2019 with Judge Creuzot and the LEAs in regards to the new DA Office policy. The minutes from the meeting and the new DA's Office policy regarding changes to case filing policies are attached to the packet on pages 29-34. Ms. Lindberg stated that another topic covered during the meeting was the current state of the DPS Drug Laboratory. The DPS lab in the current trajectory they are going will be significantly behind on testing drug samples and in turn the statute of limitations would expire on these drug cases. The DA's Office suggested to LEAs to have officers file the strongest case with the highest penalty group. This would reduce the number of samples that the lab would have to test. There are more details in the meetings minutes.

Pretrial:

Jeff Segura gave the update. Mr. Segura introduced Pretrial newest supervisor, Ms. Tomasa Ortiz, and she will be working with the supervision units in Pretrial. As of January 28, 2019 the Intake Assessment Unit is now operating 24/7 and fully staffed. Mr. Segura reported that as Pretrial continues to grow, Pretrial will continue to monitor their numbers and identify if more staff is needed to continue to operate efficiently. All units are fully staffed at the moment and operating well.

Reentry:

Christina Crain could not attend the meeting and sent an update to Miguel Canales. Christina Crain was appointed to the UT Board of Regent by Governor Greg Abbott, and therefore was not able to attend today. The Unlocking DOORS

Network now consists of 260 community partners/providers statewide. She requested that committee members please pass along any organizations that they feel should be involved so that Unlocking DOORS can get them in the Network to begin collaborating and working with the other organizations, clients, etc. This includes all police departments, nonprofit organizations, and other agencies that work individuals with criminal backgrounds. Unlocking DOORS is currently working with state leadership on the following legislation bills: HB 1342 is our primary occupational licensing bill this session. HB 1342 reduces barriers to obtaining occupational licenses for persons with a criminal record by prohibiting a licensing board from disqualifying an applicant when the offense history does not “directly relate” to the occupation being considered. It’s easy to message and rather anodyne so it would be a good fit. HB 3032 would provide reciprocity for licenses from other jurisdictions, which could greatly help lower current barriers to enter an occupation. HB 218 (and other identical bills) that would keep people from being denied an occupational license if they happen to be behind on their student loans. HB 404: Repeals civil asset forfeiture and replaces with criminal asset forfeiture, which requires a criminal conviction to perfect the forfeiture proceeding; this protects innocent property owners by placing the burden of proof on the state, as current TX law requires the property owner to prove the property was not involved in criminal activity. SB 628: Bail reform bill which requires consideration of validated risk assessment prior to release decision and allows for preventative detention; this would help ensure that low-risk persons lacking financial means could be released while those who pose a flight risk or danger to our neighborhoods are preventatively detained. HB 918 provides certain inmates with birth certificates, social security cards, and resumes to facilitate possibility of employment upon reentry.

Research:

Dr. Jennifer Gonzalez was not able to attend the meeting due being on maternity leave and sent an update to Miguel Canales. Dr. Gonzalez had her baby on February 9th, 2019. The Research subcommittee did not meet this past quarter, but has a meeting scheduled for May, and the goal is to identify any research priorities from CJAB leadership.

Program Update:

Local Data Advisory Board:

Miguel Canales stated that he had spoken to Vicki Buchanan of Dallas County IT and the Dallas County Adult Courts have begun their work for the next year. Currently the adult courts are at 89% completeness for disposed cases. The Juvenile Department is currently at 89%. The goal is to be above 90% by September 2019.

Public Comments:

None

Announcements:

The next CJAB meeting will be held on June 17, 2019, at 2:30pm.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded and approved at 3:45PM.