



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, December 16, 2019**

Welcome & Introductions, Commissioner Dr. Garcia, called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM. All in attendance made customary introductions.

Membership & Infrastructure:

There were no changes to membership or infrastructure at this time.

Meeting Minutes:

The minutes from the CJAB General Membership meeting held on September 16, 2019, were made a part of the packet. There was a motion made to accept the minutes as printed.

Presentations:

Dallas County Jail Deflection Program— Christina Smith

Commissioner Garcia introduced the speaker Christina Smith and read short bio.

Ms. Smith started the presentation by saying that mental health has been a very serious topic over the last few years and as a result, State Legislators has been increasing the budget for mental health services. With the cooperation of several partners, they are currently in the process of building a deflection center. Ms. Smith continued and stated why we need a Deflection Center. Often non-violent minor offenses are the means by which a large number of individuals with mental health needs encounter law enforcement and are subsequently arrested. These individuals are often difficult to engage, have barriers to identifying and accessing resources in the community, and are familiar only with crisis-based services. It will also provide an opportunity to engage cyclical high-need clients that have low potential for prosecution and an inordinate use of community resources.

Ms. Smith stated that when we look at the jail population these individuals are frequently without financial means to gain their release, they may be detained over a period of weeks to months. Individuals that are found incompetent to stand trial may be held in jail and placed on a state hospital waitlist and wait for months to over a year for an open bed at a state mental health facility, if no other options are available or appropriate. This all leads to more people in jail with

resulting direct and indirect costs. Individuals are typically housed in a jail for a minimum of \$70 per day and typically require specialized psychiatric care and prescription medications. This ends up costing tens of thousands of dollars over a year, to house this population.

Ms. Smith reported that if we look at Dallas County Book-Ins from January 1 – June 30, 2019, there was a total of 31,660 book-ins and of those 2,932 were identified as low-level offenses: Criminal Trespass 1,046, Possession of Marijuana 1,240 and Theft (over \$100<\$750) 636 book-ins. If we break it down even further, of the total low level book-ins 2,932, there were 1,313 identified with a mental illness AIS flag: Criminal Trespass 640, Possession of Marijuana 412 and Theft (over \$100<\$750) 261 book-ins.

Ms. Smith stated that the Deflection Center Proposal would be to identify a “one stop shop” drop off facility to be used at the time of intervention by law enforcement. Transport client to deflection center in lieu of incarceration, and engage community partners to assist with providing needed care ranging from follow-up engagement, peer support, same-day access to services, to crisis stabilization. Ms. Smith further stated that the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure 16.23 states law enforcement should make a good faith effort to divert an individual suffering a mental health crisis or the effects of substance abuse to a proper treatment facility, if there is an available facility. The diversion is reasonable, the offense committed is a non-violent misdemeanor, and the mental health crisis or substance abuse is the suspected reason, the individual committed the alleged offense. Some additional admittance criteria is for individuals who are found committing or attempting to commit criminal trespass, are in need of behavioral health crisis, are not experiencing a medical crisis, are not menacing nor acting in an aggressive manner, and would be better assisted through community-based services as opposed to incarceration.

Ms. Smith reported that some of the services provided, might be medical screening/services, behavioral health screening/services, crisis respite, peer support, and transitional services like housing assistance and benefits assistance. The process is currently in the early stages. The initial roll out will involve one drop-off deflection center, and additional locations may be added later based upon data collected from initial drop-off location. Lastly, funding for the deflection center can stem from Senate Bill (SB) 292 through the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, if matching funds, either in-kind or dollar for dollar are available. Another funding source that is being explored is corporate funding.

During questions, there was some discussion as how many beds will the deflection center hold. It was reported they will start with 16 beds for time being, and as the needs arises, the plan is to eventually double the bed space.

Judge John Creuzot reported that he has met the DART Police Chief, and spoke about the new proactive approaches DART police officers are taking in dealing with mental health and criminal trespass offenders. It was reported that DART

police officers are engaging these offenders and speaking to them about their destination and allowing them to get there without incident. This approach has reduced the number of arrests for this population due to officers no longer forcing offenders off the DART and therefore getting in a situation that may end up in a physical altercation/arrest.

Committee Project Updates:

Bail Bond:

Miguel Canales provided the update. The Bond Forfeiture Judgment Report reflected judgment totals from January – November 2019 of \$1,565,533 for 2,643 cases. The Account 62 reports reflected total bond forfeitures collected by the felony courts in November 2019 was \$46,185. For the same reporting period, the misdemeanor courts collected \$79,734.

Fair Defense Committee:

Lynn Richardson gave the update. She reported there have been some concerns with defendants that are being arraigned in city courts that are indigent and requesting council, once they arrive to county jail their information is not transferred to the system. Therefore, this slows the process down and defendants end up sitting in jail without council representation for a longer period due to their request for council not being processed. Ms. Richardson reported that she is currently working with Ellyce Lindberg, Keta Dickerson and IT to try to resolve this issue.

Jail Population Update:

LaShonda Jefferson introduced herself as the new Jail Population Manager. The December 2019 Jail Population meeting was cancelled, however a packet was created for stakeholders. Excerpts from that packet can be found on pages 25 through 29 of the CJAB packet. Mrs. Jefferson stated that the jail population for this date is 5,318. The November average jail population was 5,138 and the yearly average is 4,995.

Justice of the Peace:

Judge Steve Seider gave the update. He reported that the JP Court Management System has made some progress but nothing significant as of yet. The JP met with DA's Office, both with Criminal and Civil Division, regarding older cases that are uncollectable. They are looking at a process of cleaning up those cases. Judge Seider reported that they are also not getting accurate information on active warrants. They want to make sure that when the warrants are cleared by JP court, that it is properly communicated. IT has been helpful in crafting reports that help facilitate the day-to-day operations of the JP. Judge Seider reported that in regards to DART, fare enforcement officers are citing individuals without

proper ID and these individuals may sometimes lie about their name and date of birth. This can create driver license holds on innocent individuals who were never cited. There was a tornado that damaged the North Dallas Government Center, and as a result some of the staff from that court are now housed in Judge Seider's court. The new North Dallas Government Center is under construction and should be up and running soon. It has been anticipated that February 6th, will be the official move in date.

Law Enforcement/Jurisprudence:

Chief Jim Spivey was not present, and Ellyce Lindberg gave the update. There was no meeting scheduled this past quarter. We will be looking at scheduling a meeting sometime next year.

Pretrial:

Jeff Segura gave the update. Pretrial started the implantation of the Public Safety Risk Assessment Tool on December 16, 2019 in the intake area of the jail. The tool is still not fully integrated with the systems; however, intake officers are completing the tool on defendants coming into the jail. Pretrial continues to look for support in expanding their services. During the Pretrial subcommittee meeting, they have requested adding additional supervisors and officers to help continue to grow and expand Pretrial Services. Pretrial Services presented a resolution to CJAB requesting new positions to support Pretrial Services. A motion was made by Judge Cruzot, and second by Lynn Richardson. Resolution passed unanimously.

Reentry:

Christina Crain could not attend the meeting and sent an update to Miguel Canales. The 2019 Texas Reentry Symposium was held in September. The event was sold out. Dallas County was well represented at the event. Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia received the 2019 Susan McHenry Golden Key Award for her tireless work in the area of criminal justice reform. We are so grateful to her and all that she has and continues to do for our community. Jeff Segura from Dallas County Pretrial participated on a panel discussing available resources for those with criminal backgrounds. It was a great event and we are looking forward to the 2020 Symposium. New agencies and organizations are being added to the Community Network daily. If you are not a partner/provider with Unlocking DOORS and wish to be one, please contact Christina Melton Crain at 214-215-8152 to enroll.

Research:

Dr. Jennifer Gonzalez gave the update. Dr. Gonzalez stated there was an article published by Health Affairs on the US Firearm-Related Mortality. This article is an interesting read, and was asked to be shared with CJAB. The research subcommittee meeting was rescheduled until next year.

Program Update:**Link2Care:**

Dr. Gonzalez reported that the Link2Care project continues to progress. She did report that the project has experienced more lost phones by the project population than was anticipated, but they are continuing to assess project processes, and overall, the project is progressing well. The project will be looking to go for another year. Therefore, instead of five years it would be six years. The project is currently half way through.

Public Comments:

None

Announcements:

The next CJAB meeting will be held on March 16, 2020, at 2:30pm.

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded and approved at 3:38PM.