



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, December 18, 2023**

Welcome & Introductions: Commissioner Dr. Garcia, called the meeting to order at 2:32 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 18, 2023, were made a part of the packet. A motion was made to approve minutes by Duane Steele; the motion was seconded and approved.

Presentations:

Electronic Disposition Presentation- Charlene Randolph and Ellyce Lindberg

Jessica Gamez introduced Ellyce Lindberg, announcing her 23-year tenure as a prosecutor and her current role within the Dallas County District Attorney's Office.

Ms. Lindberg emphasized the importance of Electronic Data Reporting (EDR) in criminal justice proceedings, as outlined in Chapter 66 of the penal code. This chapter specifies requirements for criminal history reporting, which includes submitting arrest disposition information to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Local jurisdictions are obligated to adhere to specific standards, including maintaining a minimum of 90% completeness across various categories, as mandated by Chapter 66.

In the discussion, Ms. Lindberg detailed the process of handling open arrests within Dallas County. She spoke about the necessity of resolving cases promptly, through legal means, such as dropping charges or processing them through the District Attorney's office or courts. She highlighted the significance of meeting a 90% completeness deadline by August 1st each year. The calculation involves analyzing data from the past five years, spanning from 2018 to 2022, with the goal of achieving a 90% completeness rate. This completeness requirement extends to both adult and juvenile, with a focus on timely disposition reporting.

Ms. Lindberg stressed that failing to meet this standard could have significant repercussions, affecting the eligibility of organizations throughout Dallas County to receive grant funding from the Office of the Governor. She explained the critical status of Electronic Data Reporting (EDR), as it directly influences the eligibility of all government and nonprofit organizations in the county to obtain grant funding from the governor's office. Falling short of maintaining a completeness rate of 90% or higher puts funding for essential community initiatives, such as women's shelters and the juvenile department, in jeopardy. It is imperative to meet reporting targets to safeguard millions of dollars in grant awards across Dallas County.

Ms. Lindberg detailed the critical need of achieving the 90% completeness target and the collaboration between various entities in Dallas County, including Law Enforcement Agencies. She expressed gratitude for the partnership with these agencies, acknowledging their crucial role in meeting the reporting requirements. Additionally, she noted that the grants discussed are only a fraction of those administered through the council of government, indicating the broader scope of funding at stake. Ms. Lindberg deferred the speaking opportunity to Kelly Schmidt from the COG for further elaboration.

Kelly Schmidt elaborated on the significance of the grants received by the council of government, explaining the examples provided are just a fraction of the total funding. She mentioned various other grants, such as specialty court grants, internet crimes against children, and human trafficking grants, which significantly contribute to the overall impact. Despite not having direct access to these grants, she estimated that the total funding exceeds the displayed 10 million dollars, likely reaching several million more. The eligibility criteria for these grants have been in place since 2014, marking the beginning of the 11th year with counties striving to meet the 90% completeness requirement. Ms. Schmidt reassured the audience that they are not alone in their efforts, as other counties in the region are similarly committed to meeting the August 1st deadline. She urges continued diligence in meeting reporting standards, emphasizing the persistence of the requirement and its potential impact on grant funding.

Ms. Lindberg described the importance of the disposition reporting requirement to input resolved case dispositions into the DPS system within 35 days. She discussed the ongoing efforts to meet this goal, including stakeholder meetings and resource assessments across departments like the district clerk's office and county clerk's office. Additionally, she mentioned exploring communication avenues with state government to mitigate potential funding loss if the 90% completeness target isn't met. Ms. Lindberg reported additional meetings beyond regular schedules, recognizing the collaborative effort involving law enforcement agencies, the DA's office, and the courts in closing open arrests.

As of the latest update, Ms. Lindberg revealed that 29,288 dispositions must be closed to achieve compliance by 2024. However, the current trajectory suggests that this target won't be met until 2025. Contrasting with the previous year's

projection, which aimed for compliance by April, she highlighted the substantial increase in required dispositions, more than double the previous year's count. Despite efforts to meet the mandate, data from DPS indicates a current completeness rate of 79%.

Ms. Lindberg explained the reasons behind the current challenges in meeting reporting targets, primarily attributing them to the retirement of Forvus and Mainframe, and the consequent need to develop new processes for the program. She elaborated on how the absence of Forvus and Mainframe has disrupted the flow of information between departments and hindered the transmission of data to law enforcement agencies through lists that were normally sent out. The law enforcement agencies would work on their lists and track their open arrests. Additionally, she spoke about the complexity of implementing new technology solutions, which require multiple platforms and necessitate adjustments in staff processes.

Ms. Charlene Randolph emphasized the importance of addressing the challenges associated with extracting information from systems that no longer communicate. Over several months, the IT department has been actively involved in this effort. The Dallas County Commissioners Court approved a contract with a vendor to aid in retrieving information from the prosecutor system, facilitating the submission of prosecutor dispositions to DPS. Despite the six-month duration required for this task, it was crucial, as the disruption in communication severely impacted operational reporting to DPS.

Commissioner Garcia requested clarification from Ellyce and Charlene regarding the status of the case backlog, noting that despite the approved vendor contract, there over 29,000 cases needed to reach the 90%. Ms. Randolph affirmed and clarified, while prosecution information has been successfully transmitted to DPS, the focus now moves to sending court information. Judge Nash inquired about the inclusion of JP courts in these efforts. Ms. Randolph affirmed that JP courts will be included.

The discussion shifted to the manual process of ensuring data accuracy, with a focus on the need for personnel to identify discrepancies and liaise with law enforcement agencies and DPS. Mr. Duane Steele recalls the significant manpower required in past efforts in the Juvenile Department and Commissioner Garcia anticipates a similar need moving forward. Ms. Randolph expressed that much of the work must remain within the specific departments handling it, as they possess the necessary permissions for their assessments. For instance, the prosecutor system is accessible only to the DA's office and their authorized personnel. While access to the Portal to Odyssey is available, accessing the Odyssey system and altering court documents requires permissions not granted to external parties. Ms. Randolph has been actively gathering information from departments to determine their resource needs, recognizing that they are best equipped to devise solutions tailored to their workflows. The clerk's office

suggested the potential use of overtime and weekend work rather than assembling new clerical staff, leveraging existing resources more effectively.

Ms. Lindberg described the challenge of aligning systems and processes in the ongoing effort. Despite progress in system integration, the complexity lies in streamlining the manual process of preparing cases for transmission to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). With approximately 29,000 cases requiring individual review and submission by clerks, the task is immense. The importance of clear communication and collaboration between departments, law enforcement agencies, and DPS is stressed. Despite the challenges, there's a commitment to resolving the issues and ensuring compliance to avoid losing grant funding. The meeting concludes with a call for continued efforts and transparency in addressing the situation.

Dallas County Sexual Assault Unit - Trey Stock

Commissioner Garcia introduced our next speaker and read his bio included in the CJAB packet.

Trey Stock began his presentation by offering a comprehensive overview of the operations at the DA's office concerning adult sexual assault and human trafficking. He mentioned the overlap between these two areas and acknowledged the similarities and differences in their handling and prosecution. He reflected on the evolution of the department's resources, noting that in 2009, they had only one prosecutor, one investigator, and a part-time victims' advocate. However, he noted significant growth since then, with the department now having four prosecutors, two investigators, and one victim advocate. Mr. Stock discussed the existence of a cold case unit, which was established as part of the Sex Assault Kit initiative. Over the years, Dallas County has made significant progress in testing these kits, although there is still some backlog. Mr. Stock shared the unit's operations heavily rely on grants, as do many of the victim advocates.

Mr. Stock and his team specializes in handling human trafficking cases involving victims aged 17 years and older, encompassing both labor and sex trafficking. While the majority of their cases pertain to sex trafficking, they also encounter instances of forced labor and other related offenses, such as forced panhandling. Additionally, the office prosecutes all sex assault-related offenses for victims aged 17 years and older, regardless of the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Although DNA evidence plays a significant role in their investigations, Mr. Stock reported that the majority of cases do not solely rely on DNA for resolution. Instead, the central issue often revolves around the issue of consent, which can present complexities in legal proceedings.

DNA evidence plays a critical role in cases involving serial rapists, given the repetitive nature of their crimes. These perpetrators often target vulnerable populations, including prostitutes and individuals with mental health issues.

Unfortunately, victims of such crimes frequently hesitate to report them due to fear of not being believed. This reluctance complicates prosecution efforts, especially when it comes to locating and securing the testimony of the victim during the trial.

Traffickers often exploit vulnerable populations by manipulating their desires and needs, offering them a distorted sense of affection in exchange for compliance. Despite the victims recognizing the harmful nature of their situation, they may perceive the trafficker's actions as acts of love due to the provision of material needs or desires. This perverse dynamic poses a significant challenge for law enforcement and victim advocates, as they strive to combat the psychological manipulation perpetrated by traffickers.

Mr. Stock discussed the disparities between prosecuting sexual assault and trafficking cases, particularly in addressing prevailing attitudes and misconceptions prevalent in society. He pointed out the challenge of combating myths regarding rape, consent, and victim-blaming, which often influence jurors' perceptions during trials. Moreover, Mr. Stock highlighted the complexity of prosecuting traffickers, noting their sophisticated methods of manipulation and coercion, which exploit vulnerable populations' desire for affection and acceptance. He underscored the diverse nature of traffickers, ranging from individuals to intricate criminal networks, and debunked common stereotypes associated with pimps. Ultimately, Mr. Stock spoke about addressing these misconceptions and societal attitudes to ensure effective prosecution and support for victims in both sexual assault and trafficking cases.

Mr. Stock mentioned the legislative change in September 2021, which elevated solicitation of prostitution to a felony, leading to an increase in such cases in their workload. Each prosecutor now handles approximately 120 to 150 cases, a substantial burden. Despite efforts to address these cases effectively, including successful arrests, Mr. Stock described challenges arising from public misconceptions, hindering prosecution efforts.

Commissioner Garcia inquired about the most effective tool for community education regarding human trafficking, to which Mr. Stock emphasized active engagement with various community groups and outreach programs. He stated their involvement with organizations dedicated to aiding victims of human trafficking and crisis centers. When asked about the highest human trafficking arrests, Mr. Stock mentioned Harry Hines in Dallas. Regarding prosecution decisions between the Dallas County DA's office and the U.S. Attorney's office, Mr. Stock explained that it's typically determined on a case-by-case basis. He acknowledged outreach efforts in schools by the child abuse division, recognizing the importance of addressing grooming behaviors at a young age. Regarding recidivism among solicitors, Mr. Stock reported he is monitoring of repeat offenders and the need to educate them on the deeper implications of their actions. Finally, discussions touched upon the challenges posed by sophisticated traffickers and efforts to address online trafficking activities.

Committee Project Updates:

Criminal Justice Administration & Jail Population Management Update:

LaShonda Jefferson provided the updated. The Jail Population committee meeting for December 2023 was cancelled, however, excerpts from that packet can be found on pages 39 through 46 of the CJAB packet. The jail population for today is 6,136, which is 87% of our reduced total jail capacity. The average jail population for November 2023 was 6,312 and our yearly average for 2023, so far, is 6,230. The Criminal Justice Department's Population Management team continues to manually review and research individuals in custody. The Jail Population team implemented an email notification method to inform stakeholders when action is necessary for a case or individual movement. The objective is to prevent justice delays and unnecessary costs to the county. Tracking efforts commenced in April 2023, spanning April through November of the same year, with a total of 16,387 individuals researched. Among them, 34% received either an initial or follow-up email. Before the implementation of jail management, the average jail stay was 89 days, while after implementation, it reduced to 39 days, marking a 50-day decrease. Their goal remains to ensure individuals do not linger unnecessarily in jail.

Fair Defense:

Lynn Richardson was unable to attend, and no report was presented during this meeting.

Justice of the Peace:

Judge Valencia Nash reported that they are continuing to work on the conversion efforts for cases that did not transfer over from the Odyssey program. Rashonda has been diligently working to establish a team to ensure that every court receives the necessary support for transitioning traffic cases. Additionally, they are exploring e-filing for other courts, aiming for at least half of them to adopt this system. The focus remains on moving forward with the transition to the new case management system.

Law Enforcement/Jurisprudence:

Ellyce Lindberg provided the update, indicating that there has not been a formal meeting. This marks the conclusion of the updates for this subcommittee.

Pretrial:

Miguel Canales presented the update. As of December 13th, pretrial services supervised a total of 2430 defendants, broken down as follows: 1500 cases in the Alcohol Monitoring unit, 543 cases in the Electronic Monitoring unit, 213 cases in the Smart Justice or Mental Health unit, and 174 cases in the General Pretrial unit. Regarding staffing, Pretrial is currently short one supervising officer and is actively seeking a bilingual officer to fill this position.

Reentry:

Christina Crain was unable to attend the meeting, and there is no formal subcommittee report.

Program Update:

Ellyce Lindberg briefly introduced Mr. Billy Gipson.

Mr. Billy Gipson is the Critical Infrastructure Chief for the Dallas County Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office. Mr. Gipson expressed gratitude for the opportunity to provide an overview of the Dallas County Homeland Security and Risk Management Office. Mr. Gipson emphasized the distinction between their office and the federal Homeland Security. Given the recent leadership changes and the influx of new team members, their focus has been on developing the infrastructure program, particularly addressing community lifelines such as water systems, transportation, and government facilities. As the critical infrastructure Chief, Mr. Gipson has initiated community boards for various agencies, facilitating discussions on safety measures, including emergency protocols for schools and transportation systems during crises.

In discussions pertaining to transportation and crisis management, the emphasis is placed on preparing for severe weather events or active shooter situations. Mr. Gipson expressed collaborating efforts with local, state, and federal agencies, and the focus on establishing best practices and devising plans to mitigate potential incidents. While acknowledging the inevitability of crises, the goal is to minimize their impact on the community. Notably, during recent engagements, Mr. Gipson addressed shelter plans with the community, underscoring the importance of proactive measures. While often mistaken for a law enforcement agency, the office serves as a coordinating body for all entities during disasters, ensuring resilience and swift recovery for citizens and businesses alike.

The Dallas County Homeland Security and Risk Management Office operates under the direction of Dallas County Judge Jenkins. Mr. Gipson further noted the approval of a new emergency operations center for Dallas County by the Commissioner Court. Judge Valencia Nash inquired about the active shooter classes for the South Dallas Government Center. Mr. Gipson identified Chief De Los Santos from the Fire Marshal's office as the point of contact for information concerning that building.

Public Comments:

None.

Announcements:

The next CJAB meeting will be held on March 25, 2024, at 2:30pm.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:46pm.