



**Dallas County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
General Membership Minutes for Monday, December 16, 2024**

Welcome & Introductions: Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia called the meeting to order at 2:39 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 23, 2024, were made a part of the packet. A motion was made to approve minutes by Paul Blocker with a correction under fair defense to read Aloft in Dallas; the motion was seconded with a correction on the record by Duane Steele. The approval of the meeting minutes was unanimous.

Presentations:

Focus Deterrence

Jessica Gamez introduced the speaker, Shenna Oriabure, and gave a synopsis of her biography. The speaker's full biography is included in the packet.

Shenna Oriabure updated the membership on the work being done by the Dallas County District Attorney's Office through the Focus Deterrence program, in partnership with the Garland Police Department and Dallas Police Department. Mrs. Oriabure also took a moment to offer special recognition to Mr. Phillip Clark and Ms. Marsha Edwards for their contributions.

Mrs. Oriabure began her interactive presentation by asking the group about their familiarity with the Focus Deterrence program. She shared five zip codes, explaining that they represented her past and current residences. Mrs. Oriabure then provided her personal experience with crime, showing a picture of an incident from October 2022. She described how she lived in an apartment complex for eight years, where there were multiple violent crimes, including three homicides. She recalled a terrifying event when bullets shot through her residence, ricocheting in the bathroom. She expressed that this experience made the concept of Focused Deterrence deeply personal to her.

Mrs. Oriabure discussed the DA's office's commitment to reducing gun violence and crime through a data-driven, evidence-based approach. She highlighted the DA's mission, which focuses on enhancing public safety, holding offenders accountable, and improving the quality of life in Dallas County. The mission aligns with the principles of Focused Deterrence, which targets reducing violent crime by addressing the highest-risk individuals involved in frequent violent offenses. Mrs. Oriabure explained that Focused Deterrence is based on the idea that offenders are less likely to commit crimes if they believe they will be swiftly caught and punished.

She described how the program began after DA Creuzot attended a conference in 2020 where Dr. Breonna Fox presented the strategy, showing that a small percentage (6%) of violent offenders commit the majority (60%) of violent crimes. The DA's office, after extensive research and collaboration with experts, implemented the program in Garland in late 2021 and expanded to Dallas in 2022.

Focused Deterrence uses an objective scoring system to identify individuals who have committed violent offenses and meet specific criteria such as gang affiliation, prior violent crimes, or firearms-related offenses. Individuals in the pool are notified and given the option to change their behavior by engaging in services or face consequences if they continue criminal activities. Mrs. Oriabure emphasized that the program is about providing opportunities for positive change, offering incentives, and intervening when necessary to protect the community.

Mrs. Oriabure shared success stories from the Focused Deterrence program, using the "carrot and stick" approach. She described cases where individuals engaged in services and turned their lives around, benefiting both themselves and their families, while others who did not engage faced consequences that still impacted their families. The program aims to reduce crime, lower individuals' risks of reoffending, and improve community relations. Notifications to individuals on the list are made through letters, call-in sessions, or mobile check-ins, which have proven effective, such as a recent outreach where a client's family expressed gratitude through prayer.

She outlined the basic requirements for implementing the program, such as having a record management system, data management, collaboration with community service providers, and dedicated personnel. The DA's office supports these efforts by providing expertise, research, and letters of support, although funding must be secured elsewhere. Mrs. Oriabure assured that the program's success lies in its evidence-based, research-driven approach, which helps reduce crime, engage communities, and create generational change for families impacted by violence or incarceration.

Mrs. Oriabure concluded by inviting interested parties to reach out to her for further information or assistance with Focused Deterrence. Mrs. Oriabure offered

to provide personalized presentations on the Focused Deterrence program to help agencies understand how it could work for them.

When asked about the criteria for participation, Mrs. Oriabure confirmed that the program currently targets adult offenders, but there has been discussion about extending it to juveniles, focusing more on services than prosecution for young offenders. She addressed questions about success rates, noting that while formal data is still being collected, they do have anecdotal success stories. One case involved a woman whose charges were dismissed after she engaged with services, while another involved a man with countless felonies who was sentenced to 40 years in prison. What's particularly noteworthy about the case is the speed of the process: from the filing date to the jury conviction and sentencing, it took just three and a half months. This shows the program's ability to achieve swift and fair resolutions.

She acknowledged that recidivism data was still being gathered and that the timeline to evaluate program effectiveness is set for the end of 2025, with plans to track recidivism at six months, one year, and three years. Mrs. Oriabure emphasized that they were committed to ensuring the program was effective and would stop it if it was found to be harmful.

Mrs. Craine from Unlocking Doors praised Mrs. Oriabure's leadership in the project, acknowledging her dedication and effort to make it successful. She encouraged other agencies to consider joining the initiative.

Texas Police Chiefs Association Legislative Interests

Ellyce Lindberg read a brief section of Chief Gary Tittle's biography.

Chief Tittle discussed the upcoming legislative session, emphasizing its importance to the criminal justice system. He provided an overview of the Texas Police Chiefs Association (TPCA), clarifying that it is not an employee association, but operates under the Texas Municipal League, representing police departments across Texas. He spoke about the growth of police departments in the state, from 1,300 to nearly 2,500.

The Chief shared the TPCA's key priorities for the session, including advocating for increased funding, improved training, and leadership development. He noted significant successes in securing increased funding for law enforcement training, including doubling the state's law enforcement training funds. He also mentioned the push for increased accreditation for police departments, following the failure of a bill last session.

The Chief addressed concerns related to THC products, marijuana decriminalization, and the growing challenges of mental health within the criminal justice system. He stressed the need for better mental health resources and more humane alternatives to emergency detention and transport, calling for greater involvement of mental health professionals.

He introduced a new "pager pin" device, a less-lethal tool aimed at de-escalating situations, and explained the need to work with the legislature to prevent it from being classified as a deadly weapon. Chief Tittle also described emerging issues like squatting and the use of artificial intelligence in creating child pornography, highlighting efforts to strengthen laws against such crimes.

Chief Tittle discussed several important topics as the legislative session approaches. He briefly touched on issues related to university and ISG retirements, noting the importance of retirement incentives for recruiting and retaining law enforcement professionals in Texas. He also addressed the "rule of 90" retirement system, which requires officers to meet certain age and service time criteria to qualify for retirement.

The Chief then discussed a concerning issue involving "machine gun diversion devices," also known as clock switch devices, which convert semi-automatic weapons into automatic firearms. He emphasized the need to address this issue from a legal perspective in the penal code.

Another key issue was the enhancement of penalties for high-speed pursuits, particularly evading law enforcement. Houston and Dallas police departments have raised this concern, urging for stronger penalties and the potential for vehicle seizures to deter dangerous high-speed evasion.

As the legislative session progresses, the Chief provided an update on the bills filed, with approximately 2,200 bills submitted, including 350 related to criminal justice. He noted that last session saw over 1,000 criminal justice bills filed. The legislative process will kick off in January, with a key deadline for new bills to be filed by March 14. Following that, committee hearings will begin, with several weeks of discussions expected to follow.

Finally, the Chief mentioned potential changes in leadership, as new House speakers and committee chairs will be selected, which could affect the structure and focus of the committees. Commissioner Garcia asked Chief Tittle about the top priorities for public safety in Texas, particularly in North Texas, during the legislative session. Chief Tittle responded that, while his focus is broad, the main priorities include addressing mental health issues and securing funding for mental health programs. Recruitment and retention in law enforcement were also key concerns, especially given the competitive nature of policing in North Texas compared to other parts of the state.

Chief Tittle emphasized the importance of joining forces with mental health organizations to secure additional funding and support, noting that mental health programs have struggled with funding, especially post-pandemic. He expressed a commitment to working with groups like the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority to continue the progress made with increased funding.

Chief Tittle also raised concerns about recent legislative efforts to limit public entities from using taxpayer dollars to advocate for legislation. He highlighted the importance of local entities being able to advocate for issues affecting their communities, stressing that they are best equipped to represent North Texas' interests in the legislature. Tittle warned that several bills had been filed that could impact local control and lobbying efforts, and he encouraged continued unity to address this issue moving forward.

Committee Project Updates:

Criminal Justice Administration & Jail Population Management Update:

Charlene Randolph provided the update. The Jail Population committee December meeting excerpts can be found on pages 39 through 46 of the CJAB packet. The current jail population is 6,512, which is 91% of the reduced maximum capacity of 7,119. In November 2024, the average population was 6,503, and the yearly average is 6,462.

The Dallas County Criminal Justice Department's Jail Population Management Team has been working closely with stakeholders to ensure smooth case and person movement, reducing delays and unnecessary county costs. From January to October, the team researched over 28,790 individuals, with more than 10,000 requiring follow-up. As a result, 4,918 individuals were released, and the team's interventions resulted in a 61-day reduction in length of stay, saving the county an estimated \$25 million.

Additionally, the team received approval for two temporary staff members, who helped research 1,396 more individuals, contributing to a record 642 releases in October. The Budget Department and Commissioner's Court approved an additional three months of temporary staffing to further enhance the team's efforts.

Fair Defense:

Paul Blocker provided an update on Fair Defense, noting that during the last Commissioner's Court session, there was extensive discussion about priority appointments for capital murder cases. Commissioner Price asked the Public Defender's Office and the Criminal Justice Department to review how many cases attorneys were assigned throughout FY24. Preliminary data was shared with Commissioner Price and county administration, and further discussion is expected. Additionally, the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) published a report on the limited scope review of Dallas County's Indigent Defense System, which is now with county administration and commissioners. A detailed conversation on the topic is anticipated soon.

Justice of the Peace:

Judge Valencia Nash provided an update on the Justice of the Peace. She explained that starting January 1st, it is mandated for all offices to have a youth diversion plan, which will include a diversion coordinator. Efforts are underway to

implement this plan. Additionally, changes will impact the Odyssey system, including updates to forms, quick reference guides, and offense codes due to the renumbering of criminal procedure chapters 13, 45, and 55. Rashonda is working diligently to ensure these updates are ready for January.

Law Enforcement/Jurisprudence:

Ellyce Lindberg provided an update, acknowledging the great turnout at the meeting and expressing hope for continued participation in the CJAB meetings in 2025. She emphasized the importance of the committee in fostering collaboration across the county, allowing different areas to understand and support each other in making improvements. Ms. Lindberg took a moment to honor the late Jimmy Patterson, a dedicated and influential figure in Dallas County who passed away recently. Patterson made significant contributions, including improving the Sheriff's Department's systems and being available 24/7 during crises. Ms. Lindberg shared her admiration for Patterson's character and his impact on Dallas County. The committee expressed their condolences and appreciation for his work.

Pretrial:

Jeff Segura from Pretrial Services reported that they are currently monitoring approximately 2,284 individuals. This includes 1,349 in the alcohol monitoring unit, 516 in electronic monitoring, 274 in the Smart Justice Unit (which handles individuals with mental health issues), and 145 in the general pretrial unit. Mr. Segura announced that Mr. Duane Steele, after 34 years of service to Dallas County, will be retiring on December 31st, marking a significant change for the Pre-trial Department. Commissioner Garcia mentioned that the Dallas County Commissioner's Court would be reading a resolution in Mr. Steele's honor the following day. Commissioner Garcia also expressed her appreciation for Mr. Steele, recalling their early days with the Criminal Justice Advisory Board.

Reentry:

Mrs. Crain provided an update on various re-entry initiatives. The team is working with Shenna and others on the Focus Deterrence program, specifically collaborating with the city of Garland and hoping to engage with Dallas. They are also forming partnerships with Parkland and UT Southwestern to address health-related social deterrence for inmates and individuals returning to the community. Additionally, they received a DOL grant through the Dallas Workforce Board to offer job training and upskilling opportunities for those re-entering society. Mrs. Crain highlighted ongoing collaboration with the Dallas County Juvenile Department to improve services for juveniles returning to the community. She is working on organizing a roundtable group with various partners, including Mr. Blocker, to address broader re-entry issues and identify ways the county can better support individuals transitioning back into society.

Research:

Dr. Noyes was unable to attend the meeting and had no update to report.

Program Update:

Ellyce Lindberg provided an update on the Electronic Disposition Reporting, stressing the importance of closing 90% of open arrests across Dallas County. This goal, based on the annual count on August 1st, requires closing approximately 28,000 cases between now and then. Everyone's cooperation is needed, especially from different agencies, to meet this target. A critical aspect of the process is ensuring cases are properly disposed of within 30 days. Failure to meet these goals could result in losing grants from the Governor's Office, impacting various nonprofit organizations and the county.

Marsha Edwards presented graphs comparing the current year's progress with previous years, showing a significant delay despite no new case management system to blame. She shared that LaFayne McCall has been working to create agency-specific lists, which will soon be distributed. The backlog continues to be a major challenge, with 10,000 open LEA cases alone. Additionally, unfiled, unlinked arrests, and Class C offenses add to the workload.

Gary Fitzsimmons provided an update on the clerk's office efforts, indicating that database support from IT had helped in resolving some issues related to dispositions. The collaboration between various departments is crucial to meeting the 90% goal, with stakeholders working together to identify issues and solutions. The criminal justice department's jail population management team is also focused on identifying cases that need hearings, though cases involving people in the community must also be addressed.

Ms. Randolph mentioned that regular meetings are held with all relevant Dallas County stakeholders to discuss progress and challenges. A focus on closing open arrests and ensuring timely filing is necessary to prevent losing funding, which has a widespread impact on services throughout the county. She concluded by stressing the importance of collaboration and accountability to meet the EDR goal.

Public Comments:

None.

Announcements:

A retirement party to honor Duane Steele will take place on Friday, December 20, 2024, at the Frank Crowley Building, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM in the Central Jury Room. Lastly, the next CJAB meeting will be held on March 24, 2025, at 2:30 PM.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 PM.