

## Minutes

### Harris County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Wednesday December 2, 2015

1001 Preston Street, Houston, TX 77002

Commissioner Lee called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm. Council members in attendance were: Commissioner Radack, Judge Susan Brown, Alex Bunin (Chief Public Defender), Judge Hilary Green, Judge Margaret Harris, Dr. Teresa May (CSCD), Dennis Potts (Pretrial Services), Constable Alan Rosen, Judge Robert Schaffer, and Judge Michael Schneider.

#### 1. Approval of November 2015 meeting minutes

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made and seconded. The motion carried.

#### 2. OCJC Jail Population Report

Karen Hebron reported that the average daily population housed in November was 8,439, essentially the same as one year ago. The population reached its peak of 8,950 inmates in July followed by declines over the next four months which is consistent with seasonal trends observed in previous years. There were fewer inmates in every major category with the exception of probationers whose numbers increased slightly by 21 persons. Although the total housed is similar to one year ago, makeup of the population has shifted with an increased number of pretrial detainees and fewer post-adjudicated county and TDCJ/state jail prisoners. A copy of the jail population report is included with the minutes.

#### 3. Discussion regarding Strategic Plan

Clarissa Stephens presented a brief review of the Council's proposed strategic plan including the mission, vision, goals and objectives. A presentation regarding the plan was last made at the April meeting. Shortly thereafter, in May, the Council was awarded a MacArthur Safety + Justice Planning Grant. The proposed strategic plan will be included on the agenda for formal adoption in January 2016. A copy of the presentation is included with the minutes.

#### 4. Proposed 2016 Council Meeting Dates

A motion to approve the proposed dates as submitted was made and seconded. The motion carried. A copy of the approved meeting dates is included with the minutes.

#### 5. Reports

##### a. Anticipated plans for Peden program and Atascocita

Dr. May reported that 150 probationers had been transferred to Atascocita and the number of probationers in jail was down to 347 as of December 1. Currently there are 300 probationers in the downtown Peden facility and another 350+ receiving treatment in the Atascocita location. More beds are needed for female probationers as evidenced by the waiting list of 50-100 women. Medical facilities are also needed to serve those with long-standing drug abuse issues and chronic health conditions. CSCD is working with PGAL Architects, the Public Infrastructure Department, and Budget Management to design a long-term solution for consolidating all residential treatment programs in Atascocita.

**b. Update: Round II MacArthur Grant Application**

Caprice Cospers reported that the grant technical consultants would return on December 8<sup>th</sup> to meet with the planning team and provide guidance on the application due January 6<sup>th</sup>. The planning team has been expanded to include three community representatives, Dr. Everette Penn, Director of the TAPS Academy and UH Clear Lake Professor; Dr. Sandra Guerra Thompson, Director of the Criminal Justice Institute at the UH Law Center; and Jay Jenkins, J.D, Harris County Project Attorney, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition.

Another view of the strategic plan was presented to highlight the alignment of the CJCC's stated goals with the Safety and Justice Challenge strategies developed by the planning team for the Round II grant application. A copy of the presentation is included with the minutes.

**6. New Business**

Alex Bunin reported that the Public Defender's Office is expected to be awarded a grant from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission to coordinate a statewide response regarding re-testing of cases involving mixture-DNA evidence. Assistant PD Bob Wicoff will oversee training and support of a handful of contract lawyers who will review potentially impacted cases and train and assist lawyers across the state. There is no cost to Harris County and the TIDC will pay for an additional lawyer while Mr. Wicoff is involved in this initiative.

**7. Old Business**

**a. Stepping Up Mental Health Initiative**

Caprice Cospers presented a draft copy of the proposed resolution for the Council's review. Comments from Council members are due to the County's Attorney's Office by Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. The final resolution will be included on an upcoming Commissioner's Court agenda.

**b. CJCC Website Update.**

A website for the Council has been developed with information about the membership, mission and vision statements, and upcoming meeting dates. An overview and demonstration will be presented at the next Council meeting. Protocols for adding information to the site must be developed and agreed upon by the Council members.

**8. Announcements**

Judge Harris announced that a legal education seminar will be offered on January 21 and 22, 2016 at no cost to the participants. The seminar will be open to the judiciary, prosecutors, and members of the defense bar. A number of nationally known speakers have been confirmed. More details are forthcoming.

Dennis Potts reported that the Pretrial Services Department recently underwent an operational assessment and has already begun implementing recommendations.

**9. Executive Session: Jail Processes**

The Chair elected to dispense with an Executive session. John Odam reported that the DOJ will be visiting the Harris County jail in early March. Since 2008, DOJ has focused on two issues: care and treatment of the mentally ill and use of force by jailers. Mr. Odam suggested there may be some benefit in engaging a consultant to review medical policies and procedures, and the integration of detention and medical services.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 pm.