

Minutes – Criminal Justice Alternative to Incarceration Meeting

Date: February 26, 2025

Time: 12:00-1:30 pm

Location: Beverly Livesay Room at Human Services Building

Attendees: Bridgette Nugent, Lance Salisbury, Rich John, Louise Miller, Samantha Stevenson, Marie Boyer, Rich John, Matthew VanHouten, Lauran Harrison, Dominick Recckio, Dave Sanders, Sherron Brown, Michael Rhines, Daniel Cornell, Ruma Poudell.

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Bridgette welcomed everyone, everyone introduced themselves.
2. **Changes to Agenda:** No changes.
3. **Minutes Approval:** The minutes of the January meeting were unanimously approved.
4. **Updates:**
 - a. **Chair's Update** – No updates from Bridgette.
 - b. **Re-Entry Caseworker 2024 Annual Report: Marie Boyer**
 - i. Marie referenced the 2024 annual Results Based Accountability (RBA) report shared with the members of CJATI throughout her updates.
 - ii. The re-entry caseworker program is primarily a 60–90-day transitional program with the goal of connecting clients with longer term community support.
 1. 69 unduplicated individuals were provided ongoing re-entry services in 2024.
 2. 445 successful referrals were made to supportive services in the community.
 3. 203 referrals were made to entitlement programs (a majority of which was housing).
 4. There were not as many referrals for the area of readiness and employment given the more basic needs of clients upon exit from jail.
 5. 167 referrals were made to other community resources (e.g. 211, personal identification and documents)
 - iii. Of those served in 2024, 22 people were released from jail unhoused
 1. 12 people were housed through work with Marie
 - iv. 60% of those working with Marie are considered “paper free”
 1. When Marie has a sentenced out date, it is much easier to facilitate connections and referrals and this process is not as smooth when there is not this date.
 - v. The recidivism rate for clients served in 2024 is at 8% re-booking rate
 1. 54/70 or 77% struggle with substance use disorder

2. 44/70 or 63% self-report a Mental Health Disorder but this is assumed to be higher
- vi. Marie shared a detailed anecdote of one individual she worked with in 2024 who utilized the incarcerated person request form to request her services ahead of release.
 1. All appointments set up/ DSS applications completed ahead of release
 2. Short term shelter stay (5 days) transition
 3. Met with probation and secured and maintained conditions of probation
 4. Secured part time job
 5. Transferred to ongoing care management
- Rich recognized and lauded Marie for honoring the original intention of the program as defined by the Legislature and thanked her for her ongoing work the intent of the program.
- Michael Rhines from the Civic Ensemble asked what treatment programs are available in the jail. Captain Harrison responded that inmates have access to NA, AA, religious services, holistic health, and programming with a forensic counselor. Cayuga Medical Center will begin a physician's direct program by April. URO has a gardening program at the jail. There is a need for more program space at the jail. The average jail stay is currently 15-30 days.

c. OAR 2024 Annual Report Highlights: Dave Sanders –

- i. OAR has established and maintained a cohesive database to track data related to community goals and indicators
 1. These include questions to OAR clients on their income, employment, health coverage, and stable housing- all self-reported.
 2. 319 clients under the age of 24 were served and are all directed to local youth programming.
 3. 261 were over the age of 50
 4. OAR will have a food pantry in June 2025
 5. Due to impacts of recent budget cuts, OAR will no longer be providing services in the area of domestic violence, emergency housing, and transportation (which has been provided on several occasions to rehab facilities).
 6. OAR has on average 470 interactions per month, serving 918 unduplicated individuals in 2024. 732 new clients have been served by OAR over the last few years alone.
 7. Other trends:
 - a. Unmet needs (decreasing over recent months)

- b. Decreased incidents/decreased calls to police, with Dave commented that building respect among staff and clients is key to the decrease in security incidents at OAR.
 - c. Huge need for personal IDs among this population
 - d. 29% of people in jail are OAR clients
 - e. 85% of clients are diverted from jail
 - f. College Initiative Upstate has assisted students in achieving 48 college degrees
- 8. Sunflower House
 - a. 30% find permanent housing
 - b. 56 clients served
 - c. Improvements year after year in reducing return to homelessness. Opioid settlement money is used to hold rooms during treatment.
- 9. Endeavor House
 - a. 773 days average stay.
 - b. \$400 a month DSS housing subsidy is not adequate in Ithaca, especially for a single male who frequently is waiting on the Section 8 approval list for years.
- ii. The OAR annual report presentation will be shared in full with the board. Marie commented that, in her experience, OAR is the best at finding immediate housing for the target population and lauded Dave for his team's work.

d. Discussion Item: Involuntary Commitment (Governor Hochul's Proposal)-

- i. Legislator Rich John introduced a resolution that was recently approved by the Public Safety Committee and will be taken up by the full Legislature on 3/3/25. He provided the following information as an overview of the resolution and Governor Hochul's proposal:
 - 1. Studies about the effectiveness of involuntary treatment are unclear.
 - 2. Intervention is needed when people can't take care of themselves.
 - 3. Harm reduction and risk management approach do not work.
- ii. The success of ATI programs in the County
 - 1. Violations of the law need to be addressed in the appropriate way.
 - 2. The proposal is aimed at treating people that are severely mentally ill and/or severely drug addicted. The two state agencies that are responsible for the oversight of these issues, OMH and OASAS, are siloed and not yet effective in tackling the co-occurring disorders.

Robust discussion was then had among all present, with some highlights noted below:

- Dave inquired as to the motive of the Governor's proposal and noted that it is likely very NYC focused given the high profile incidents of violence on the subway system. To him it doesn't feel it is meant to serve the individuals in distress but rather improve tourism.
- Dave asked Lance to speak on the topic of Lance responded that NYS has one of the highest standards for involuntary commitment and that, as a tool, could be utilized more. Lance also noted that the vague terminology included in the proposal will most certainly be challenged.
- Dave asked Samantha to speak to the topic of harm reduction and relayed that outpatient, voluntary treatment is evidence based, and the evidence shows that patient centered care works. This proposed model of involuntary treatment is very expensive, and we know it doesn't work. Outpatient intensive clinics are needed in the community. Further, Samantha noted that she does not believe that any professionals in the field of health services and harm reduction would be in support of this proposal and therefore no facilities or staff would be in place to execute or support it. Harm Reduction does work, there is a need to continue to challenge the stigma of harm reduction approaches, to restore the autonomy of the individual being served and invest in processes that lead to patient centered incremental changes.
- Captain Harrison reported that the jails become the dumping ground for individuals with severe needs and jails and Cos are not designed to be service providers. There are frequent assaults on COs in the jail, and her priority is the safety of both staff and inmates. It is incredibly challenging to locate the psychiatric residential facilities that these inmates need. There are many barriers to get assistance/ residential spaces for people in need.
- Taili said this is a further encroachment on individuals' rights. People don't trust the government, TC is a leader in NY and should be setting a precedent.
- Further comments made included that what happens in an involuntary commitment facility is not treatment that addresses why people are there, and who determines what criteria must be met to be released from such treatment? How does this center the autonomy of the individual?

e. Long Term Inmate report- Lance Salisbury & Captain Harrison

- i. There are currently 15 inmates on the LTR, which is considered high. Some inmates are awaiting or were awaiting psychiatric assessment/treatment.
- ii. Nine inmates on the list are under Judge Miller.
- iii. Seven trials are on the schedule.