

Minutes for Criminal Justice/Alternatives to Incarceration Advisory Board (CJATI)

Date: 2/24/2021

Call to Order: 12:04

Attendees: (31) Tammy Baker, Deana Bodnar, Karla Brackett, Ray Bunce, Deanna Carrithers, Suzi Cook, Dan Cornell, Erica Cotraccia, Deborah Dietrich, Donna Fleming, Belisa Gonzalez, Henry Granison, Judy Griffin, Lisa Holmes, Rich John, Schelley Michell-Nunn, August Miguez, Scott Miller, Jason Molino, Jess Moskowitz, Taili Mugambee, Mary Orsaio, Dominick Reckio, Richard Rivera, Susan Robinson, Benay Rubenstein, Lance Salisbury, Franci Saunders, Matt Van Houten, Keyanna Vann, Jerry Wright.

Excused: Mark Dresser, Louise Miller, Bridgette Nugent, Angela Sullivan

Introductions were made by attendees.

Changes to the Agenda:

Lisa Holmes shared a graph of Tompkins County Jail Statistics (attached). The average daily census in 2020 was an all time low of 36, and this is due in large part to the collective efforts around the table and the commitment to ATI programs.

Minutes: 1/27/21 meeting minutes were accepted.

Moved: Matt VanHouten

Seconded: Dan Cornell

Ayes: 31

Updates:

a. 13A Funding Update:

Lisa Holmes informed the group that the annual 13A funding from DCJS was confirmed for the current year (2020-2021) and a streamlined application for the funds was submitted this week. The annual award of \$18,720 goes to College Initiative Upstate.

b. Crisis Outreach Center:

Deb Dietrich informed the group that OAR has a 6 month lease/sublet from Groundswell for a Crisis Outreach Center to deliver outreach services, focusing on individuals who are homeless or housing insecure. It's located near Fulton and Meadow, close to the encampments and the west side. OAR will be providing benefit navigational services through volunteers, OAR staff, and Second Wind Cottages. REACH Medical's community health worker outreach nurse can deliver COVID testing and vaccination from this location as well as facilitate telemedicine services.

Tammy Baker: How is this different from the shelter as a space where people can gather? Can people still visit REACH in person or is it only through this satellite location?

Judy Griffin: People can still come to REACH in person. The Cayuga Street location is now closed and REACH is completely in the Seneca St. location for the past year.

Richard Rivera: The shelter isn't open as a gathering place. The OAR Outreach Center is not meant as an open gathering place but rather a place to receive services.

Deb Dietrich: OAR's main office has been open since May and has seen about 400 people a month. OAR is hoping that this satellite will help to serve people while being able to maintain social distancing.

Tammy Baker: She has been meeting with people throughout COVID in multiple downtown locations. OAR's services are in addition to what the Community Outreach Worker Program already offers to vulnerable populations.

Richard Rivera: The Outreach Center came about entirely through donations. Local non-profits have reconfigured themselves to provide services to the most vulnerable populations where they're at, to keep the population healthy and keep our community safe. This is a big reason why there hasn't been more of a big COVID outbreak locally.

Dan Cornell: Wanted to commend OAR and Richard for finding creative solutions. People's lives have been saved during the pandemic due to these efforts.

c. Long Term Inmate Report:

Matt VanHouten: There are seven individuals on the report; one of whom has been sentenced and should not be on the list. The top name has pled guilty and is waiting to be sentenced on April 6th. Another has signed a plea memo and will be entering a plea later this month. The remaining four individuals are all waiting for trials. Many are in jail for parole violations. NYS is allowing trials to be scheduled effective March 22. All the individuals listed will be a top priority to go to trial and resolve their cases.

Ray Bunce: None of the names on this list are technical parole violations, but there are others in the jail with technical parole violations. Even with a technical parole violation, they're still entitled to a hearing which takes up to 30 days for Parole to provide. Then it's decided whether they go back to state prison or parole supervision. During COVID, hearings are being held in the jail, some are virtual, and some are in person. NYS stopped all state ready or state returns during COVID. NYS will start taking inmates back to state prison at the end of March. They will be held in the jail until then.

Lance Salisbury: Not optimistic that we'll get to trials until May. There is great reluctance among the public to participate in jury pools until more of the public can be vaccinated.

Ray Bunce: There are currently 39 inmates in the jail right now. There was an inmate with COVID in the jail recently, someone coming in from outside, and COVID was identified through screening processes. There was no spread to other inmates during his stay, and he's since completed the isolation period. Ray commended Probation staff for following the safety protocols.

d. Reimagining Public Safety: Jason Molino: Jason recognized the collaborative effort; most of the members of the CJATI committee participated in the process, either on workgroups, helping to organize public input sessions, or participating in the input sessions. The document is a draft, living document, and not all of the people that worked on it agree with all the recommendations. Any feedback offered at today's meeting will be shared with the Legislature for their consideration. Jason went through a summary of the recommendations.

The report in its entirety, including the recommendations from both the City and the County can be found here:

<https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/reimaginepublicsafety>

Feedback:

Lance Salisbury participated on the Law Enforcement Workgroup has heard community concern that IPD is no longer going to exist. That's not the model. Law enforcement officers receive a lot of non-police related calls, and the goal is to transfer activities where an armed officer isn't needed.

Deb Dietrich noted the digital divide that occurred during the pandemic and acknowledged the efforts that went into reaching people and soliciting their feedback for this report. There will continue to be a need for outreach efforts to continue during implementation.

Deanna Carrithers agreed with the need for continued outreach, acknowledging that many people don't want to read a 97 page document. The County produced a one page summary and Tammy Baker and Richard Rivera have agreed to take it and speak to vulnerable populations about it.

Richard Rivera noted this is an aspirational document which requires us to step out of our comfort zone and reimagine policing in a new way. The report included qualitative data from people we interviewed, those who had disproportionately been impacted by policing, and has allowed us to see things from their point of view. The work that has gone into this was incredible, and this is a historical moment. We're not trying to get rid of policing, we're trying to make policing better, with more advocacy and community connections.

Judy Griffin is impressed with how aspirational the document is and commended people for their bravery in putting it forward. She highlighted the wellness and training components for law enforcement staff, as there is a lot of trauma and suffering faced in this work.

Benay Rubenstein: CIU students interviewed people who had a lot of police contact. It was the first time for both CIU students and the people they interviewed where they said they felt connected to the county in a positive way. She suggests keeping this population alive in this work because that could make all the difference.

Jason Molino put in a plug for CIU graduation this Friday, the link to which is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBmpY53sBlk>

Rich John: Noted that the first proposal about IPD is getting the most attention, which is unfortunate. It is a huge undertaking and will be a big budget challenge. The rest of the document is more of a pathway. The IPD proposal will involve changing people's job descriptions, reformatting procedures, and there will be no turning back. With the other recommendations, if we go down a bad path, we can turn things around.

Jason Molino: For the next 35 days, we will be speaking about the plan to as many different community groups as possible. The Legislature and the Common Council have to adopt a plan, edits or no edits, before April 1. Budget numbers need to be assigned to the recommendations for the elected bodies to consider. Jason offered to follow up with groups or subgroups on the report.

Lisa Holmes suggested that CJATI members hold open the question of how we can serve to implement the recommendations in the future.

Adjourn 1:25

Motion: Deborah Dietrich
Second: Matt VanHouten
Submitted: Lisa Holmes
Date: 2/26/2021

Attachment

