

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

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**Date:** 12/16/2020

**Call to Order:** 12:00

**Attendees: (21)** Rich John, Henry Granison, Taili Mugambee, Judy Griffin, Donna Flemming, Scott Miller, Susan Robinson, Benay Rubenstein, Erica Cotraccia, Deb Dietrich, Mark Dresser, Bridgette Nugent, Deana Bodnar, Dan Cornell, Matt Van Houten, Amy Heffron, Suzi Cook, Ray Bunce, Lance Salisbury, Jason Molino, Lisa Holmes

**Excused:** Louise Miller, Angela Sullivan

**Changes to the Agenda:** The order of agenda items was changed to allow for maximum input from group members.

### **Updates from County Administrator: Jason Molino**

Jason acknowledged the leadership and contributions of Dave Sanders as the Criminal Justice Coordinator and facilitator of CJATI over the last 2 years. His position was funded through 2020, and unfortunately due to the County's fiscal position, the funding is not continued in 2021. This does not impact the County's commitment to ATIs or to the continued momentum of the CJATI Committee. The Committee will continue to be staffed out of the County Administration office, with Lisa Holmes, Deputy County Administrator taking that role starting today and in 2021.

### **Reimagining Public Safety Update: Jason Molino**

Jason provided background about the process of Reimagining Public Safety and collaboration with the City of Ithaca and the Center for Policing Equity. Working groups have convened around communication, data analysis and law enforcement/public safety. The public input process is currently underway and multiple community voices public forums have been held to garner input. Focus groups have been an important way of hearing from community members who might not participate through other means. COVID restrictions on public gatherings have made the process more challenging. More information about these efforts can be found on the County's website: <https://www2.tompkinscountyny.gov/ctyadmin/reimaginepublicsafety>

### **CJATI Board Members' Input: All**

Jason offered all meeting participants the opportunity to provide a few minutes of input on the Reimagining Public Safety project, with the prompt: "What do we need to know to reimagine public safety in Ithaca and Tompkins County?" The meeting was recorded and a full transcript of each participant's comments will be compiled and shared with the Communications workgroup.

Lance Salisbury: Tompkins County's level of engagement with Reimagining Public Safety has gone far beyond the rest of the state. We need to maintain that engagement.

Deb Dietrich: The focus groups have been critical to the process and have underscored the digital divide. OAR has facilitated focus groups in this process.

Taili Mugambee: The work has been a sacrifice by community members and has been at times emotionally taxing and retriggering. He shared concerns around the quick turnaround to submit something to NYS. What we submit should be a living document that can be adjusted over time to advance social justice initiatives. Relationship building should be continued in this process.

Benay Rubenstein: College Initiative Upstate and Civic Ensemble participants have served as interviewers and it has been an empowering experience. She would love to keep these connections alive between the students and the larger community. This was positive towards leadership development.

Mark Dresser: With 32 years of service in law enforcement, he feels the Sheriff's office is committed to enhancing communication, participation and transparency, and that process will continue.

Bridgette Nugent: Investing in youth and providing positive engagement opportunities is an investment in public safety.

Sue Robinson: She has served on CJATI since 1985 when she was a Probation Officer and has continued since retirement. Tompkins County has always been a leader and supporter of ATIs. We are better now than we were 20 years ago because of who is at the table, and the variety of new approaches that are available. We will be even better in the future. It is important to listen to everyone's voices.

Scott Miller: Tompkins County is a statewide leader in ATIs, and there is room for improvement. He is proud that we have the first and only Mental Health Court in the 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (a 10 County area). Eligibility for MH Court now extends beyond the City to across the whole County. He is working with Tompkins County Mental Health to expand options for mental health treatment including an enhanced safety plan contract, where a person agrees to enhanced outpatient services as an alternative to jail or hospitalization.

Deana Bodnar: The Department of Social Services is shifting toward de-escalation and a trauma informed approach. In the reimagining process she envisions the County adopting an approach of trauma-informed care organization-wide. Changing the approach can change systems. Individuals are traumatized by the cumulative impacts of structural racism. A change in approach is needed.

Amy Heffron: Has been involved in the Reimagining efforts through the College Initiative Upstate and Civic Ensemble and was honored to be a part of the interviews. She would like to see more youth engagement across the County.

Judy Griffin: The product is the process. This isn't an endpoint. Reach Medical is part of a Rural Health Equity training collaborative with Cayuga Medical Center and are conducting a health survey where community participants are paid for participation. Community members should be paid for their participation in this process. When services are accessible, engagement rates are high. We should be thinking beyond alternatives to incarceration. Harm reduction is a path forward.

Donna Flemming: She is a volunteer liaison from Ithaca Common Council. New York State laws regarding Civil Service and collective bargaining tie the hands of localities.

Jason Molino: Sees this plan to the State as a living document which will continue to evolve. The equity lens which we are using in this process should extend across all aspects of the services we provide in the community.

Matt VanHouten: He has been a part of the Law Enforcement working group. There have been good discussions around sending the right people to calls requiring de-escalation: it doesn't always require an armed officer. LEAD will be launching in 2021, and this will be a long term process.

Dan Cornell: He has been a part of the Law Enforcement working group and echoed that the work is an ongoing process and commitment.

Suzi Cook: In working with youth, she would like to see a better connection between schools, Department of Social Services and her office. Family engagement is needed earlier. Parents need services and validation around enforcing rules. Many 16 and 17 year olds will not be getting the transition time that college offers. She wishes there were apprenticeship programs available for youth to instill hope and purpose. Officer training in mediation is needed. Who is hired and the training offered is important.

Ray Bunce: We've made great strides. Even with those, a jail will still be necessary. People should leave jail better than when they entered it.

Henry Granison: Questions how all the information that's being collected will be processed.

Rich John: Spoke about the commendation for an officer who recently saved a man who overdosed. We will always have a need for police. There is a critical role for CJATI coming up, and the collective knowledge at this table will help move this process forward.

#### **CJATI Membership Renewal: Lisa Holmes**

Lisa reached out to members whose terms are expiring in 2020, and Bridgette Nugent, Judy Griffin and Louise Miller will renew their terms. Sue Robinson will not be renewing another term, but will continue to attend meetings when possible as a member of the public. Many

members recognized Sue for her decades of participation with CJATI and warmly thanked her for her service.

There are two at-large vacancies on CJATI. Lisa encouraged people to contact her if they are interested or if they know of others who should have a seat at the table.

Lisa notified committee members that she looks forward to working with them and plans to reach out individually in the coming months for conversation about CJATI.

**Minutes:** February 26, May 28, June 24, July 15 & September 16, 2020 minutes were accepted

Moved: Scott Miller

Second: Matt VanHouten

Ayes – 21

**Long Term Jail Statistics: Ray Bunce, Matt VanHouten, Lance Salisbury**

There is currently an overall jail census of 34.

There are 4 long term inmates who have been in the jail for over 5 months unsentenced. Of those individuals, 3 of 4 are parole violators awaiting jury trials.

Rich John discussed the Less is More Act, calling for parole reform in New York State.

[www.lessismoreny.org](http://www.lessismoreny.org)

Ray Bunce stated that New York State has suspended all intakes into the state prison system, and that they are not doing technical parole violations at this time.

Judy Griffin inquired about COVID cases and testing at the jail, and there have been zero cases to date. Vaccinations cannot be required but can be offered to inmates.

**Adjourn 1:28**

**Submitted:** Lisa Holmes

**Date:** 12/17/2020