

Minutes – Criminal Justice Alternative to Incarceration Meeting

Date: April 27, 2022

Time: 12:00 – 1:30p

Location: Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Deanna Carrithers, Marie Boyer, Mark Dresser, Rich John, Suzanne Scholten, Daniel Cornell, Ray Bunce, Jerry Wright, Bridgette Nugent, Erin Hynes, Matt VanHOuten, David Sanders, Peter Salton, Lousie Miller, Lance Salisbury, Maty Osario, Temitayo Sansui Parkinson, Sue Robinson, Deana Bodnar.

- I. Welcome and Introductions** – Deanna welcomed everyone.
- II. Changes to Agenda** – No proposed changes.
- III. Minutes** – Minutes from March meeting approved.
- IV. Updates (Rich):**
 - a. Bail Reform-** The State Bail Reform Budget passed. In NY bail is used as a guarantee to return to court, in other states it is used to keep people incarcerated as a safety tool for the community. Bail Reform in NY has not been attributed to changes in crime rates. NYC has seen a rise in violent crimes. There are some changes to bail rules in cases of gun trafficking, multiple incidents of no-shows on appearance tickets, order of protection violations, and involuntary commitments.
 - i. Lance went on to say that there were tweaks to Bail Reform that gives judges more discretion in setting bail with a distinction between crimes of poverty and other crimes. The changes will not create an increase in incarceration in TC. There are some changes in MH laws that may bring challenges from advocacy groups.
 - ii. Matt- Reiterated that Bail Reform is not responsible for TC crime rates. Crimes of poverty are not bail eligible.
 - b. Encampment Update-** The growth of the camps in the west end along with an increase in camp locations has created problems between encampment residents, and area businesses and residents. There are environmental issues, from trash and chemicals (propane tanks), crime, and PH issues from the drug use and discarded needles. There needs to be policy from the city regarding camping in the city limits. There is a lack of available housing and space in the shelters. There is a proposal for a TIDES program. This program is to get people that are resistant to housing and other services reintegrated back into society and stable housing. There would be a local non-profit that staffs it, and the land can be rented. There would be some rules for residents but with low barriers. The site would operate under NYS law for campsites. It would allow for easier, safer access social service providers to make connections. The proposal is supported by the city and will go to the county for support.

- i. **Peter:** Wants to explore how this will be received by the people in encampments that are there to avoid treatment. Rich said that it is not an effort to stop the treatment but to create harm reduction.
- ii. **Mary:** Wants to know what the expectations of IPD will be? Also, will it be staffed by STAHP or REACH or another similar agency. There is also a concern that the city codes will be considered in the plans. She also said that having case managers like the ones from the LEAD program would be important. Rich responded that there will be a loop access and lighting to make it safer and easier for first responders to have access. Second Wind Cottages or St. Johns will provide on-site staffing but there may need to be supplemental security from local law enforcement. There will be working bathrooms and shower houses. The plan requires a lot of input from many agencies.
- iii. **Dan-** Asked if there would be a maximum length of time for people to stay there. Rich said that ideally it would not be permanent and that anyone coming in would have an engagement plan. Having collaboration between city and county will determine if the plan can move forward.
- iv. **Dave-** Asked if there is an to engage with the people that have lived there or are living there to get their feedback. Rich said that this can be collected from the service providers that work closely with the residents.

V. Erin from BorgWarner Presentation:

- a. Erin said that BorgWarner is a Global company that has started implementing “Ban the Box” and “Second Chance” hiring throughout the US. They want to start these practices in their Ithaca plant, and she is working on meeting with different groups that can help them develop the process for this and to help make connections with groups that can ensure success for the people they hire.
 - i. Many group members had suggestions. Lance suggested OAR, CIU and GIAC. Peter said that there should be a statement that highlights that criminal status is not a barrier to being hired. Rich said that the Career Pathways program at CCE would be a good resource as well. Marie said that they can help people with applications and getting to interviews. Ray said that she is welcome to do a presentation in the jail. Dan invited her to speak at a probation staff meeting. He also suggested that there should be an employee representative or manager that has the skills to advocate for the people that are referred by the jail and probation. He also said that there is a concern about transportation and maybe having an employee ride share program can help that. Dave offered to set a meeting with Erin, himself, Alojja and Taili to talk about collaboration. He went on to say that the number of people being served at OAR is up. He said that

47% of the people they serve have no job and receive no services and that 43% of the people have not had an arrest in at least 5 years. Employment would be a tremendous asset to change these numbers. Dan asked to be a part of that meeting and others asked for a copy of that survey. Dave will share it with Deanna who will get it to the group. Erin said that another step in being ready to implement these hiring practices is making sure that the tools for employee success are in place.

VI. Chair Update (Deanna Carruthers)-

- a. **Reimagining Public Safety-** Alternative responses to Incarceration and WRAP HS delivery are outlined in the steps to utilize plans and response options. There is also a need for shared approval from the city and the county. There has been a focus on community healing for the black and brown community that will open to more parts of the community. Sedgwick Alexander from CU will speak to the CJATI board he also wants to be involved in the program.
- b. **CJATI Goals-** Have been assigned. Deanna asked if anyone wants to volunteer for parts that they are not already assigned to. She also asked if there were any changes to commitments that were already made. No one spoke up.

VII. Long Term Jail Report-

- a. In place of a long-term jail report Ray spoke of the challenges that exist in the jail with a high number of inmates that have severe, long term mental health needs. This has created a strain on an already reduced staff. Recently 3 of the inmates were sent to hospitals for inpatient treatment and there are 6 others waiting for evaluation. Ray wonders if the correct resources are making it to the people before they get to the breakdown that causes them to be arrested and sent to jail. There is difficulty for the staff, they are not trained to treat MH needs, they are trained in behavior response for safety. The jail is not designed for this level of people with significant MH needs being incarcerated. Rich reports that the Leg. Is looking at functionality in designs for a new jail, it is a slow-moving process. Lance responded that there that people with significant MH needs that are not getting the in-person counseling services that they need that make it difficult to for them to build a trusting relationship and have the desired effect. COVID has enhanced stressors that people with MH are dealing with. Marie said that there is a lack of providers. There are people that are difficult to treat due to lack of participation. For some people there is a barrier to treatment due to past incidents with MH or ADC. Dave said that he has clients reporting that MH is booking 5 months out for new appts. He also suggested mediation as an alternative to banning people from an agency. Dan suggested that there be “no fee for service” MH providers at TCMH so that people do not have to wait for care and can receive it when they are in crisis and ready for help. Marie agrees and said that money can’t dictate community wellness

response. Saving money now creates more costs later. Deana Bodnar said that the lack of providers for MH in the area is creating troubles for residents in the shelters as well. Dan would like to meet with HHS and Pub. Safety to talk more about this. Rich said that more money is needed for MH but careful spending is needed with money going to plans that will have the best impact, quick targeted spending that makes a difference. He agrees that a joint meeting will be helpful.

VIII. Adjournment- Deanna encouraged everyone to reach out with agenda items for future meetings. Next meeting is May 25, 2022.