

Milwaukee County Community Justice Council Minutes

Meeting of Wednesday, March 25, 2009
Washington Park Senior Center

Chief Judge Jeffrey Kremers called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Executive Committee Members in attendance were: County Executive Scott Walker, Chief Judge Jeff Kremers, District Attorney John Chisholm, Mayor Tom Barrett, Diana Rowe, representing Police Chief Ed Flynn, Supervisor Willie Johnson, Inspector Kevin Carr and Richard Cox representing Kit Murphy McNally, The Benedict Center.

The Chief Judge indicated that several members of the CJC were attending a hearing on the State budget proposal and others would have to leave early to go there.

The Minutes of the January 28, 2009, meeting were approved on a voice vote with no changes.

Issues Affecting Immigrant Communities Laurie Mlatawou, Co-Chair of the Dane County Task Force on Disparities in the Criminal Justice System, spoke to the group. She had attended the Marquette Law School Public Service Conference and wanted to speak to the CJC about her view that ICE is using unbridled enforcement against the immigrant communities. In her opinion, this is creating health issues and a human rights crisis with jails in the United States holding thousands of immigrants. She said that this was recently the topic of an Amnesty International report. She also expressed her concerns about the high drop out rate among this population and the Real ID initiative because those individuals without a social security number cannot get a driver's license or State ID and so they are forced to drive without a license. She also stated that Governor Doyle's budget would allow Wisconsin to opt out of Real ID. Mlatawou added that these are issues for the criminal justice system because they inhibit access to the courts and interpreters.

Standing Committee reports were as follows:

Juvenile Justice Committee: Co-Chair Eric Meaux presented the Committee's report which was also submitted in written form. He discussed the impact of the 2009 Executive Budget (Assembly Bill 75) on various services and programs in the delinquency court services area. He also mentioned two grant opportunities that Delinquency and Court Services Division staff have applied for from the Department of Labor and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Committee might have a role in their oversight if the application is successful.

Jail & Huber Utilization Committee: Inspector Carr spoke for Inspector Schmidt in his absence. He said that the Executive Committee is endorsing the Committee's recommendation of a new way of determining which inmates would be appropriate for a form of electronic monitoring. The criteria to provide the risk assessment would include:

1. The LSI-R score;
2. The criminal record;
3. Current criminal complaint;
4. Percent of sentence serviced;
5. The inmate's compliance with all aspects of their incarceration and program participation.

A written report was also submitted.

Chief Judge Kremers asked if there were any questions on the proposal. Hearing none, the full Board approved the recommendations as written.

Inspector Carr reminded the group that the Sheriff has the statutory authority to do this but wants to build community support so the protocol was developed. The pastor from St. Timothy's Baptist Church added that it may be another way to save money and we should pursue it. Inspector Carr said that it's not just about the money but it is the right thing to do. Holly Szablewski added that there are high compliance percentages for those individuals in electronic surveillance, around 95-97%. Inspector Carr said that this is also affected by the existence of an absconder unit. Ms. Mlatawou asked how one should respond to "there's a place for jail." Inspector Carr reminded her that an individual must serve 60% of their time in most cases.

Inspector Carr and Holly Szablewski say they have some support in the budget but it is largely technology, duplication, space, computer needs and phones. The final proposal needs to be the best estimate of the costs. Inspector Carr said the CJC has endorsed universal screening and he asked if everyone would let their County Board supervisors know that they support it. He stressed that it should not be sold as cost savings based on reducing the number of individuals in jail only but on the fact that we will have better information on which to make decisions.

Programs & Interventions Committee: Holly said that the Committee needs direction from the Executive Committee because without staff for the CJC, there is often no time to work on CJC projects as everyone has full-time jobs. She also reported that the drug treatment court is running with ten individuals in the process. So far, the results look promising which is particularly important since the drug court team selected very difficult cases. She invited anyone to drop in to Judge Joe Donald's court (423SB) on a Friday afternoon to observe the process.

She also reported that the Behavioral Health Department recently submitted a grant application to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and has not received a response yet. Also, there was a submission to the Bureau of Justice Assistance to provide a coordinator for the drug treatment court and other enhancements.

Holly also reported:

1. A formal funding letter has been received on the TAD program and it will now be opened to new admissions next week but will probably quickly meet the capacity of 90 individuals. If that happens, the program will have to be closed to new admissions again.
2. A formal application has been sent to the Office of Justice Assistance for AIM funds contained in the State budget. The responses to the recently released request for proposals are in the evaluation stage. A notice of intent to award will be issued Monday, March 30. AIM is designed to provide enhanced information to judges at sentencings.
3. The development of a risk assessment tool on OWI's is underway and, once finished, will benefit the Pretrial Services drug driving program and the Sheriff's Department as it will provide assistance on who should go on electronic surveillance or a SCRAM unit.
4. Funding for treatment slots will continue to be an issue for the Committee.

Public Health Committee: In the absence of First Assistant Public Defender Tom Reed, there was no report.

Data Analysis and Information Committee: Dennis John, CIO, IMSD, said he learned a lot at the Marquette conference and as a result of the conference he may be developing data sharing with Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The Committee continues to look at issues related to disparity in sentencing but they need a different set of skills than is available on the Committee. The Milwaukee County-Milwaukee Police Department information sharing project has made significant strides but the Beta test won't be available until the end of April and he will report the results in May. The Committee is looking at ways to support the Universal Screening project and may look at pre-populating demographics to assist in the screening process.

Rob Henken, Public Policy Forum, reported that they continue their analysis of community justice councils nationwide and have completed a preliminary report of the Jefferson County, Colorado, organization. He will have a more complete report at the next meeting.

Chief Judge Kremers asked all attendees to introduce themselves.

Community Outreach & Public Education Committee: Beth Bishop Perrigo reported that the Committee discussed the Marquette Conference, which was very successful, but that the conference really didn't confront critics of the ongoing efforts to change the criminal justice system in Milwaukee. The Committee recently discussed the possibility of hosting listening sessions or focus groups. The group anticipates making a recommendation to the Executive Committee on this issue.

Dan Idzikowski, Marquette University, mentioned that as a result of the Conference, there will be information about the Conference, breakouts, video and audio with links to the work group reports on the Law School website.

Clarence Johnson, Justice 2000, asked the Chief Judge if he had received a report yet from the National Institute of Corrections. The Chief Judge said he has not received the report. But when he does, it will be posted on the CJC website.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled to be Wednesday, May 20, 2009, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at the Clinton Rose Senior Center.