

CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION (CJPAC)

Thursday, April 30, 2020 Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Marc Pelka – Office of Policy and Management, *Dr. Richard Cho* – CT Coalition to End Homeless, *Dr. Michael Norko* – Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, *Christine Rappillo* – Public Defenders Office, *Humayun Beg* – Criminal Justice Information System, *John Russotto* – Chief State’s Attorney, *Karen Jarmoc*, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Jane Siegel* – Department of Veterans Affairs, *Rollin Cook* – Department of Correction, *Carleton Giles* – Board of Pardons and Paroles, *Judge Patrick Carroll, III* – Judicial Branch, *Gary Roberge* – Judicial Branch-Court Support Services Division, *Vincent Russo* – Department of Children and Families, *Beth Hamilton* – CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence, and *Laurie Deneen* – Public Member

I. Opening Remarks

- Marc Pelka gave introductory remarks
- CJPAC was held virtually and recorded in a MP4 file
- February minutes were approved by Commission members with one edit
- Marc Pelka reviewed the April Monthly Indicators Report with commission members

II. Presentation and Discussion

- *Marc Pelka, Undersecretary of Criminal Justice – Office of Policy and Management* Presentation on Initial Analysis of March and April 2020 Criminal Justice System Trends

III. Agency Updates

Rollin Cook – Department of Correction – Early Actions Taken: Suspended Social visits, enhanced communications by providing 2 free phone calls, suspended volunteer and contractor access. The DOC has a 3-phase operational plan that can be applied at any location, flexibility for long term lock down. Initiated intake screening for all offenders and a 14-day quarantine for all jails, prior to allowing them access to the general population. Initiated and maintained a continuous cleaning schedule at facilities and ramped up access to cleaning supplies and soap. Initiated a screening and temperature check for all employees at facilities and parole offices. DOC has limited facility transfers to essentials only. Centralized all positive covid-19 cases to one facility – Northern CI, to preserve PPE and enhance levels of case. Distribution of masks to all locations, making cloth masks by offender industry workers, surgical masks, and n95 masks and a policy for each of these masks. Covid-19 website with daily postings of datapoints, pandemic plans, press releases and memos for staff and family members, and conference calls with union officials. Centralization of release of Covid-19 patients to one location in the community. Now all offenders who are in halfway houses and are positive are in one location at the Cohegan House. Mandated all employees and offenders wear masks when social distance cannot be achieved. Use Power Breezer cleaning tool to disinfect large areas identified as hot spots and use backpack versions for smaller

areas. DOC has a strong focus on releasing eligible and suitable offenders as part of early preparedness plan, in line with public safety, continue to include risk assessment and consider victim impact. Discretionary release requires a solid home plan, because homelessness and disruption of community support services are a real concern for the agency. At DOC Commissioner discretion, release reviews are prioritizing offenders at high risk if exposed to covid-19– which includes population over age 50 and high medical scores. The DOC team is monitoring population counts, the count has dropped over 1,300 which is the size of the largest prison in Connecticut and the population fell below 12,000 for the first time since 1993. Today’s count is 11,024. Discretionary releases in March were the highest at 522 in one month, a 72% increase from the month prior (Feb 2020). As of 4/29/2020 – 326 employees have tested positive for Covid-19 and 148 of them had a full recovery and returned to work. There have been 417 offenders test positive for covid-19 and 242 of them have fully recovered and were released from Northern and returned to their previous facilities. Appreciation to all cooperating agencies and thank you to correctional and health services staff of the DOC. These folks and their families are often the forgotten heroes and the DOC is extremely proud of them.

Carlton Giles – Board of Pardons and Paroles – Thank you to the Board team who have pivoted to an online model for the public to access parole hearings. BOPP is continuing to grant expedited pardon hearings. Partnered with DOC for plan for Covid-19. BOPP has done a lot of work with transfer parole and chairman approvals to grant nearly 100 releases in keeping with public safety and victim input.

Christine Rapillo – Office of Chief Public Defender – Continue to work with prosecutors and Judicial Branch to review files. Focus on continuing bond reduction and look at files of people who are held pre-trial and may have had their cases continued a few times, who haven’t been able to be released with bond reduction, are making sure they don’t max out on pretrial. Luckily with the focus on low bonds earlier on, there don’t appear to be many of them. List received from CSSD and DOC have helped them identify clients. Some input from CT Bail Funds provided a list of folks who had community supporters, which was given to public defenders counsel and community social workers and they reached out to DOC PCS to notify them that these folks have community support if they were looking to try to get some help in finding community placements who were currently sentenced at DOC and public defender clients. Continue to work on plans to reopen, Attorney Colangelo’s plan to start discussing pretrial cases, since there will be a significant backlog, is a good idea. Just thinking about how we do that respectfully and safely. Client communication is changing because courts are closed. DOC has been good at communicating with clients who are in the DOC and having trouble getting in contact with their public defender, they have posted phone numbers in facilities. We have changed a lot of behavior, more people being released, fewer being arrested, a lot of time last years we have talked about bail reform, it will be interesting to see how these changes impacted the numbers. And will be interesting to see what comes out of this in the future months once we get past this.

John Russotto – Chief State’s Attorney – Great productivity despite change to teleworking. Spending a lot of time learning about video conference technology in relation to oral arguments

with supreme and appellate court, which is something that might continue into the fall. Using Teams to allow attorneys to participate in briefs before presenting the arguments to the court. Case management system project – continue to work on that project remotely with their partners, including CISS team and judicial partners. A lot of progress made in the last 8 weeks in terms of getting data in their system, doing quality assurance with vendors and having end users test the system. Division is the first agency to get data from CISS – they are hip deep in the proof of concept. They are working with partners to make sure that is good data. June 12th they will get one year's worth of data and if it goes well on June 26, they will get 10 years' worth of data. And at that point in time they will consider the project up and running and will then roll out to all of the locations around the division.

Karen Jarmoc – Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence - DV advocacy system has been remarkable. They are offering remote services. Some advocates are going into shelters. Continue to attend arraignments in court and assist victims through that process. Shelters at the beginning of the pandemic were at 130% capacity. Worked quickly to make a change for social distancing. DOH adjusted policies around DV Rapid Rehousing dollars. Since March 4th – 40 families have been housed through that project. Quickly moving families into safe, stable, and permanent housing. Now shelters are at 96% capacity. But technically at 118% capacity because they reached out for philanthropic dollars to house people in hotels near the organization that has been working with them. Decline of 4% in calls for service statewide, but an increase of 8% of lethality assessments. Acknowledge and thank judicial branch and governor's office to allow for online restraining order applications. CT Safe Connect can assist with that process, nearly 30 people have used CT Safe Connect to help with that online application. Advocates work with marshals to have the order served, which happened in person at this point. DV offender programs are suspended temporarily. Concerns around how police reports are reporting DV charges, as disorderly or breach of peace when there were much more serious assaults happening – anecdotally. Looking to see what those outcomes are. Acknowledge Joe DeTuno and team at Family Services they have been actively working with them and keeping them informed of changes of court process to management DV arrest and arraignments.

Beth Hamilton – CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence – Services are fully operational, albeit remote. Work with victims and survivors who have reported social distancing increased trauma triggered folks and generally difficult. Sexual Assault Service Centers have pivoted services online, fully providing counseling, support groups and all services remotely. Continue to work with state agency and community providers to link up with them to continue services to clients. Decrease of people seeking support for the first time, but significant increase of victims and survivors who have used their services in the past seeking support and high capacity online support groups than ever before. Thank you for all people who continue to keep processes moving. But some challenges supporting victims during forensic collection in hospitals. Doing that work remotely via telephone. Challenged remain for reporting to police, moving through investigation, serving arrest warrants, and court operations are reduced and these have negatively impacted victims. Increase of victims reaching out due to anxiety and fears of offenders receiving only

limited offender treatment currently. Team of attorneys have had positive experiences when going into court to support clients.

Dr. Michael Norko – Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services – DMHAS has identified spaces at all of the state operated facilities for quarantine and isolation of patients, distribution of PPE and sanitizer to facilities along with SOPs. Outpatient services changed, group process and wellness center and social clubs were closed. More telephone calls with clients. Visitors have been restricted. Anyone entering a DMHAS facility must undergo a screening including a temperature and questionnaire. Over 1100 DMHAS employees are teleworking. Directions for staff if they suspect they have symptoms. CVH has 34 patients and 22 staff confirmed with Covid-19 and at Whiting there are 10 patients and 17 staff members confirmed with Covid-19. And a few other staff members at other facilities but no other patients at other facilities. At CVH there have been 9 patients recovered and 7 patients at Whiting have recovered. And 21 staff members have recovered from Covid-19 and provide paperwork from their healthcare provider that they are safe to return to work. DMHAS received a \$2 million SAMHSA grant for pandemic related behavioral healthcare needs. Some funds will go to DOC-Manson Youth Institute to facilitate contact with family members. A new statewide call center for behavioral health emergencies was expanded, family-based recovery services for families with infants or toddlers at risk of abuse or neglect (DCF) is being expanded, increased services of intimate partner violence, and increase support behavioral health needs of healthcare responders. DMHAS is applying for additional funding from the Cares Act and preparing requests under – coronavirus emergency supplemental fund managed through OPM. DMHAS is creating new policies for telemedicine and teleconferencing. Forensic services is looking to expand video conferencing capacity and housing supports for people who are being diverted and in re-entry. Accomplished video conference testimony of cases of people in Whiting for restoration of competency – 13 patients released from Whiting. Probate court and PSRB hearings by videoconferencing.

Humayun Beg – Criminal Justice Information System – CJIS teleworking successfully. Provided update on the governing board virtually. Collaborate with stakeholders, no slow down on progress, no Covid-19 impact, they have continued development and deployment of CISS. They moved all training online; this has been helpful and more people have been able to be trained. Help through the Bond Commission and approved funding for next phase. Moving forward with project.

Vincent Russo – Department of Children and Families – 85% of staff teleworking, 15% not teleworking are serving at children psychiatric treatment centers. Careline is fully functional 24/7. And investigators are on the ground, visiting homes when necessary. Deployed over 1,800 tablets to staff. Last week launched warm line – “when it builds up talk it out” for parents and guardians to vent and voice frustrations, a line to listen, be supportive, help parents through this time. A lot of interest in this line and trying to promote this new line. Worked closely with CSSD to transition children out of detention out to other living arrangements, so far 11 children have been moved. Legal staff work with judicial through courts – getting priority 1 cases heard.

Jane Siegel – Department of Veterans Affairs – DVA is responding to COVID-19, restricting visitors, limiting travel, screening all people, protocols posted on website, and updated regularly. Commissioner posts daily updates on veteran patients and residents. As of yesterday, there 4 positives in health care and 2 positives at residential facility. There are isolation units in both of those facilities. Anyone needing more acute care is transferred to a hospital based in the local community.

Gary Roberge – Judicial Branch - CSSD – Acknowledge Rob Christano a pre-trial bail manager to set up video conferencing to have people released directly from DOC. Ramp up referrals, thanks to DMHAS, after having to cut back on referrals for social distancing. Night staff continues to work looking at cases that the police hold on bond and release them prior to arraignment to help pre-trial numbers. Set up a process at night where a low bond and have a nonviolent case, Judge Alexander is available to Rob and they can discuss and override the judge's order in order to release individuals. JRI continues to work with DOC via video conferencing and phone calls. Continue to do bond screens and referrals to residential treatment programs. Transitional houses continue to operate and working with DCF to get kids out of their detention centers. Down to 6 adult court locations now. DV folks are coming in everyday working in the courts. The adult probation offices all remain opened except for Torrington and Stamford and those staff are working at other locations. Working with victims advocates on high risk clients to make sure they stay in contact with AIC and adult probation have scaled back services but remain to provide services over the phone and the clients have what they need. Acknowledge DOC staff and the Judicial night staff, and the people who go into court every day for their courageousness, dedication and professionalism. These people must go into work everyday in tough and frightening circumstances. CSSD had an adult probation officer recently passed away from COVID-19 complications, he was only 32 years old and had a wife and two children – 2 ½ years old and a 10-month-old baby.

Dr. Richard Cho – CT Coalition to End Homelessness – DOC reached out to CCEH with concerns regarding the EOS population and housing issues. DOC Rapid Rehousing Project –was created by a partnership between DOC and OPM. This program is identifying people slated for discharge within 60 days prior to hitting their EOS. DOC and CSSD try to identify housing solutions and when they are not able to do that, they are able to refer to a regional lead agency – nonprofits in community regarding homelessness and housing issues – across the state. Modification to 211 and CAN policies. Justice Assistance Grant from OPM can fund flexible uses for clients relating to housing, like security deposits, rental application fees, or costs with hotels or motels, provide smart phones, utility deposits and other expenses. 61 referrals to this program, of them, now 17 people are receiving rental assistance and have been housed, 11 are in alternative housing, 10 individuals have been placed with CSSD, and 4 of those individuals referred were unable to be housed.

Eleanor Michael – Office of Policy and Management – Update on new funding OPM will be administering. Under the CARES Act, the federal government has sent funds to the state through a variety of new funding streams. One such new funding stream that flows from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance to the State Administrating Agencies for the federal justice assistance grant is called Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Grant (CESF). Although this grant is

coming to the administering agencies for the JAG Grant it is not considered a JAG Grant. These funds will be used for prevention, preparation, and response to Covid-19. CJPPD is the SAA for JAG Grants, therefore also responsible for administering this new funding. Connecticut is eligible for about \$6 million, and in addition 16 municipalities are eligible to receive grant funds from the federal government directly and that total is just shy of \$3 million. In order to receive Connecticut must submit application, which is due on May 29, but they are being received on a rolling basis. OPM submitted an application 2 weeks ago. Applications are being approved quickly and OPM is hopeful for good news.

IV. Subcommittee Updates

Behavioral Health Subcommittee – Last February they sponsored a Grand Rounds at CVH. Discussion about people with autism in the criminal justice system, there were about 20 people from agencies and some people from UK who have a program there for a similar group. The next subcommittee meeting will be on June 4th.

V. Adjournment

- Next CJPAC meeting is Thursday May 28th at 9 am
- Thanks to David Camille our IT support specialist at OPM
- Chairperson Marc Pelka adjourned the meeting at 11:27 am