

CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY ADVISORY COMMISSION (CJPAC)

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 19, 2020

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Hosted on Microsoft Teams

Meeting was called to order at approximately 9:05am

I. Attendance

- Lucy Nolan, Director of Policy and Public Relations, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence;
- Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education;
- Richard Cho, Executive Director-CCEH;
- Judge Patrick Carroll III, Chief Court Administrator, Connecticut Judicial Branch;
- Gary Roberge, Director of Court Support Services Division, Connecticut Judicial Branch;
- Dr. Michael Norko, Director of Forensic Services, and Chris Burke, Assistant Director, Division of Forensic Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services;
- Christine Rapillo, Chief Public Defender, Division of Public Defender Services;
- Humayun Beg, Executive Director, Criminal Justice Information System;
- James Kenney, Chief of Police, Vernon Police Department;
- Thomas Saadi, Commissioner, Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Geralyn O'Neil-Wild, Director of Legal Advocacy, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence;
- Richard Colangelo, Chief State's Attorney, and Kevin Lawlor, Deputy Chief State's Attorney, Division of Criminal Justice;
- Angel Quiros, Commissioner, Cheryl Cepelak, Deputy Commissioner, Nick Rodriguez and Sharonda Carlos, District Administrators, Department of Correction;
- Carleton Giles, Chairman, and Richard Sparaco, Executive Director, Board of Pardons and Paroles; and
- Vincent Russo, Legislative Program Director, Department of Children and Families.

II. Opening Remarks

Chairman Marc Pelka provided opening remarks, noting the recording of the virtual meeting on Microsoft Teams.

Pelka introduced the two-part presentation from the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) on the dominant aggressor policy and online restraining orders, to be given later in the meeting by Karen Jarmoc and Dan Cargill. He also provided an update on the availability of the November Monthly Indicator report, which will be posted on the OPM Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division (CJPPD) website by November 30th.

Pelka introduced CJPPD's new staff member, Chidi Nwuneli, who will administer Byrne JAG, RSAT and Project Longevity grants among others for OPM.

October minutes were approved: A motion to approve the minutes was offered by Chief State's Attorney Colangelo, and the motion was seconded by Chairman Giles.

Pelka announced that Karen Jarmoc, President of CCADV, would be departing to take on a new role as Assistant Vice President Sustainability Leader at The Hartford. Commission members provided their congratulations and well wishes.

III. Presentation and Discussion

A presentation, "**(Emerging Responses to Victims of Domestic Violence)**," was delivered by Dan Cargill and Karen Jarmoc of Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

IV. Agency Updates

Chief Kenny

Highlighted that his community has seen a dramatic increase in check welfare requests over the prior three-months, exceeding such activity during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and becoming a major concern.

Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence

Updated the commission on office closures and service provision during the holidays, including proactively reaching out to emergency and police departments statewide to plan. Services to remain fully intact during the period.

The Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division

CSSD working to expand virtual platform, currently has 60% of their request granted. Judge Albis and Judge Bozzuto, Court Support Service, legal and tech staff worked closely with the Governor's Office to draft an executive order permitting conducting the temporary restraining order process on a remote basis, which will require adjusting law in the new legislative session to continue.

CSSD updated on its virtual hearings and residential program placement, with 164 placements to date since the pandemic began. CSSD working with Department of Housing to possibly fund additional rapid rehousing in the New Haven area.

CT Coalition to End Homelessness

The coalition updated on the progress made with the CESF funded DOC re-entry housing assistance program, including contracting with six non-profit community-based providers across the state. Also providing technical assistance to local law enforcement about addressing growing homelessness in communities.

Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

The DVA briefed the Commission on its COVID-19 mitigation measures, including point prevalence testing of veteran residents, patients and staff, as well as isolation units in both residential and health care facilities. Both types of facilities remain open for admissions and actively accepting resident applications.

Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

DMHAS expanding its outreach services to vulnerable populations via a SAMHSA-FEMA grant award, targeted to congregate living settings. COVID cases increasing, but the use of quarantine units has enabled quickly isolating outbreaks in inpatient settings.

DMHAS, CSSD, and Judicial branch continue to coordinate on holding evaluations for competency to stand trial. While evaluations in the community have continued, COVID restrictions has made conducting evaluations difficult for those in custody. Late November, DMHAS piloting system to bring defendants from Hartford Correction Center to a large, open courtroom in which four or five people necessary to conduct the evaluation can safely occupy the space.

Department of Correction

The DOC launched video visits for inmates in three facilities, expects to have the full rollout of video visits for the population by mid-December. COVID update: 21 symptomatic inmates in the COVID-19 unit at MacDougall Walker. Overall, less than 1% of the positivity rate. Staff positivity rates increasing, so DOC is working on increasing staff testing capacity to weekly and our inmate testing to bi-weekly. The current DOC population is 9,299, a 26% decrease from last year.

Board of Pardons and Paroles

BOPP highlighted both their continued use of transfer parole and the ongoing processing of pardon applications. Currently holding two hearings a month to process pardon applications, which have migrated to being conducted online over being held in court.

Criminal Justice Information Systems

CJIS continues to work with criminal justice agency partners to provide the backend solution to share information and provide an automated solution for arrest and adjudication process. Data quality and data cleanliness remain ongoing priorities. CJIS also helping the Division of Criminal Justice to complete a data transfer from Judicial by February, meaning the first geographic area district will be fully automated from arrest through the judicial process.

Victim Issues Subcommittee

Natasha Pierre provided an update from the Victim Issues Subcommittee, which held a recent meeting. The Judicial Branch is developing an RFP with the goal of releasing the RFP next year.

Office of Chief Public Defenders

The Office of the Chief Public Defenders continues its efforts to engage with folks with cases pending during or after the onset of the pandemic, including expanding into taking public defender applications by telephone. The OCPD and the Judicial Branch websites have details available about these outreach efforts.

Karen Jarmoc Appreciation Statement

Karen Jarmoc thanked the Commission for allowing CCADV to present and highlight the work of the advocacy community around system change. She also noted that Steve Eppler Epstein, who used to head Connecticut Legal Services, will be serving as CCADV Interim President following her departure.

V. Closing

Pelka announced the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 17th. Normally we meet the last Thursday of the month but this year that falls on New Year's Eve. The previous Thursday is Christmas Eve.

So, thank you for any calendar adjustments that you made to accommodate the change. Pelka also thanked everyone for today's meeting, in a virtual setting, and for the lively and thoughtful conversation.

He wished everyone safety and good health.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:45