

Porter County Community Corrections Advisory Board/Local JRAC Meeting
August 15, 2023
4:15pm by Zoom

Present: Don Evans; Judge Drenth; Sharon Mortensen; Chris Buyer; Melanie Golumbeck; La'Shawn Lewis; Laura Blaney; Matt Burden; Sheriff Balon.

Present by Proxy: Gary Germann (Tammy O'Neill); Judge DeBoer (Monica Shields); Alison Cox (Danielle Bennett)

Grant Staff Present: Ameshia McDonald; Tammy O'Neill

Community Corrections/Local JRAC

Don Evans welcomed everyone. Don called the meeting to order at 4:15pm.

Christ Buyer moved to approve the April 25, 2023 meeting minutes. Judge Drenth. Seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Community Corrections

Tammy O'Neill reviewed the 2024 Community Corrections Justice Reinvestment grant award, reviewing each program budget with members. Matt Burden Moved to approve the revised budgets as submitted. Judge Drenth seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Tammy reported on the Drug Court, Mental Health Restoration Court and Veterans Treatment Court programs, providing members with program caseloads, referrals and completion rates. Tammy invited members to attend the upcoming Mental Health Court graduation scheduled to take place October 9th at 2:00pm at the Butterfield Pavilion in Valparaiso. Tammy updated members concerning the Loyola graduate interns, also noting she and Judge Buckley will soon begin a partnership with Dr. Amanda Zelechowski for additional assessments to be conducted with Mental Health Court participants by her students.

Tammy provided an update for Recovery Connection, describing the recovery project between the City of Valparaiso and PACT. She also reported on the new partnership with the jail, adding that on August 2nd, Recovery Connection peer coaches began providing recovery support services to individuals within three months of their release to ensure a warm handoff as they transition from incarceration into the community.

Tammy provided an in-depth explanation of the recent evaluation conducted by two researchers/University of Cincinnati and two staff from the Indiana Department of Correction. Tammy shared that on June 22nd, Community Corrections underwent the Correctional Program Checklist (CPS) which was previously discussed with members. Tammy reminded members of the evaluation purpose and provided an overview of the process, noting there were many positive comments offered about the programs and staff. Tammy stated the evaluation exit

interview considerations included some of the same projects currently being undertaken through the training with Coaching Network for Change. Tammy said a letter regarding the evaluation will be provided in the coming months. Tammy thanked Don and others for attending the evaluation and shared that after the visit, she was told that one of the reviewers said what he saw was among the best he'd ever seen. Tammy commended staff for their dedication.

There were no comments or questions concerning the adult and juvenile community corrections reports previously provided to members.

Local JRAC

Tammy informed members of the upcoming EBDM Mental Health Workgroup meeting, noting the workgroup will be chaired by Judge Buckley. The first meeting will be held at 2:00pm on August 25th at the Sheriff's Department.

Matt Burden reminded members that Porter Starke serves as a pilot to provide a mobile crisis unit. Matt said they completed a soft launch of this project recently.

Melanie Golumbeck said she is working with Court Services regarding certification of the Pretrial program. Melanie said our workgroup will need to meet soon to work through some of the details concerning certification. Melanie said the data does not show any anomalies, adding our data looks consistent or better than data she has seen from other counties. Melanie said she went to National Institute of Corrections to participate in a training for pretrial executives in April. She said Indiana was spoken highly of during her training.

Sheriff Balon reported on the JRAC Racial Equity Project noting they are in week 2 of the 26-week period. Sheriff Balon said the study is being conducted by George Mason University. He said in this process, arrestees may volunteer to respond to a survey of 12 questions.

Sheriff Balon went on to say the jail is at about 85% capacity, adding they have 18 or 19 individuals waiting to go to the Department of Correction.

Community Corrections/Local JRAC

Tammy updated members about the local Justice Partners Addiction Response Grant Conference lead by Judge DeBoer, noting the Conference is called "The Blind Eyes of Addiction and Mental Illness, understanding how gender and age are impacted and updates in treatment".

The focus of the conference will be to inform attendees of current legislation, research, and evidence-based practice concerning mental health and addiction for professionals working with justice involved youth and adults through the lens of gender, trauma and early childhood attachment.

The conference will run from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. at Ivy Tech Community College in Valparaiso.

Don reminded everyone of our next meeting scheduled for October 17, 2023 at 4:15pm by Zoom. Sheriff Balon moved to adjourn. Judge Drenth seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.