

Jail Study Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes (same as Notes) – Approved 5-11-17
Thursday, April 20, 2017 5:00 PM
Legislature Chambers

Attendance

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Departed
Rich John	Chair	Present	
Anna Kelles	Vice Chair	Present	
James Dennis	Member	Excused	
David McKenna	Member	Present	
Martha Robertson	Member	Present	6:56 PM
Joe Mareane	County Administrator	Present	
Dooley Kiefer	Legislator	Present	
Ray Bunce	Jail Administrator	Present	
Deb Dietrich	Director of OAR	Present	
Michelle Pottorff	Chief Deputy Clerk	Present	
Carol Chock	Legislator	Present	
Marcia Lynch	Public Info. Officer, County Administration	Present	

Guests: Jacob Carver, Mental Health Association; Mike Kesten, Gabrielle Illava, AA Program; Public Comment Speakers - Barbara Regenspan, Stuart Friedman, Lily Gershon, Shari Korthuis, Bill Rusen, Jesse Goldberg, Erin Griffeth, Emma Madison, Paula Ionide, Edwin Santiago

Call to Order

Mr. John, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. He explained a video link with CGR has been arranged and will take place at this time followed with public comment.

CGR Progress Update

Mr. Pryor thanked the Committee for arranging this update and stated they have reached a point in the Study to provide feedback as to where they are and what needs to come. He spoke of key aspects of the Study that have been completed or in process and noted a lot of information has been posted to the webpage. He said there have been a lot of requests for information to be posted but some information cannot be out of respect for confidentiality and various data analysis that are in process. He said putting some information on the website could be misleading and lead a person to conclude something that is unjustified at the end. Mr. Pryor called attention to the cooperation he has received from Captain Bunce and Pat Beuchel. At this time, he reviewed the contents of the memorandum dated April 20th that outlined the progress of the study.

Mr. John said when the report is prepared he would like to hold another public information session as there is a lot of community interest in this. Mr. Pryor said the Committee should discuss how this should happen and provide CGR with guidance.

Mr. McKenna asked how many inmates have been interviewed. Mr. Pryor responded 15 to 18 and the vast majority of them have experience in the local jail and some have experience outside Tompkins County or in State prison.

Ms. Robertson said based on comments by Autumn at the URO she was lead to believe there were more inmates that had experience outside the local jail. Ms. Robertson said jail numbers have been down since June 2016 and asked whether there have been a similar drop in arrests. Mr. Pryor said they will be looking at that and are currently trying to get arrest data updated to match the same months that are being used for jail data. He would also like to break it down to specific courts if possible. Mr. Robertson said the Commission's directive was in June and that correlates with the drop in population since then. Mr. Pryor said they will be looking at not only aggregate data from year to year but each month and quarter.

Ms. Kiefer asked if CRG has come across much that has not been tried in Tompkins County. Mr. Pryor said there is not a lot that Tompkins County has not tried or thought about. There are things that may be in play but we are looking at what experiences other communities have for what has been talked about as well as things that the County is already doing. They are looking at whether there are ways to do those things more cost effectively, reach more people, or in ways that would have a greater impact.

In response to Ms. Chock, Mr. John said the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the draft report. Mr. Pryor said comments and questions can be inputted on the website.

Ms. Robertson asked if questions can be posted and answered on the website. Mr. Pryor said they have not been posted up to this point but they can post them if the people who are asking the questions are comfortable and if the Committee directs CGR to. Mr. John suggested those who submit a question be asked if they would like it to be publically posted and if they are the questions and answers should be posted.

Mr. Pryor said last week was the first time they heard of the group Decarcerate Tompkins and asked whether CGR should reach out to them to have a conversation. Mr. John will speak to the Committee and follow-up with Mr. Pryor.

Public Comment

Barbara Regenspan, Ithaca, spoke of the conference call earlier in the meeting with CGR and does not believe it provided any additional information and was disappointed in what was presented. She understood the process would be a public interactive process through a website and said that has not happened and said that is why there is skepticism in the community about this study. She also stated it is unreasonable that CGR has not heard of the Decarceration group.

Stuart Friedman, Ithaca, spoke as a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor and said the presentation by CGR earlier in the meeting was just a marketing report. Detoxification is a small step in someone's rehabilitation of alcohol and/or drug abuse. Detoxification needs to be immediately combined with a comprehensive-based program for an individual.

Lily Gershon, Freeville, said a lot of people want to understand these issues as many individuals will be affected by the outcome of the study. She spoke of the importance of communication and said the lack of information made available by CGR is a problem. She agrees there needs to be services offered in the Jail, but she further commented that people with mental health and addiction issues should not be in the Jail in the first place and should be able to access services within the community.

Shari Korthuis, Ithaca, spoke of her support for OAR, but said when a person is in Jail, boarded out or not, it is harsh on the families because of the rules and costs of items. She spoke of a personal experience of a close friend who was arrested and who she believes should not have been. She hopes the

rules can be revisited as there are limited times for phone calls to be made, visitations, and the expensive cost of items through the Commissary. She hopes the County would look into the Ithaca Plan and she said she would like to see the letter from the female inmates posted on CGR's website, if possible.

Bill Rusen, Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services (CARS), provided an update on the proposal for a 25-bed women's facility. He explained the process and said it is now in the State's hands and once approved a contract will be drawn. It is approximately a two-year process. He also spoke of the detox center and said it is very exciting that funding has been received for it; however, he said there needs to be continuum of care put in place as well as rehabilitation is a multi-step process. Finally, he recommended people read the book "Dreamland". It concluded the antidote to heroin is community.

Jesse Goldberg, Ithaca, said incarceration is a disruption to family and not boarding people out is important and said this can be done by not incarcerating people. The question he asked of CGR is if the Ithaca Plan could be added to the list of documents reviewed and if it was what was learned from it. He spoke of the presentation held earlier in the meeting and does not believe it was useful. He said it is troubling to him that a statement was made that data could not be put on the website because if it was available there would be inappropriate interpretations.

Erin Griffeth, Ithaca, spoke about the population at the Jail and that many of them are there because of drug addiction. It is a problem throughout the community. She also commented on the Ithaca Plan that was worked on for a year with community stakeholders and hopes that a good look is taken at the document. She believes as stated in the Ithaca Plan that drug addiction and mental health crisis and poverty should not be criminalized but actually dealt with in the community. At this time she read two quotes from the Ithaca Plan.

Emma Madison, Tompkins County, said she is an intern at the Jail and she has done over 60 mental health and substance abuse screenings. She talks to every inmate who is willing and said they are interested in services being provided within the Jail. She agrees services outside the Jail are needed but she has also seen first-hand how much services within the Jail are needed and would be beneficial.

Paula Ionide, Ithaca, spoke of an analysis she did in 2013 concerning bail and said there were a large disproportionate number of black people incarcerated in the County compared to the population that she believes signals a systemic racism problem within the Jail. A vast majority of people in Jail are poor as well. She spoke of the number of people unsentenced that are in Jail and said bail reform would have positive effects on the Jail population and asked CGR to do an analysis on that issue. She said as a researcher of prison issues, the data already made public from organizations should not be an issue to have posted on CGR's website. That would allow other researchers to look at the information and analyze it.

Edwin Santiago, Freeville, spoke of his experience with the drug programs and other systems and believes that people with drug addiction can change.

Ms. Robertson commented that many of the issues raised at this meeting were discussed at the Public Safety Committee meeting earlier today and said much of the information is available online. The Public Safety Committee is the standing committee of the Legislature and meets monthly. She asked if the Sheriff's monthly statistics could be added to the CGR website. Mr. Rich agreed to that request. In addition, Ms. Robertson said the County had a report on the LEAD program that was included in the Ithaca Plan and said there are steps being taken by the County.

Ms. Kelles thanked those from attending the meeting and speaking about difficult issues. She

encouraged attendance at future meetings as well to continue sharing information.

Mr. John announced the next Jail Study Committee meeting was changed from May 18th to May 11th.

Ms. Chock asked if on the County website there could be a note of where other County information can be found and a summary of that information. Mr. Rich said he would have to defer to the Public Information Officer for that.

Minutes Approval

March 16, 2017

RESULT:	DEFERRED
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Reports on Services Provided at the Jail

Jacob Carver - Mental Health Association of Tompkins County

Jacob Carver said the Mental Health Association is a local branch of the national organization Mental Health America. It is a non-for-profit agency and provides peer support, advocacy, and education around mental health issues. The agency's first involvement with the Jail began last March with trainings of officers on how to deal with someone in a mental health crisis. In April 2016, the WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) program began where conversations take place about developing one's own self-help tools. It was believed that service was not enough and a new Talk program began in October 2016. This program is just talking and letting people tell their stories. The agency is in the Jail twice a week and staff spends 90 minutes with the males and 90 minutes with females. The WRAP program is also available at Cayuga Medical Center and the Day Reporting program at Community Justice Center. The Association does hear from people that there should be more services available and not just in the community.

Mike Kesten - Male AA program

Mike Kesten said AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) carries the message twice a week to males at the Jail. They talk about the program and provide outreach and a place where questions can be asked. AA members try to stay sober and help other alcoholics. At this time he shared his experience with recovery and what it has done for him and his life and hopes he can encourage others to do the same. It is a 12-step program that can help change a person's life.

Gabrielle Illava - Female AA program

Gabrielle Illava said she is the women's AA Jail liaison from the local AA group. The intent is to connect AA members from the community and orient them with the Jail as professional visitors. Weekly meetings are held for women and about 5-10 attend each week. Some of them will continue to attend AA meetings once they are released from Jail. She too spoke of her own personal experiences as an alcoholic and an addict and said it is important that a direct connection is provided.

Deb Dietrich - OAR

Deb Dietrich said OAR has been going to the Jail four afternoons a week for over 40 years. Having the presence of representatives from AA and Mental Health Association has been helpful and beneficial at the Jail. OAR works with people in and out of Jail. Within the Jail, OAR does intakes for the Assigned Counsel program and maintains a bail fund which is a critical piece to level the economic

Minutes
Jail Study Committee
Thursday, April 20, 2017

playing field so that poverty is not the only reason a person is sitting in Jail awaiting trial. She spoke of her support of bail reform and believes it would be very welcome. She explained the services provided to inmates including bringing messages to family and friends, provide a Relay phone line to OAR, volunteers who drive twice a week to bring family members to the Jail on visiting days, and OAR provides writing supplies to all inmates, Commissary assistance, and advocacy.

Ms. Kelles spoke of her experience with meeting with inmates and commented that they appreciate the programs that are offered; however, they wish there are more. She noted that there is no NA (Narcotics Anonymous) program offered. She asked the agencies about funding sources, what support is needed, and whether there is a need for more space for the programs.

Mr. Kesten commented that the AA representatives are volunteers and do not get paid. Ms. Illava also said that as part of the 12-step program, they are self-supporting and funded within. She spoke of an interest in having additional time at the Jail for a second meeting.

Mr. Carver said he is not compensated for his time, but the workbooks for the WRAP group are now supplied by the Sheriff's Office. There is funding in the budget for education the community to fight the stigma around mental health issues. He commented that space at the Jail can be an issue at times for them.

Ms. Robertson was excused at this time.

Mr. Bunce thanked the agency representatives who attended the meeting today and for the work they do at the Jail. He understands the Committee is going to have to make some decisions and said it is also going to be about education. There are many assumptions being made in the community. He reminded people too that the people in the Jail are there because there was a violation of penal law and a Judge put them there, not the police or a Correction Officer.

Mr. John spoke of the Reentry Coordinator and encouraged the agency's to work with that position if needed.

Next Agenda

Diahann Hestler - BOCES

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.