

Lebanon County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
Minutes of the Meeting of February 9, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Place: Second Floor Conference Room, MH/ID/EI, 220 East Lehman St., Lebanon

Present

Pier Hess Graf, District Attorney and CJAB Chair; Holly Leahy, MH/ID/EI Administrator and CJAB Vice-Chair; Honorable John C. Tylwalk, President Judge; Audrey Rakow, Director of Probation Services; Daniel Wright, Chief County Detective and Police Chiefs Representative; Bruce Klingler, Sheriff; James Donmoyer, Director of Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse; Stephanie Axarlis, Court Administrator; Tina Litz, LCCF Warden; and, John P. Shott, CJAB Planner.

Absent

Robert J. Phillips, County Commissioner; Jamie Wolgemuth, County Administrator; Karen Hess, Director of Domestic Relations; Brian Deiderick, Chief Public Defender; Erin Moyer, Director of Children and Youth; Carla Cyr, Veterans Justice Outreach; and, Kim Mackey, PCCD Regional Representative

Guest

Ryan Henning, Intern, Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

District Attorney and CJAB Chair Pier Hess Graf called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Minutes of 12/8/2020 CJAB Meeting—Approved on a motion by Sheriff Klingler, seconded by Ms. Axarlis.

The Chair recognized and welcomed new core member Tina Litz, who started her duties as Warden of the LCCF on February 8, succeeding the retired Robert Karnes. Mr. Donmoyer introduced Ryan Henning, a student at Penn College who is doing an internship in Mr. Donmoyer's office.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- **D.U.I. Court**—Presently, 39 offenders are participating in the program. The President Judge has conducted some DUI Court sessions via ZOOM. He has also limited in-person court sessions to 12 participants. Adult Probation Officer Mallory Barr is now assisting, as part of her regular duties, Officer Maddison Duncan with the supervision of offenders in the program.
- **Renaissance-Crossroads--** Current number of offenders in the long-term program is nine, with three in short-term. President Judge Tylwalk has been conducting monthly reviews onsite at Crossroads rather than in his courtroom in recognition of COVID concerns and transporting offenders.
- **Prison Reduction**—Average Daily Population (ADP) has been 281 this year, with the ADP at 276 as of February 9.
- **Mental Health**—TEAM M.I.S.A. (Mental Illness and Substance Abuse) met for the first time on January 12 to, among other things, discuss the role of each team member as this new program goes forth. Departments/agencies represented on the team include MH/ID/EI, LCCF, Probation, PrimeCare, Public Defender's Office, Crisis Intervention, Drug & Alcohol, Area Agency on Aging, and Community Action Partnership. The team meets regularly on the second Tuesday of each month; the next meeting will take place on March 9. In preparation for the March session, the team plans to use release of information to

identify inmates at the LCCF with mental illness Agreement among the CJAB that the District Attorney's Office should also have representation on the team.

Number of reported suicides in the county in 2020 was 21, a slight increase from 19 in 2019. Statistical breakdown: average age of the victim was 52.7, the youngest being 20, the oldest 89; 14 male, seven female; 12 of the suicides by firearm; eight of the 21 had known mental-health history; two had known drug/alcohol history; 20 white, one Hispanic. Report of two suicides on February 8: one male, one female; both from Palmyra, though not related; both by drug overdose. The outlook for 2021 is not encouraging. Feelings of hopelessness due to the pandemic could result in higher incidences of suicide.

- **Veterans Court**—Current number of participants is 18, with the Court recently removing one participant due to substance use. The President Judge has conducted some court sessions via ZOOM. Mentors have not been as active meeting with offenders due to their concerns about the pandemic. Point of emphasis that participants in this court program have a wider range of offenses than those in the D.U.I. Court or Crossroads programs. Others are battling mental-health issues. Compliance with the program's stringent requirements can be a challenge for certain participants.

CJAB DEPARTMENTS: REPORTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

Day Reporting Center—Current number of active participants is 49, with three referrals from the D.U.I. Court program.

Heroin Task Force—The number of confirmed overdose deaths in 2020 was 39, representing a 39 percent increase over the 28 deaths in 2019. Of the 39 deaths, 27 were male, 12 female. The ages of victims ranged from 19 to 60. Regarding race/ethnicity, 26 victims were white, 11 Hispanic, and two unknown or other. Fentanyl was the main drug in 25 of these overdose fatalities. Task Force ("Stronger Together") continues to meet quarterly and has scheduled another drug take-back day in April. The take-back day occurring on October 24 was a highly successful event, with individuals dropping off a record number of medications at collection sites. The City collected 297 pounds of unused or expired prescription drugs.

Offender Reentry Coalition—No report.

Other Updates from CJAB Departments—

Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) Initiative—The County submitted a grant application to PCCD on October 15th for federal funding to purchase body-worn cameras (BWCs) and related equipment and training for Probation Officers. In late December, however, the Commission notified the County that it would not be selecting the application for funding. Grant process was highly competitive, and the number of applications exceeded the overall amount of funding available. The Commission noted that Lebanon's application had not provided enough supporting data to make the case for BWC funding. In addition, the reviewers expressed concern that the application had not mapped out a sustainability plan to continue the project after funding ends, and that it had not provided letters of commitment from key stakeholders pledging to support the program in the future. (The application proposed sustaining the initiative with funds from Supervision fees collected by Probation Services, thereby eliminating the need to enlist private stakeholders/partners or to seek support from the County General Fund.)

On a positive note, PCCD did approve the City of Lebanon Police Department's application for BWC funding.

Coronavirus Supplemental Funding—PCCD approved the County's request for \$33,696 in additional COVID funding for law enforcement. Grant cycle ends on January 31, 2022.

Probation and Reentry Overdose Reduction Grant—In January, the County, through Probation Services, submitted an application to PCCD for \$43,500 in funding to develop strategies focused on reducing overdose among offenders on supervision. Lebanon was one of ten counties in the Commonwealth invited to participate in this grant program, which New York-based Vital Strategies, a private organization, is funding in collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies. Vital Strategy's mission is to address the overdose epidemic in the U.S. by encouraging the use of non-coercive approaches and services. The County's application requested funding for specialized training sessions for Probation Officers and for purchasing gift cards for supervised offenders who pass drug tests. On February 4, Vital Strategies emailed Mr. Shott with feedback and questions about the application. Ms. Rakow and Mr. Shott will take part in a ZOOM call this afternoon with representatives from Vital Strategies to discuss their concerns about the County's application and its adherence to the grant announcement's guidelines.

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- **Strategic Planning for 2021 and Beyond**—The Board should begin discussing priorities for another round of Strategic Planning.
- **PCCD/CCAP Technical Assistance Funding**—On a motion by President Judge Tylwalk, seconded by Ms. Axarlis, the members authorized Mr. Shott and Ms. Leahy to submit an application for \$2,000 to assist with the ongoing suicide-prevention campaign. The County must expend any funds awarded under this special grant by September 30, 2021.

NEW BUSINESS

CJAB Spring Conference—The annual conference will be a virtual event taking place on April 20-22. Details about the itinerary TBA.

Community Outreach and Requests for Core Membership—District Attorney Hess Graf reported that SARCC-Lebanon and the Lebanon County Branch of the NAACP recently requested an invitation to attend a CJAB meeting, with the thought of eventually becoming core members of the Board. The Chair raised the issue of community outreach and the possibility of a Board member acting as a liaison to outside agencies. Mr. Shott has been the main contact for CJAB-related inquiries.

SARCC has also requested that the members review the Minimum Operating Standards for CJABs, which require that membership on CJABs include a Local Victims Organization. (SARCC is a core member of the Schuylkill County CJAB.) The District Attorney also noted that her office has a strong Victim/Witness Program.

LCCJAB Bylaws, which list the core members of the Board, are on record with PCCD, which has never voiced concern that the CJAB is out of compliance with the operating standards. The

Board has the ability to amend the bylaws to expand core membership, which it has done on a few occasions since the CJAB's inception. However, granting membership to every organization requesting it could create a Board that is too large and, as a result, not as productive. The Chair moved, and Ms. Leahy seconded the motion, that the Board maintain the current membership under the bylaws, but extend an invitation to the organizations to attend or make a presentation at a future CJAB meeting. Motion carried. District Attorney Hess Graf will send a letter to SARCC and the NAACP advising them of the Board's action.

ADJOURNMENT—With no further business to conduct, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m. on a motion by Warden Litz, seconded by Ms. Leahy.

NEXT CJAB MEETING: Tuesday, April 13, 2021, 11:00 a.m., MH/ID/EI