

**EBR Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, July 28th, 2022**

MINUTES

The Board of Directors of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council held its scheduled meeting on July 28, 2022 at 11:30 am at the Shaw Center for the Arts.

Directors in attendance were John Spain with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Judge Fred Crifasi with the 19th JDC, Jermaine Guillory from the District Attorney's Office, Major Anthony Ponton with the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, Aislyn Taylor with Baton Rouge City Court, Jennifer Carwile with Together Baton Rouge, Dianna Payton with the YWCA, Judge Gail Grover with Juvenile Court, Hunter Thomas with the Public Defender's Office, Lamont Cole with the Baton Rouge Metro Council, and Leslie Chambers with the Mayor's Office.

Additional attendees were Lauren Crapanzano Jumonville and Sarah Gardner with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Rhonda Belone with the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison, Jerry Hebert and Alex Deshotels with Grace Hebert Curtis Architects, Lisa Burns with the Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program, David Conachen with Zachary City Court, and Christopher Csonka, Niles Haymer, and Brianna Jeansonne with the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Mr. Csonka called the meeting to order at 11:48 am.

Mr. Hebert and Mr. Deshotels gave a 25-minute presentation on Juvenile Justice Programming Designs to the Board. Mr. Hebert explained how the various design and concept improvements provide a more therapeutic, rehabilitative environment for juvenile detainees. Additionally, improvements made to programming, technology, and staff structuring provides a safe and secure environment that focuses on holistic therapy and education.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES

Mr. Csonka called the Board's attention to Mr. Cole as Metro Council representation on the CJCC Board of Directors and emphasized the value of his presence as the Board moves forward with criminal justice initiatives.

Mr. Csonka stated that Louisiana is one of five states that received funds from The Just Trust (TJT) and CJCC is one of a handful of organizations within Louisiana to be chosen to participate and receive funds. Funds received from TJT are aimed to focus on criminal justice reform efforts on the state and local level. The CJCC was awarded a total of \$150,000 for a two-year grant period. These funds will bolster current efforts to make legislative changes, improve processes to our justice system, and allow the CJCC to bring other like-minded agencies across the state to discuss implementing a statewide CJCC.

Next, Mr. Csonka updated the Board on a scheduled trip to New Orleans Criminal District Court on August 5th with a group of judges, attorneys from the district attorney and public defender's office, court staff, and community representatives to observe their Pretrial Services Program. The goal is for the group to gain a better understanding of utilizing Public Safety Assessments (PSAs) to set fair bonds and how this tool could be utilized in our jurisdiction.

Mr. Csonka reminded the Board that the end of 2022 will mark the fourth year of the East Baton Rouge CJCC's involvement within the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) Network. He stated there is one more round of grants, which is called the sustainability grant, and this grant proposal is due on September 16th. Mr. Csonka stated he will individually consult with Board Members as he begins drafting this final grant proposal for input.

Mr. Csonka notified the Board of the upcoming SJC Convening, which is a semi-annual convening of all SJC Network Sites that includes seminars and other justice initiative-related programming. Mr. Csonka stated that our CJCC, as an implementation site, allows up to nine delegates to attend. He stated this particular convening will be hosted in Atlanta, Georgia and conveyed his plans to ask certain Board Members to be present. He reminded the Board there is an option to attend the SJC Convening virtually. Mr. Csonka stated these convenings provide team building with stakeholders and provide opportunities to learn from other jurisdictions as we collaboratively work to improve our justice system.

To conclude his updates, Mr. Csonka reported progress on planning the 3rd annual CJCC Board Retreat. He stated this Board Retreat will take place of the November Board Meeting and will serve as an opportunity to reflect on 2022 accomplishments/progress and plan out a 2023 strategic plan.

PROGRAM/AGENCY UPDATES

PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION & RECOVERY PROGRAM

Mr. Csonka called upon Lisa Burns to deliver the Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program report.

Ms. Burns reported the program currently has 13 participants and program staff are working hard to build that number up to 20 participants. Ms. Burns also stated an increase in referrals from Baton Rouge City Court, the District Attorney's Office, and 19th JDC Judges. Ms. Burns noted that of the 13 current participants, 9 of them were homeless prior to entering the program. Additionally, Ms. Burns stated many of these participants have reunited with their families and have been maintaining their in-person monthly status hearings in Judge Donald R. Johnson's court room. Ms. Burns reminded the Board that the Program is a minimum of six months where participants receive inpatient treatment and then to sober living environments to help them get stabilized. Ms. Burns stated that once they become stabilized, most of the participants obtain a job in the service industry or shelf-stocking job.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Burns concluded the Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program report.

BATON ROUGE CITY COURT

Mr. Csonka called upon Ms. Taylor to deliver the Baton Rouge City Court report.

Ms. Taylor reported that her office is working with the Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program team to increase referrals and opportunities for individuals to participate. Ms. Taylor also reported an issue with obtaining access to clients with the new jail management software and her office is currently using the Sheriff's Office website as a work around until the new software issue is resolved.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Taylor concluded the Baton Rouge City Court report.

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Mr. Csonka called upon Major Ponton to deliver the Baton Rouge Police Department report.

Major Ponton reported his anticipation in working with the CJCC Board of Directors as Sheriff Sid Gautreaux's recently appointed delegate and will provide more updates at the upcoming Board Meeting as his new position on the Board solidifies.

With no further questions or comments, Major Ponton concluded the Baton Rouge Police Department report.

EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH PRISON

Mr. Csonka called upon Ms. Belone to deliver the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison report.

Ms. Belone reported that the biggest concern they are facing is getting the new jail management software on track. Ms. Belone then reported the current Parish Prison Population as follows:

- 753 males
- 118 females
- 225 individuals housed in East Carrol
- 58 individuals housed in Catahoula Parish

Additionally, Ms. Belone reported there are no restrictions on attorney visits, and they are currently using phone booths for communication. Due to spacing, Ms. Belone reported they are allowing six individuals at a time. She stated visitation hours for family are between 8:00 – 10:00 am and 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm. She also reported that any documents that the deputies facilitate in handling any documents that need to be signed for the inmates. To conclude, Ms. Belone reported the kiosks are still functioning and serving their purpose in their units.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Belone concluded the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison report.

EAST BATON ROUGE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Mr. Csonka called upon Mr. Guillory to deliver the East Baton Rouge District Attorney's Office report.

Mr. Guillory reported that a firm has been conducting an assessment in their office to right size and meet the demands of modern prosecution. Mr. Guillory also stated that the firm will provide an assessment report, which will outline a structure change to the court room and office staffing. Lastly, Mr. Guillory reported the public facing data dashboard is scheduled to launch during the last quarter of this year.

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Guillory concluded the East Baton Rouge Parish District Attorney's Office report.

19th JDC

Mr. Csonka called upon Judge Crifasi to deliver the 19th JDC report.

Judge Crifasi reported that the 19th JDC is working to reinitiate the Reentry Program, which is a program that involves an individual committing two years at Angola Prison where they are trained by certified mentors in certain areas to obtain skills. Judge Crifasi stated this nationally recognized program is designed to set up the individual up for success when released after the two years. Judge Crifasi stated it is his hope that this program has opened eligibility to more individuals due to the recent legislative changes. Judge Crifasi also stated that it is up to the District Attorney's Office to determine an individual's eligibility for this program. To conclude, Judge Crifasi notified the Board of an upcoming Continued Legal Education (CLE) Seminar on September 9th in the jury assembly room of the 19th JDC Courthouse, where Reentry Program staff will discuss aspects of the program where defendants and family members can observe.

With no further questions or comments, Judge Crifasi concluded the 19th JDC report.

EAST BATON ROUGE JUVENILE COURT

Mr. Csonka called upon Judge Grover to deliver the East Baton Rouge Juvenile Court report.

Judge Grover reported there are currently 25 individuals housed in the juvenile facility and 25 individuals will be sent to Angola. Judge Grover stated that the number went up to 36 today and their staff is having logistical issues to address the problems in such an outdated facility. Additionally, Judge Grover stated that they are also experiencing a staffing shortage. Judge Grover then said there have been four individuals who have been transferred to the parish prison with a 471-day stay being the longest and a 93-day stay the shortest. To conclude, Judge Grover reported the State is working on truancy with a taskforce and East Baton Rouge is being represented on that.

With no further questions or comments, Judge Grover concluded the East Baton Rouge Juvenile Court report.

BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION

Mr. Csonka called upon Mr. Spain to deliver the Baton Rouge Area Foundation report.

Mr. Spain reminded the Board of the recently completed jail study to properly size a new jail for East Baton Rouge Parish. Mr. Spain stated that City/Parish leaders are responsible for undertaking the building of this new facility and work to identify key stakeholders with areas of

expertise to guide this effort. Mr. Spain additionally stated that this undertaking will be put on a bond election, and everyone involved with this process must focus on educating the public on the process of building a new jail.

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Spain concluded the Baton Rouge Area Foundation report.

CJCC ENGAGE

Mr. Csonka called upon Ms. Carwile to deliver the CJCC Engage report.

Ms. Carwile stated that the CJCC Engage group viewed the jail report presentation and the group's main takeaway included further reducing a projected population. Ms. Carwile stated that the CJCC Engage group is concerned that not all options to further reduce the jail population are being taken into consideration and focus should be made on pre-trial services and other community led initiatives. Lastly, Ms. Carwile stated the CJCC Engage group is continuing discussions with the Board members and announced plans to present a position statement to the Board during the next Board Meeting.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Carwile concluded the CJCC Engage report.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 1:18 pm.

Christopher Csonka
Executive Director, CJCC
July 28, 2022