

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE COORDINATING COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Thursday, January 18, 2024**

MINUTES

The Board of Directors of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 11:32 am at the 2nd Floor Conference Room at the Shaw Center.

Directors in attendance were Jennifer Carwile with CJCC Engage and Together Baton Rouge, Lindsay Blouin with the YWCA, Judge Don Johnson with the 19th JDC, Eric Dexter with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Leslie Chambers with the Mayor-President's Office, Captain Frederick Thomas with the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office, Deputy Chief Myron Daniels with Baton Rouge Police Department, John Spain with Spain Enterprises, Mike Mitchell with the LA Public Defenders' Board, Brandi Lawrence with the City Prosecutor's Office, and Warden Dennis Grimes with the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.

Others in attendance were Chris Csonka, Niles Haymer, Brianna Jeansonne, and Margaret Lagattuta with the Office of the Public Defender, and Diana Gibbens with the 19th Judicial District Court.

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, J. Carwile called the meeting to order at 11:32 AM.

FOR APPROVAL

Motion by J. Spain seconded by L. Blouin to approve Board minutes from 11/8/23. With no opposition, the motion is carried.

DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL EVALUATION

C. Csonka stepped out for the Director's Annual Evaluation. N. Haymer led the discussion on the Director's Evaluation. After questions from the Board about budget line items, C. Csonka returned to discuss the final 2023 Budget and seek approval for the 2024 Budget. C. Csonka stepped out again to turn over the meeting to N. Haymer to continue the Director's Annual Evaluation discussion.

C. Csonka returned to the meeting to be summarized by N. Haymer about the Executive Director's positive Annual Evaluation and the Board requested that C. Csonka schedule a special meeting in February after Mardi Gras in order that the Board can meet with CJCC's accountants and be able to then make an informed decision on a merit-based salary raise for the Executive Director.

FOR APPROVAL

Motion by L. Blouin seconded by M. Daniles to approve the 2024 Budget 'as is' but also anticipating approval for an amended 2024 Budget at a later date. With no opposition, the motion is carried.

DIRECTOR UPDATES

J. Carwile called upon C. Csonka to deliver Director Updates.

- **2024 GOALS**

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2024 CJCC GOALS

- **CAPRI**

C. Csonka informed the Board of the Goals for 2024 starting with the hiring of a Reentry Coordinator for CAPRI. C. Csonka states that the CAPRI interview committee is in the final stages of interviews which will be conducted next week.

- **Pretrial Service Unit (PTSU)/Risk Assessment Tool**

C. Csonka informed the Board that a top goal of 2024 is to continue to help facilitate the implementation of the Pretrial Service Unit and the adoption of a Risk Assessment Tool at the 19th JDC. Judge Johnson informed the Board that two (2) new commissioners will be hired by July 1, 2024. It is Judge Johnson’s hope that a Commissioner’s Court along with the PTSU and risk assessment tool will be up and running before then end of the year.

- **LA Public Safety Summit**

C. Csonka announced to the Board that the CJCC will be officially hosting the Louisiana Public Safety Summit the Friday after Mardi Gras (Friday, February 16th) at the Hilton Capitol Center. C. Csonka was also excited to inform the Board that the new Attorney General, Liz Murrill,

MID-YEAR FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Csonka informed the board that the mid-year finance report indicates our spending remains in line with our annual budget. Additionally, Mr. Csonka mentioned it is important to note, as previously discussed, our funds will decrease as the grant cycle concludes. Initially, MacArthur grants covered 80% of our expenses, but now only account for 30-40%.

Mr. Csonka noted City-Parish has been supportive by creating a specific line item for our Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program and increasing funding to cover operational costs for the CJCC. Mr. Csonka expressed his optimism about addressing our financial requirements in the future by securing additional funds from the City-Parish and additional funding sources.

SIM REPORT

Mr. Csonka shared that in March, the CJCC conducted a day and a half exercise, with technical assistance provided by PRI to improve our comprehension of service coordination in East Baton Rouge Parish.

He also mentioned that we are in the process of establishing a workgroup to address the recommendations stemming from this exercise. This workgroup will focus on identifying gaps and needs within the parish, with a specific emphasis on the intersection of behavioral health and the criminal justice system.

In addition, Mr. Csonka highlighted that a similar exercise had been conducted back in June 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. He suggested the possibility of having the same partners return to observe any changes in the landscape and to reassess our strategies in the next few years.

SAFETY AND JUSTICE COMMUNITY SURVEY

Mr. Csonka reported as part of our budget allocation, we contracted with LJR Custom Strategies to conduct a public safety survey. To make the survey results more accessible to the public, we had a pamphlet created for the survey results in a user-friendly format. This booklet is now accessible on our website and serves as a gauge of the parish's sentiments on various matters.

Mr. Csonka noted that this survey will continue to inform our decision-making at CJCC as we refine our initiatives. In consideration of the upcoming election cycle, we plan to hold off on conducting the survey until a more suitable time.

Furthermore, Mr. Csonka pointed out that we have not previously produced an annual report. However, we intend to include the results of this community survey in our inaugural annual report next year.

CITY-PARISH / SAFE HOPEFUL HEALTHY BR, SAFE BR

Mr. Csonka reported that CJCC Engage has been actively involved with the Mayor's initiative to reduce violence since February. This initiative involves conducting a roadmap academy with the aim of developing a comprehensive 5-year plan to address violence. The plan encompasses short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals.

As part of this process, we recently organized a well-attended community lab to gather input from the community regarding their expectations for this plan. Over the next 60 days, there will be six subgroups working on various aspects of the plan. Notably, Mr. Csonka is chairing the subgroup focused on criminal justice and juvenile justice reforms.

NNCJCC

Mr. Csonka mentioned that he and Niles had the opportunity to attend the NNCJCC annual network meeting in June. They were able to interact with representatives from 30 other CJCC agencies and engage in valuable information sharing. This experience highlighted the common challenges and experiences shared by other CJCCs, reaffirming the importance of these collaborative efforts.

LOUISIANA NETWORK MEETING

Mr. Csonka reported the CJCC is actively collaborating with JMI as part of our partnership with the MacArthur Foundation to establish a state-level CJCC collaborative body. This initiative has been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions and given that both Orleans and East Baton Rouge Parish are part of the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC), the first step was to convene a meeting involving law enforcement and prosecutors.

This meeting took place for half a day, with representatives from both NOLA and EBR coming together to discuss shared experiences between the two parishes. Universal challenges were identified, and

participants benefited from the opportunity to engage in open dialogue and gain insights into each other's agencies.

While acknowledging that the meeting could have been longer, Warden Grimes found the discussion interesting and agreed that it allowed for a better understanding of each other's roles and the obstacles they face to work efficiently. Mr. Guillory echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the need for continued dialogue and healing even among our own group to acknowledge shared experiences.

Chris mentioned that during the meeting, participants initially split into smaller groups and then reconvened. The Baton Rouge law enforcement representation was strong throughout the session. The goal is to replicate this type of meeting for other affinity groups, such as judges and community members, from both parishes. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) led the discussion on the police aspects, and a representative from Everyday Democracy, a component of the MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice Challenge, was also present.

PRETRIAL SERVICES UNIT

Mr. Csonka reminded the board of ongoing efforts to establish a pre-trial services unit within the 19th Judicial District Court (19th JDC). The primary objective is to implement a validated risk assessment tool and employ dedicated staff to oversee individuals on pretrial supervision.

Mr. Csonka noted that House Bill 217 has passed, granting permission to add two additional commissioners to the 19th JDC. Funding for this expansion is currently in progress, with the aim of these two commissioners serving as a vital component of the Pre-Trial Services Unit (PTSU).

JMI conducted a comprehensive needs assessment, outlining the essential requirements to bring the parish up to national standards for effective pretrial services.

Mr. Csonka urged the board's attendance at the Metro Council meetings to advocate for funding for these two commissioners and the necessary staff. The overarching vision is to have commissioners equipped to handle bonds and provide support for specific cases. By working collectively and ensuring that all areas are connected and labeled effectively, we anticipate having the funding and the infrastructure in place before the end of this year.

Lastly, Mr. Csonka underlined the integral role of the Office of the Public Defender in this initiative, as it will ultimately streamline their work and enhance the decision-making process for judges and prosecutors by providing comprehensive risk assessments.

With no further comments or questions, Mr. Csonka concluded the Director Updates

ADJOURNMENT

With no other updates or business to conduct, the CJCC Board of Directors meeting was adjourned at 12:14 pm.

Christopher Csonka
Executive Director, CJCC
November 8, 2023

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