

**EBR Criminal Justice Coordinating Council  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Thursday, September 22, 2022**

**MINUTES**

The Board of Directors of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council held its scheduled meeting on September 22, 2022 at 11:30 am at the Shaw Center for the Arts.

Directors in attendance were John Spain with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Aislyn Taylor with Baton Rouge City Court, Dennis Grimes with the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison, Mike Mitchell with the Public Defender Board of Louisiana, Anthony Ponton with the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, Jermaine Guillory with the District Attorney's Office, and Margaret Lagattuta with the Public Defender's Office.

Additional attendees were Hunter Thomas with the Public Defender's Office, Diana Gibbens with the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court, Lauren Crapanzano Jumonville with the Baton Rouge Area Foundation,

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Csonka called the meeting to order at 11:36.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATES**

Mr. Csonka updated the Board of Directors on current initiatives. Mr. Csonka stated that consultants from the Justice Management Institute (JMI) will be visiting in the coming weeks to conduct an assessment of East Baton Rouge Parish to potentially implement pretrial services to the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC, including the use of a Pretrial Risk Assessment (PSA) tool. Consultants will send out stakeholder surveys to begin putting together an assessment and collect data on the jail and court, including the types of bonds that are being set. The goal is for pretrial services to serve everyone in the Parish and to create a risk assessment that better informs judges when setting bonds. Once the assessment is concluded, Mr. Csonka stated this initiative will potentially launch in February or March of 2023.

Mr. Csonka updated the Board on Veterans Treatment Court (VTC) progress. Mr. Csonka stated the team completed the training sessions and will receive confirmation of grant funds within the next few weeks. Once funds are received, the post-adjudication VTC will be a fully functioning program in the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC and will serve all veterans involved in the justice system with tracks lasting typically around 12-24 for completion.

Mr. Csonka informed the Board that he submitted the third funding proposal to the MacArthur Foundation for the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC) Grant. Mr. Csonka pointed out that although these are sustainability funds, CJCC will continue receiving technical assistant support. Since it is 6 year phase, 1<sup>st</sup> 2 are etc., (insert the text from PowerPoint). Mr. Csonka told the

Board we want to ensure we maintain sustainability when the funds run out in the beginning of 2024.

Mr. Csonka informed the Board of the upcoming SJC Network Meeting in Atlanta, where 60 SJC sites, including East Baton Rouge Parish, convene in one city for three days of justice reform workshops, plenaries, and information sessions. The CJCC may bring 10 delegates on this trip and Mr. Csonka told the Board the network meetings are a great opportunity to network as we discuss improving our justice system. Finally, Mr. Csonka informed the Board that these convenings occur twice a year, and delegation will be rotated for the spring convening in St. Louis.

Mr. Csonka informed the Board of the upcoming site visit from the Director of Criminal Justice for the MacArthur Foundation, Laurie Garduque, along with two other technical assistant providers with the Urban Institute. Mr. Csonka said the goal of this site visit is to set up individual meetings with CJCC stakeholders to get a sense of system improvement efforts and how the MacArthur Foundation will be assisting us moving forward.

Mr. Csonka reminded the Board that the third annual CJCC Board Retreat the Board Retreat will be held on Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm on the third floor of the Shaw Center for the Arts. The Board Retreat will be open to all Board members, designees, and other who are vital to the work of the CJCC. Lastly, Mr. Csonka stated that those in attendance will view the CJCC Engage presentation, results of the community safety and justice survey, review 2022 accomplishments, and map out 2023 strategic goals.

Mr. Csonka updated the Board on the Lights On! initiative, which is a national non-profit that partners with law enforcement to provide funds for vouchers in lieu of citations for dysfunctional cars with faulty tail or head lights. Mr. Csonka announced partnership with BRPD and EBRSO to launch this program as the first of its kind in Louisiana. Mr. Csonka said when MOU documents are finalized, a press conference will be held to inform the community. CJCC has donated total of \$9,000, which covers the printing of the vouchers. CJCC will provide funding for first year and seek other funding sources to sustain the program in the long term. Major Ponton stated that their office's Community Policing Taskforce will kick off this program and will provide CJCC with tracking and reporting. Lastly, Mr. Csonka stated this program will be a good opportunity to mend law enforcement and community relations.

Lastly, Mr. Csonka introduced Diana Gibbens, general counsel for the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC, and stated her support in implementing pretrial services for the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC will be crucial to its success.

## **PROGRAM/AGENCY UPDATES**

### **PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION & RECOVERY PROGRAM**

Mr. Csonka delivered the Pre-Trial Diversion & Recovery Program Report.

Mr. Csonka reported on the previous Status Hearing during Recover Month, where two program graduates came in and spoke to the class and one individual graduated the program. Will be more active about letting Board Members know about upcoming status hearings. Mr. Csonka stated

that CJCC staff will be more proactive in inviting other stakeholders to observe status hearings to increase awareness of program benefits. Lastly, Mr. Csonka reported the program currently has 13 participants active.

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

### **PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE**

Mr. Csonka called upon Lisa Parker to deliver the Public Defender's Office report.

Ms. Parker reported difficulty for attorneys to speak with the inmate and public defender to discuss sensitive matters. Additionally, there is a need to have a public defender at the jail daily to meet with inmates and consider referrals to other resources. Ms. Parker also stated communication issues with staff in other agencies, which may lead to confusion of inconsistent callout times. Mr. Thomas reported progress on Operation Restoration with the Mayor's Office and Louisiana Department of Health about trying to collectively come up with coordinators to have a local facility that prevents people being sent to Jackson, LA.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Parker concluded the Public Defender's Office report.

### **BATON ROUGE AREA FOUNDATION**

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

Mr. Spain announced that the Bridge Center for Hope reported an average of below three minutes for law enforcement drop off at the facility. Mr. Spain also reported the Bridge Center is in the process of rectifying their reimbursement model with the state and they are working to address the issue.

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

### **EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH PRISON**

Mr. Csonka called upon Warden Grimes to deliver the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison report.

Warden Grimes said when the Parish was conducting evaluations before the transition of health care in the jail and there is confusion around ensuring specific individuals are being evaluated. Warden Grimes stated that judges and the City Parish do not have a clear understanding about mental evaluations when speaking with defendants. Warden Grimes expressed the importance of appropriately addressing defendants who have severe mental health needs. Mr. Haymer stated his commitment to spearhead all stakeholders involved on expectations of issuing a mental health evaluation and review Turnkey Health Contract.

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

## **19<sup>th</sup> JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT**

Mr. Csonka called upon Diana Gibbens to deliver the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC report.

Ms. Gibbens stated she has experienced willingness to change as the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC works to improve their processes. Lastly, Ms. Gibbens stated the importance of maintaining momentum and buy in around these improvement efforts.

With no further questions or comments, Ms. Gibbens concluded the 19<sup>th</sup> JDC report.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 1:03 pm.

Christopher Csonka  
Executive Director, CJCC  
September 22, 2022