

Public Safety Coordinating Council

February 27, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Council Members (or designee) in Attendance:

Commissioner Bill Proctor	County Commission
Judge Augustus Aikens	Judiciary
Asst. Sheriff Argatha Gilmore	Leon County Sheriff's Office
Jessica Yeary	Public Defender's Office
Brylan Jacobs	Florida Department of Corrections
Owen McCaul	Assistant State Attorney
Anne Meisenzahl	Big Bend AFTER Reentry Coalition
Nancy O'Farrell	NAMI Tallahassee

Council Members Not in Attendance:

Teresa Broxton	Office of Intervention and Detention Alternatives
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Also, in attendance:

Captain Carroll	Leon County Sheriff's Office
Wanda Hunter	Leon County Administration
Kimberly Holland	Office of Intervention and Detention Alternatives
Blanca Chavez-Delgado	Judicial Assistant, Judge Ashenafi Richardson
Elaine Webb	Tallahassee Bail Fund
Malia Bruker	Tallahassee Bail Fund

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM

Issues Discussed

I. Approval of the January 30, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Owen McCaul moved to approve the minutes from the January 30, 2024, meeting; seconded by Brylan Jacobs.

The motion passed 10-0.

II. Tallahassee Bail Fund

Elaine Webb and Malia Bruker joined the meeting to present information on the services provided by the Tallahassee Bail Fund (TBF). Ms. Bruker shared that the TBF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that began in May 2020. The TBF had its first bailout in June 2020 and has bailed out approximately 80 people since. Ms. Bruker advised the Council that TBF receives most of their referrals from the Public Defender's Office and directly from the community.

Ms. Bruker explained that the TBF members review each request for assistance by reviewing and discussing the individual's arrest affidavit, prior criminal history, charges, and then decides collectively whether to post the individual's bail. The TBF typically does not assist individuals with current charges or a criminal history involving domestic violence or crimes against minors. After approving an individual for assistance, the TBF delivers funds obtained from a revolving account to the detention facility to have the individual released. At the time of the individual's release, the TBF provides them with a backpack containing toiletries, a \$25 gift Visa gift card, bottled water, snacks, and a folder and pen to keep track of important information.

The TBF maintains an account of revolving funds through community donations and bail money returned after assisted individuals attend all scheduled court dates and their cases are disposed of. Ms. Bruker shared that TBF has recently received a large grant from Trinity United Methodist Church which will assist with their long-term sustainability. The funds will be primarily used to pay for clients' aftercare services after their release from the Leon County Detention Facility.

Ms. Webb shared that the TBF prioritizes people who are disproportionately affected by the system such as people of color, women, individuals with mental health disorders, physical limitations, or individuals in the LGBTQ community.

Ms. Webb stated the TBF currently has 13 clients on pre-trial release. Additionally, the TBF has not had any bail funds estreatures due to failures to appear for scheduled court appearances. Ms. Webb also shared that the TBF has paid cash bail for forty-three (43) clients since 2020; used surety bonds for thirty-one (31) clients; and declined to post bail/bond for ten (10) clients but provided other forms of support to them post-release. To date, the TBF has provided a total of \$60,600 towards cash bail/bond.

Commissioner Proctor asked Ms. Webb and Ms. Bruker what are the core values that drive the altruistic work of the TBF. Ms. Web shared that they are a non-faith-based organization and collectively believe that the way society, especially the criminal justice system, is not operating on a level playing field and disadvantaged individuals are severely impacted because they are not able

to access the relief that someone with means can. Ms. Bruker added that the organization is a social justice organization wanting to make a difference in the place that we live.

Commissioner Proctor acknowledged that the TBF efforts assist with the PSCC's mission to reduce and manage the detention facility population. He asked Ms. Yeary to keep the TBF in mind when identifying programs and initiatives for future funding recommendations.

III. Introduction of New Public Safety Coordinating Council Appointment (Kelli Mercer)

Ms. Holland introduced Ms. Kelli Mercer, Program Director for Behavioral Health at HCA Healthcare. Ms. Mercer will serve in the statutorily required position of a "director of a local substance abuse treatment center", formerly filled by Paul Knoll. Ms. Mercer was unable to attend due to an emergency but has confirmed she will attend the March meeting.

IV. Leon County Detention Facility Population Updates and Discussion- Asst. Sheriff Gilmore, Leon County Sheriff's Office

Capt. Carroll presented the Leon County Detention Facility (LCDF) Status Report for 2/26/2024 (Attachment #1). He reported that the LCDF population was 921 as of 2/26/2024 and there are eight juveniles being housed in Jefferson County.

Commissioner Proctor asked what is contributing to the declining trend of the detention facility's population. Capt. Carroll shared that he believes there are two factors: 1) the courts are disposing of more cases, and 2) an increase in the number of individuals transferred to the Department of Corrections over the past two weeks.

Commissioner Proctor shared that he attended the Tallahassee Urban's League campaign launch to end gun violence in the community through key chains reminding citizens to lock their car doors to prevent guns from being stolen and used in crimes. Commissioner Proctor reflected on the Sheriff's "Anatomy of a Homicide" report released in September 2021 which reflected poverty as a factor of criminal behavior. He inquired if the Council members believe that poverty is linked to crime and the detention facility's population. A.S. Gilmore stated that research does show that poverty is a key factor which is reflected in the demographics and zip codes contained in the report. She further commented that research shows gun violence and crimes are connected to socioeconomics in communities across the nation.

Commissioner Proctor reflected on the importance of him being able to convey to other local leaders the impact and significance of continued funding for programs that address and provide constructive activities in impoverished communities. He stated that when we identify factors that contribute to crime, we have a community to address them.

Capt. Carroll shared age data on the detention facility's population. Commissioner Proctor inquired if mental health diagnoses are reflected in one age group more so than others. Capt. Carroll stated that they are beginning to see an increase in individuals with varying forms of dementia. The council members discussed the challenges of housing individuals with dementia in the detention facility, identifying alternative housing options for them in the community, the inability to transfer

individuals with dementia to Florida State Hospital, and the stage of dementia when the crimes are occurring, on set or as the condition progresses.

A.S. Gilmore stated approximately 50% of the detention facility's population has a mental health diagnosis (ranging from major depression to schizophrenia). She reported that FAMU and FSU have interns coming into the detention facility and assisting in treatment for individuals with mental health diagnosis.

Capt. Carroll shared data on the number of individuals and the length of stay for individuals charged with violations of probation (VOP). Commissioner Proctor commented on the cumulative number of days in custody for VOP cases and the cost of incarceration. Ms. Meisenzahl inquired about alternatives to incarceration for VOP cases. Mr. Jacobs advised there is an Administrative Order authorizing the Department of Corrections (DOC) to impose alternative sanctions for technical violations.

V. Court Administration Reports- Ina Hawkins, Detention Review Coordinator

The report is provided as Attachment #2.

VI. Electronic Monitoring Reports- Teresa Broxton, IDA Director

Ms. Holland presented the Electronic Monitoring Program Report for January 2024 (Attachment #3).

VII. Other Business:

Ms. Meisenzahl asked for an update on the PSCC's Workgroup progress on housing services for the FY 23/2024 funding allocation. Ms. Holland shared representatives from the Office of Intervention and Detention Alternatives, Human Services and Community Partnerships, and County Administration met with multiple transitional housing providers in the community to learn more about the services they provide. Ms. Broxton will schedule a meeting with the PSCC Workgroup to share details on the proposal for housing services in March.

Commissioner Proctor announced that Dr. Randy Nelson will be attending the March meeting to present the "Leon County Community Safety and Engagement Action Plan".

Next Meeting: March 26, 2024

4:00 PM

Commission Chambers, 5th Floor, Leon County Courthouse