

Lebanon County Criminal Justice Advisory Board
Minutes of the Meeting of October 9, 2023

Time: 9:00 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; Robert J. Phillips, County Commissioner; Audrey Fortna, Director of Probation Services; Stephanie Axarlis, Court Administrator; Tina Litz, LCCF Warden; Jonathan Hess, Police Chiefs Representative; Matthew Rys, Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse; Jamie Wolgemuth, County Administrator; LeAnne Burchik, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Intervention; Michael Anderson, Director of Domestic Relations; Karen Raugh, Executive Director, County Housing Authority; Jeffrie Marley, Sheriff; Megan Tidwell, Chief Public Defender; and, John P. Shott, CJAB Planner.

Absent

Erin Moyer, Director, Children and Youth; Carla Cyr, Veterans Justice Outreach; and, Kim Mackey, CJAB Regional Representative.

Guests

Lori Burrus, Lebanon Branch #26AA of the N.A.A.C.P.

Proxy entered for the record: Matthew Rys, for James Donmoyer, Executive Director, Drug and Alcohol Commission.

CJAB Chair Pier Hess Graf called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Presence of a quorum noted.

Minutes of August 14, 2023 CJAB Meeting—Approved on a motion by Ms. Leahy, seconded by Ms. Fortna.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- **D.U.I. Court**—At present, 35 offenders are actively participating in the program, with two applications pending.
- **Prison Reduction**—Current Average Daily Population (ADP) is 261; the ADP had been as low as 240 recently. 19 inmates are currently involved in the Medical Assisted Treatment (MAT) program.
- **Mental Health**—To date, Team M.I.S.A. has discussed the cases of 42 individuals. Statistical breakdown: all 42 have current or a history of mental health issues; four have an intellectual-disabilities diagnosis; 17 have current or a history of drug/alcohol abuse; two are veterans; and ten are currently or have been chronically homeless. Team M.I.S.A. will continue to hold meetings on the second Monday of the month, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

The number of confirmed suicides as of mid-September is 15. Statistical breakdown: average age, 42; 13 males, two females; nine deaths by firearm; one veteran; six victims from outside Lebanon, including five from Lancaster County; ten with known mental health histories; one known to MH/ID/EI; five with known substance abuse issues; 12 white, two Hispanic, one unsure.

Two females are now residing in the County-owned cottage behind the MH/ID/EI building. The County is considering the application/referral of a third female, bringing the cottage to capacity.

- **Veterans Court**—Current number of active participants is 19, with two applicants under consideration, one of whom would be a transfer from another county.
- **Drug Court**—Current number of active participants is 21, with one offender scheduled to be accepted into the program.

CJAB DEPARTMENTS: REPORTS AND ISSUES OF INTEREST

Day Reporting Center—Only three offenders are participating in the program. The County Commissioners have notified PA Counseling Services, Inc that the County will not be renewing the contract for the DRC, effectively ending the program no later than Dec. 31, 2023. The Courts will continue to refer eligible offenders there for partial programming between now and the end of December. The census at the DRC has been struggling to reach double digits. Despite the low number of participants, the County remains under a contractual obligation to pay for a minimum of 40 offenders per month. From a fiscal standpoint, this cannot be sustained. The President Judge thanked the County Commissioners for their support of this program over the past five years.

Heroin Task Force—Confirmed overdose deaths, to date, is 27. Despite determined efforts to prevent such fatalities, the County is on track to exceed last year's total of 29. A reminder that the Drug and Alcohol Commission still has Narcan available. Recovery Day took place on September 30 at the Lebanon YMCA.

Offender Reentry Coalition—No official report. Christine Hartman is the new Administrator of Community Action Partnership, replacing Ryan Wertz. Reinvigorating the Reentry Coalition, including hiring a part-time Reentry Coordinator, will be one of her priorities.

COVID Mitigation Grant—County submitted a \$35,990 grant application to PCCD for enhanced COVID testing/mitigation at the LCCF. Warden Litz and Mr. Shott are coordinating the project. Grant would enable the County to purchase testing and cleaning supplies. A major item in the grant budget is upgrading the videoconferencing equipment used at the LCCF. This video system, which was installed during the pandemic in 2020, enables the County to conduct court sessions without having to transport inmates to the Courthouse. Glitches in the current system necessitate upgrades/updates.

ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

- **Strategic Planning for 2024-2025**—The first step toward developing a new Strategic Plan is to review the existing Board Mission Statement and Role of CJAB Members. On a motion by Ms. Leahy, seconded by Ms. Fortna, the Board voted to approve these documents, keeping the current wording intact (attached). Regular strategic planning is expected of CJABs to remain in compliance with PCCD's minimum operating standards. In recent years, such planning has taken place at regular CJAB meetings instead of at special meetings or retreats. Members should identify priorities for the next two years.

Members continued the discussion from the August meeting regarding CJAB membership and including revisions to the Bylaws as part of the strategic planning process. Main issue is whether the CJAB

should have voting (core) and non-voting members. York County's Bylaws provides for this two-tiered system. Non-voting members may be invited to join the York CJAB when approved by a two-thirds majority of the core membership. It is also a policy in York County not to invite private vendors to join the Board because it could present conflicts of interest. The Board requested additional information on other counties' bylaws, particularly as they pertain to membership. District Attorney Hess Graf will survey fellow district attorneys on this issue. Further discussion to take place at the December meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Items for December Meeting-- Election of officers and approval of CJAB meeting dates for 2024. Meeting schedule will be based on the 2024 court calendar.

Crime Filings—According to data from the Administrative Office of PA Courts (AOPC), major crime filings in Lebanon County decreased by 31 percent over the past year (August to August), representing the largest decrease among fifth-class counties in the Commonwealth as well as among the counties in South-central Pennsylvania.

New CJAB Member—The Chair welcomed new CJAB member Megan Tidwell, Chief Public Defender. Self-introductions by the other members.

ADJOURNMENT—With no further business to conduct, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m. on a motion by Ms. Axarlis, seconded by Mr. Wolgemuth

NEXT CJAB MEETING: Monday, December 11, 2023, 9:00 a.m., MH/ID/EI

CJAB MISSION STATEMENT

The ongoing mission of the Lebanon County Criminal Justice Advisory Board is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the local criminal justice system, and by means of communication, cooperation, and collaboration, enhance and improve the system and services in the most effective, efficient, and cost-effective manner possible.

YOUR ROLE AS A CJAB MEMBER

As a member of the Criminal Justice Advisory Board, you should follow these guidelines:

- Be willing, able, and prepared to participate in free and open discussions with your colleagues.
- Remain aware of trends that commonly present themselves as matters of concern within your department or agency.
- Understand that collaboration and communication are critical to the future growth of criminal justice departments and agencies in Lebanon County.
- Know that you, as the leader of your department or agency, are in charge of how anything the Board discusses will ultimately be implemented (or not) in your office.
- Know that there are moments when negotiations and compromise will have to take place. Consensus, however, is always the preferred solution.
- Attend the CJAB meetings regularly so that you stay informed of the issues presented and can represent your department or agency more appropriately.
- Have read the CJAB Bylaws at least one time.
- Submit questions or concerns about the Board to the CJAB Planner so that the CJAB Planner has an opportunity to discuss such matters with the Board Officers.
- Participate, when necessary, in electronic voting about initiatives under consideration by the Board.
- Know that members may express concerns without threat or retaliation. Our Board demands decent, non-hostile conduct during meetings.