

# **Adams County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

May 15, 2012

1:30pm – 3:30pm

Adams County Justice Center, 1100 Judicial Center Dr., Brighton

First floor training room

## **Meeting Attendees**

### **Members Present**

Vincent Phelps, Lee Birk, Doug Darr, Sharon Dunlap, Scott Evans, Ruth Kedzior, Charlie Long, Randy Nelson, Richard Weinberg, and Dave Young (for Don Quick)

### **Members Absent**

Don Quick

Municipal prosecutor representative

### **Others Present**

Mike Jones, Institute for Justice Planning

## **Meeting Goals**

- Establish rapport among members
- Discuss the long-term purpose of the Committee
- Decide initial areas to be addressed
- Agree on an initial process for addressing these areas
- Establish a plan and schedule for accomplishing next steps

## **Agenda Item**

### **Call meeting to order and make opening remarks**

Judge Phelps called the meeting to order.

He said County Administrator Jim Robinson asked him to serve as the initial chairperson of the committee.

He anticipates that the committee's membership will grow in size and participation and that membership will change as different topics and projects arise.

The committee's long-term goal is to approach problems that affect each agency in the criminal justice system and to give people a chance to be heard and to express their perspective.

### **Introduce one another and express hopes and expectations**

Attendees took turns providing a brief autobiography of their life and career to help them get to know one another.

### **Discuss the long-term purpose of the Committee**

The Board of County Commissioners is interested in the concept of a criminal justice coordinating committee (CJCC) because of the current jail bed issue (cap on beds used by municipal courts), public safety, and managing resources.

The commissioners want the committee to be objective, stakeholder (not BOCC) driven, and produce outcomes that benefit the different governments and agencies. They would like by June for the committee to be established, to hire staff, have a project, and to begin developing a long-term agenda. Dave Young stated that if he becomes district attorney in early 2013, he intends to initiate an expedited disposition process in which the DA's Office makes an offer at first appearance, especially in misdemeanor cases. He believes this will reduce the attorneys' and court's caseload and reduce the use of jail beds. See attached handout. For the draft purpose statement, a suggestion was made to add the word "equitable," such that the statement reads "The Adams County CJCC provides an ongoing forum for leaders from the criminal justice agencies, general governments, and community in Adams County to discuss and prioritize public safety and criminal justice issues and coordinate resources to address issues in the most data-guided, cost-effective, and equitable ways possible."

### **Discuss and decide initial areas to be addressed**

A few possible topic areas to address were mentioned.

See handout for factors members can consider when selecting an area.

#### **1. Court date reminder**

Some courts do this now and others do not.

Thornton does.

Westminster, Aurora, and the combined courts do not.

Thornton's program, which uses existing utility billing phone lines and some new software programming, has increased its court appearance percentage from the high 80s to the mid 90s.

Aurora considered it a few years ago, but did not pursue it because it was cost prohibitive.

One large jail sub-population is inmates with non-compliance, many of whom have warrants for failure to appear.

A brief summary of the Jefferson County court date notification program, and how it came to be, was provided.

One possibility is that all municipal and the combined courts reduce failures to appear through notification/reminders, saving law enforcement, court, and jail resources.

There may be some front-end, start-up costs to realize the back-end, longer-term savings.

Some time would be needed to implement a program like this.

A working group could be formed to work on this topic.

#### **2. Municipal jail bed allocations**

The municipalities are very interested in looking at this issue, including revisiting the number of beds in the allocations.

One possibility is to increase the allocations to the cities.

The Sheriff's Office's budget has been cut for the past three years, which limits that number of jail beds it can staff.

The jail is staffed for 1,124 inmates, and currently there are approximately 1,100 inmates.

The population will likely increase over the next few months because it will be summertime.

An initiative that reduces the number of jail inmates who are in custody for failure to appear would also need to benefit other agencies, such as the municipalities.

The municipal bed allocation issue is important to the municipal judges and is therefore a candidate for an initial project.

### 3. Prolific offenders

One possible initiative would be for the different law enforcement agencies and courts in the county to target the offenders who commit the most crime in the county.

Some agencies may be doing this now, and others may not be, and there may be opportunity for more interagency collaboration.

With whichever topic or issue the committee initially chooses, the BOCC per its resolution from 2011 would like a report from the committee by July.

#### **Agree on an initial process for addressing these areas**

There was no time to discuss the process through which the committee, or perhaps one or more task forces or subcommittees it creates, could go through when working on an issue. See handout for draft.

#### **Establish a plan and schedule for accomplishing next steps**

The committee will meet again as soon as possible to continue discussions about possible initial projects.

Next month, the committee will need to provide the BOCC with a written summary of progress and plans. See handout for possible report components.

The BOCC has authorized the hiring of up to 1.5 FTEs to work as criminal justice planning staff for the committee.

#### **Set next meeting date & time and agenda topics**

This will be done next week.

#### **Adjourn**

Judge Phelps adjourned the meeting.

#### **Tasks**

Mike Jones will send out options for the next meeting date and times.

Mike Jones will send a draft job description to committee members for edits.

Ruth Kedzior will work with Human Resources on the hiring process.

Sharon Dunlap will ask various municipal courts for failure to appear data.

Sharon Dunlap will estimate the cost of Thornton's court date reminder system.

#### **Next Meeting**

To be determined