



**Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council**

**Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting: January 2020 12:00 PM**

**Courthouse Annex Extension, Fort Walton Beach**

**Public Safety Coordinating Council Members**

Present	Name	Agency
x	Graham Fountain	Board of County Commissioners
x	C. Eric Esmond	Chief Corrections Officer
x	Judge Gontarek	Circuit Judge
	Judge Grinsted	County Judge
	Jay Jones (Harold Mason)	Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Designee
	Bill Bishop	Assistant State Attorney
x	Charles Russell	Assistant Public Defender
x	Robert Kemp	Circuit Administrator, Florida Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Services
x	Kelli Huckabee	Pretrial Services
	Tina Ferland	Judicial Corrections Services, County Probation Provider

**Other Attendees:**

April McDaniel, Captain, Department of Corrections  
 Desiree Hartwig, Department of Corrections  
 Dennis Knighten, Department of Corrections  
 Susan Priddy, Corizon Health Services, Department of Corrections  
 Courtney Bowden, Corizon Health Services, Department of Corrections  
 Jeremy Miller, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
 Larry McFarland Bridgeway Center, Inc.  
 Bonnie Barlow Bridgeway Center, Inc.  
 John Anderson, Okaloosa Clerk of Court Office  
 Craig Coffey Deputy County Administrator  
 Valerie Broxson

Meeting opened at 12:06 pm.

**Welcome:**

Commissioner Fountain opened the meeting.

**Minutes/Commissioner Report**

1. a. The October minutes were approved as sent.
- b. Commissioner Fountain introduced Mr. Coffey, the new Deputy County Administrator, to the committee.

## **2. Old Business**

- a. The ribbon cutting ceremony for the jail diversion program took place on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from Bridgeway indicated the program is off to a good start. At present, there are two individuals in the program, one male and one female. There have been some minor issues with operations and plumbing, however. The facility is fully staffed 24/7 at this time. A new staff member was hired who brings with him seven years of supervisory experience in working with similar clientele for the diversion program in Miami-Dade County; he is expected to be a valuable asset to the program. There are some concerns regarding participants leaving the program and returning to jail, as this has already happened with one female. The program's committee has an upcoming meeting and will continue to evaluate the program and work out kinks.
- b. Chief Esmond and Captain McDaniel discussed that the procedure for legal visits at the jail has been working well. It has taken 30 minutes off the time south end attorneys need to see clients since the jail is able to have the inmates readily available when the attorneys arrive on-site.
- c. Chief Esmond indicated that the FLOW bus continues to visit the jail bi-monthly to assist with issuing ID cards to inmates. This program is helpful in addressing barriers to reentry and facilitates an easier transition into the community for those inmates who are able to benefit from it.
- d. Chief Esmond also discussed the upcoming DL Clinic which is set to take place on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. There are currently 59 individuals who have been vetted and approved for the clinic. There will be up to 150 participants selected with 10 of these being inmates, if applicable. In order to alleviate lengthy wait times regarding the inmate participants, the appropriate parties will come to the jail prior to the clinic date to complete the requirements with the selected inmates.
- e. Captain McDaniel provided an update in regards to Marcy's Law and its impacts to the jail, specifically where booking is concerned. This law is being applied differently throughout jurisdictions. It has been decided locally that these rights will need to be specifically invoked by the victims; the jail will be notified when these rights have been invoked and may need to redact certain information where appropriate. The Sheriff's Office continues to provide a victims' rights brochure at arrest of the perpetrator.

## **3. Jail Report**

- a. Chief Esmond presented the statistics report. The ADP for the jail has been below 700 for the last two months. All facets of the judiciary have been collectively working to keep the population down and it has been successful. Chief Esmond expressed gratitude, as this helps with many operations in the jail as well as Officer stress.
- b. The ADP for FY 2019 was 804.
- c. The population is anticipated to spike again soon due to spring break.

## **4. Pretrial Services Report**

- a. Ms. Huckabee reported they are implementing a new Risk Assessment tool for assessing individuals. It has not yet been fully implemented. This tool will eventually be forwarded to the jail to assist ACR in determining those who

may qualify. The tool will be fully implemented once the jail forms are completed.

- b. Non-monetary bond approvals have gone up recently in efforts to lessen the jail population.
- c. GPS rates have been higher, with a total of 30 offenders currently on the program; all are individuals whose pending charges and criminal histories would otherwise preclude them from bond/release. It was reported that the program has had increasing success, as there is a low return to jail rate for most of those on GPS. They anticipate being able to accommodate more individuals in the near future, as they have hired a new Mental Health Pretrial Officer. They also hope to be able to assign a position specifically for supervision and monitoring of the GPS program.

## **5. New Business**

- a. In regards to Spring Break, the Sheriff's Office initiative has done as intended in recent years and the overall plan will remain the same this year; last year, there were 597 spring breakers booked in with zero reoffenders. Chief Esmond indicated that, in anticipation of Spring Break, the jail has routed additional staff to ACR in efforts to facilitate more timely bookings/releases. There is speculation that there will be an increase in offenders this year, as PCB remains under construction. Pre-trial indicated that there are no anticipated changes to the bond schedule.
- b. Chief Esmond outlined that, in regards to judgement and sentencing, there has been a slight increase from 2018 to 2019 when a six month increment was examined. He thanked everyone for making the packets available in a timely manner, allowing those inmates to move more quickly into DOC custody. Mr. Anderson reported that there is a new application in beta testing which will allow the packets to be e-filed in the near future; this new system should further improve the timeliness of packet submission. The system will also work with Benchmark regarding tracking judgement and sentencing.
- c. Ms. Priddy reported that the jail is working to address mental health more effectively due to ongoing mental health issues; this is being done through additional staff and newly defined positions. A new mental health position was added and they are now a team of three. Despite the loss of Ms. Hoffa, a new SW was quickly hired; she brings with her experience in and knowledge of opioid addiction and other facets applicable to the jail's population. Ms. Bowden is now the mental health RN; she is able to facilitate things in areas such as medication management that the SW was unable to do in the past and it has been working well. Commissioner Fountain mentioned the possibility of the jail having an NP on staff to be able to write scripts on site; this possibility is being explored.
- d. Chief Esmond, Captain McDaniel, and Mr. Knighten discussed the jail's ongoing programs efforts aimed at assisting with population/recidivism reduction. Monthly reentry briefings are held with those getting released; these cover restoration of rights, clemency, career source, local resources, and substance abuse treatment opportunities. The FLOW Bus in December assisted 64 inmates in receiving IDs. AA is held weekly with approximately 35 attendees. TABE Testing is being conducted to gauge inmate viability for the GED; 16 inmates participated in the last session. Possible upcoming programs include OSHA 10 and ServSafe; both of these programs are in the

beginning stages, but, once active, will be able to provide inmates with these certifications to assist them with obtaining employment upon reentry. 50 volunteers from Good News Ministries came in December to carol and pass out bibles, cookies, and socks to the inmates; this assists inmates in making connections with local churches they can take advantage of upon reentry. Commissioner Fountain mentioned vocational programs (electrical, welding); Chief Esmond and Mr. Coffey indicated challenges to those types of programs include limited available space and staffing. Mr. Coffey has plans to assist with incremental jail expansion to some sections to help facilitate additional programs opportunities.

- e. Corrections were made to the upcoming meetings, as the dates provided at the October meeting were incorrect. Upcoming meetings are now scheduled for April 30<sup>th</sup>, July 30<sup>th</sup>, and October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting ended at 1:03 pm.