



Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council

Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting: January 27, 2022 12:00 PM

**Courthouse Annex Extension, Fort Walton Beach/
Zoom**

Public Safety Coordinating Council Members

Present	Name	Agency
x	Paul Mixon	Board of County Commissioners
x	C. Eric Esmond	Chief Corrections Officer
x	Judge Polson	Circuit Judge
x	Judge Mason	County Judge
x	Craig Coffey	Deputy County Administrator
	April Madden	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
 John Schwarz, Captain, Department of Corrections
 Tammy Matthews, Department of Corrections
 Desiree Hartwig, Department of Corrections
 Dennis Knighten, Department of Corrections
 J. D. Peacock, Clerk of Court
 Susan Priddy, Corizon Health Services, Department of Corrections
 Tricia Fagan, LCSW, Corizon Health Services,
 Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center, Inc
 John Anderson, Okaloosa Clerk of Court Office
 Valerie Broxson, Clerk of Court Administration
 Julie Gaither, Florida Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Services
 Jay Jones, Captain, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
 Dale Carter, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
 Jessica Trimbaldi, Sergeant, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
 D. Folley

Meeting opened at 12:00 pm.
Meeting conducted via Zoom.

Welcome:

Minutes/Commissioner Report

1. a. Commissioner Mixon opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
- b. The minutes were approved as sent.

2. Old Business

- a. The security and medical inspections were completed for the requirement of the Florida Model Jail Standards (FMJS). Both areas were in compliance with all requirements. The FMJS inspection prepares the agency for the accreditation inspection scheduled with the mock inspection in May and the on-site inspection in July.
- b. The body scanner operations were discussed. The device assists with checking inmates. The scanner helps protect from contraband coming in due to finding things we can't see with the naked eye. The scanner is a deterrent since **inmates** often turn in the contraband since they know it will be detected. All inmates are sent through the scanner unless medically restricted. Work crews will be checked when they return from outside work.
- c. The tablets provide opportunities for reading, educational and religious materials as well as movies, and music. The tablets are a valuable behavior modification tool and have been well received by inmates and officers. The tablet issuance has led to a reduction in Use of Force issues. Inmates who become behavior problems are restricted from use.
- d. Cost-free vaccinations are still being provided to the officers and inmate population for COVID, COVID boosters, and the seasonal flu. There are no current inmate/staff positive COVID cases. Hepatitis A and B vaccines are also available. The vaccinations assist with keeping the population within and outside the facility safer.
- e. Mr. Peacock asked if attorneys can access their inmate clients through the tablets. At this time they cannot visit on the tablet, but they can through the mounted kiosks. There are attorney's registered with Securus who meet with their clients through this format. Other **attorneys** prefer in-person meetings. The phone set up in legal visitation for attorney calls was very staff intensive. Registered attorneys do not have their visits are confidential and are not recorded. The inmate can receive e-messages, but they are not confidential. Specific hours have been blocked in the afternoons which are only available to attorneys. Visits are required to be scheduled 24 hours in advance. Judge Mason stated attorneys may need additional information on what is available. Zoom will continue to be available for court proceedings as requested. Commissioner Mixon tested the booths for confidentiality.

3. Jail Report

- a. Chief Esmond presented the statistics report and had no questions.

4. Pretrial Services Report

- b. Kelli Huckabee provided a report for review on pretrial services statistics. **There average between 80 and 90 cases on GPS.** The majority of defendants

on GPS would likely be in jail, so their numbers have had an impact on the jail population. The mental health cases are still high. They have started using the Risk Assessment Tool at the beginning of the year. They are working to have other counties use the same tool.

5. New Business

- a. Chief Esmond discussed the longer time frames for moving sentenced inmates to prison. A small number was allowed every three weeks which has led to increased population. The Department of Corrections (DOC) has reported staffing **issues** so they would accept three males and one female at a time. The attitude of inmates sentenced to DOC changes and can become more difficult to manage. He has reached out to neighboring counties to determine if they have similar difficulty and is working to get the numbers accepted increased. Mr. Peacock suggested contacting Senator Broxson for assistance. Escambia County is leading a discussion with the state to seek compensation if counties are required to hold them longer than average.
- b. Chief Esmond discussed the amount of inmates called to docket court and the difficulty in managing multiple judicial dockets. Captain McDaniel explained an additional room with court connections **has** been completed and will be available soon with secure connections. It will offer court through zoom. The Polycom system will be discontinued soon with all court conducted remotely through zoom. A schedule with zoom cases heard in the morning and in-person court held in the afternoon would help with staff shortages at the facility. Mr. Coffey explained the department has a significant shortage of certified staff, but an academy has been planned to accept cadets and train them for certification.
- c. Chief Esmond reported the Omicron virus worked through the department, but the staff and inmates were not showing as many symptoms as previous strains. He reports being thankful the CDC has made changes to the quarantine requirements. Security and medical staff have worked closely together to keep the positive cases down.

6. Closing Announcements

- a. Commissioner Mixon invited people to visit the jail. He stated changes are coming to the facility. Chief Esmond encourages people to tour the facility and see how some parts were built in the 1960s and 1980s.
- b. He announced a corrections academy is scheduled to begin in March, so let **others** know and encourage them to apply.
- c. The camera system is being upgraded and will have great coverage. It was needed.

Meeting ended at 12:53 pm.