

Community Corrections Advisory Board Minutes – December 9, 2021 (In Person & Zoom)

Members Present: In person: AlmaAnn Jones

Via Zoom- Richard Vargas, James Convey, Janet Federico, Kelli Grant, Sandra Glinder-Flanders, Ann Swegle, Brent Allred, Michael Birzer, Kevin O' Connor

Members Absent: Patricia Houston, Sean Gates, Peter Shay

Staff: In person: Abigail Lessman, Chase Tipton, Sasha Teel

Via Zoom: Lori Gibbs, Glenda Martens, Chris Morales

Guests: Via Zoom: Lonny Wright, Aaron Breitenbach

Introductions and Announcements: Chase Tipton announced that Brenda Gutierrez has resigned her position with the SCDOC and Abigail Lessman is filling her role as Project Manager. Abigail was given an opportunity to introduce herself to the board. Ann Swegle announced her plans to retire as of January 1, 2022 and will be replaced by Aaron Breitenbach. Aaron was given a few minutes to introduce himself to the board.

Approval of Minutes from the meeting on October 14, 2021: *A motion to approve the Minutes from the October 14, 2021 meeting was made by Kelli Grant, seconded by James Convey and unanimously approved.*

ACTION ITEM: Approval of the 2022 Meeting Schedule – AlmaAnn Jones motioned, James Convey seconded. There being no one abstaining and no objections, the motion carried to approve 2022 meeting schedule, as submitted.

Call for Nominations: Chase provided the 2022 ballot nomination form and indicated board members could submit their nominations by 12.17.21.

Program Updates:

Lori: Sedgwick County continues to have an issue with staff retention which may only be getting worse as Governor Kelly recently approved a significant raise for state CO's and Parole Officers. Critical pay and hiring bonuses have been approved to target hard to fill positions with the hopes that this money will help assist in the retention of current staff.

Due to staff shortages, SCDOC has not been accepting courtesy supervision cases and has limited the number of intakes into their residential/work release facilities. ISO's and some salaried staff members are helping to mitigate the issue by assisting with coverage in direct care facilities.

Members of Sedgwick County's management team has been busy sharing retention concerns with stakeholders. Included in their efforts has been holding a legislative platform event in October discussing the impact of OJA's salary adjustments, having directors from across the state meet with the Secretary of Corrections and testify before the oversight committee in Topeka and meeting with legislators from the South Central Delegation to educate them on the counties needs including how recent salary enhancements have negatively impacted our agency. With all of these efforts, there is hope that the Governor's 2022 budget will be amended to include funding for community corrections.

SCDOC has also been working with Communications to increase visibility on social media platforms and has contracted with KWCH to produce a recruitment commercial.

Over the last several months, staff participated in an environmental scan conducted by consulting group Allen, Gibbs and Houlik. SCDOC received feedback from the consultants recently and shared these results with department staff earlier this week. Areas of focus from the scan are centered on staff pay, communication and consistency related to policy development and enforcement, safety, and training.

NexStep graduation was held this week with an additional 8 community corrections clients completing the welding or CNC program. Several of these individuals have been offered jobs through Textron and the next program will start in January. Due to the program's success, it is expected that additional grants will be made available with the hope of expanding the program and to hire additional staff to manage referrals, testing and life skills classes.

Drug Diversion staff have finalized the process for receiving new cases. At this time, no new cases have been assigned but they are working with the drug diversion team to review candidates.

Sasha – Several intakes are expected at work release this month as they continue to limit their population to approximately 100 residents due to Covid and low staffing levels. Several internal programs have been resumed that were previously suspended due to Covid including a male bible study class and male weekly AA meetings. A family Halloween party was held and in the upcoming weeks, Christmas activities including a dinner provided from Pathway Church will be made available.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2022.