

Cuyahoga County Criminal Justice Governing Board
Minutes of the meeting June 25, 2007

1. Call to Order- Commissioner Hagan welcomed the members and made a few remarks about the proposed increase in the county sales tax. He asked for support for the tax increase, noting that it may be the only opportunity to change the image of the entire region.
 - Minutes of the Meeting April 2 were approved
 - William mason (County Prosecutor, Agency Council Chair) gave a short overview presentation noting that much progress has been made in the last 18 months, especially in the area of expediting low level felony cases.

2. Dan Peterca (Adult probation, JMI compliance work group) gave a brief rundown on progress in implementing the recommendations of the Justice Management Institute.
 - He said in two meetings, the JMI compliance work group has found only 5 recommendations in the original study that have not been acted upon in some way. The expedited case management pilots, due to expand this fall have addressed aspects of many of the recommendations, while most others are under active review, or in the process of implementation.
 - Jerome Dowling (County Prosecutor's Office, JMI work group) said plans to start the expedited management pilots in Parma and the Cleveland 4th District are moving ahead, and that police agencies have already begun filing case reports electronically, a key first step. In Cleveland the time from filing to indictment or other action has been reduced from an average of 40 days to 8 days. Commissioner Hagan called the results "remarkable." The Hon. K.J. Montgomery (shaker Hts. Municipal Court) noted that the cooperation of police agencies in getting their reports to the prosecutors, especially in multi-jurisdictional municipal courts is crucial to success, while Mr. Mason passed along information from Chief Malley in Lakewood that the expedited case management had actually saved overtime costs for the city.

3. Carole Rendon (Defense Bar, Community Council) reported on the formulation of a new fee structure for assigned counsel. The new arrangement increases the fees for counselors to act in behalf of clients in the expedited case management pilots, and the maximum fees they can receive over all. Although the fee increases will cost an estimated \$1.3 million per year, Ms. Rendon said the savings realized in dealing with the low level felonies (40% of the cases) in terms of prisoner housing and transportation, will more than pay for the increases in the first months they are implemented.

4. Ms. Rendon (Chair, Community Council) followed with a report on the formation of the Community Council. The group will have its first meeting July 18, 2007 in the Sheriff's training room of the Justice Center at 10 a.m.
 - The council will focus the efforts of its community leader members on identifying community justice services needs, researching and recommending best practices, organizing and soliciting funding help from the private sector and recommending community-related activities for the reform.
5. Linda Lingler (County Chief Technology Officer, Technology Council Chair) outlined plans for the first meeting and activities of the Technology Council.
 - The meeting will be at 10 a.m. July 17th in the Information Services Center at 1255 Euclid Avenue.)
 - The centerpiece of Technology Council activities will be creation of a special website dedicated to the justice reform, including a master calendar of meetings, and both public and participant access.
 - The video-conferencing grant activities have reached the implementation stage, and installation of equipment, support and training should begin this month.
 - The ISC is continuing work on the Prosecutor's video observation program, which is aimed at providing training and support for prosecutor personnel.
 - An inmate tracking system is being designed that will provide "real time" search capabilities throughout the multiple systems in the county. A demonstration of a similar system at the University Hospital System has been arranged for the second week of August. The ultimate goal is to provide access for the defense bar to the inmate tracking system, as well as the other stakeholders.
6. Dennis Madden (County Administrator) gave a brief overview of activities of the recently-organized Grant Optimization unit.
 - The group will meet every other month, to ensure that opportunities to secure funding for reform issues is maximized, and that all county agencies with a stake in the justice system are included. The unit will develop time frames and identify funding opportunities that fit the priorities of the reform.
7. Thomas Pokorny (Common Pleas Court Administrator) briefed the board on the Court's re-entry Court initiative.
 - The group is working on obtaining a grant to set up a re-entry court that would serve the needs of offenders when they return to the community. The group has seen the re-entry court in Mansfield, Ohio, and will travel to Stark County July 6th to observe the re-entry court there.
 - In a separate, but related briefing, Dr. Russell Kaye, (Alcohol and Drug Addiction Board of Cuyahoga County) said he is leading a group called the

“Leadership Coalition”, which includes leaders from private foundations and the community in addressing re-entry. The group is working with the State to develop capacity and programs to remove the barriers that face inmates who return from prison or jail to the community.

8. The University of Akron reported the results of its evaluation of the Cuyahoga County Drug Court.

- Its report showed only 7 % of those offenders in the drug court program re-entered the justice system with a felony charge in the first year of participation.
- Participants also showed significant reduction in drug use, and many participants were successful in overcoming barriers such as finding stable housing, and jobs or job training. The University is making the full report available to the county.
- The Hon. Judge Larry Jones endorsed the program, saying further success was just a matter of expanding the capacity of drug courts and funding them.
- The Hon. Judge Nancy McDonnell (Presiding Judge, Common Pleas Court) said the Court is committed to instituting a countywide drug court at the Common Pleas level.
- The board approved a motion to move ahead to create a countywide drug Court.

8. The Board welcomed Terry Collins, Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, who addressed the board on the planning and need for a community-based correctional facility (CBCF) in the County.

- He said the CBCF’s had shown to be effective in providing sentencing alternatives for jurists, and in reducing recidivism, and that Cuyahoga was the only county in the state that did not have some sort of community-based option.
- The state has set aside funding for the construction of a CBCF in the County, and is willing to provide operational funding when the facility is developed.
- CBCF’s help offenders work on critical issues facing them, such as keeping them closer to and involving families in their rehabilitation, working on housing and employment issues, and addressing substance abuse in a less restricted environment than traditional prison.
- Commissioner Hagan noted that the County was committed to the CBCF concept, but had had trouble in finding an appropriate site. He mentioned that the County owned property on Croton Avenue in Cleveland that could be used, if city officials concurred.
- Ken Kocevar (County Sherriff’s Office) added that the county and city really need to develop a misdemeanor jail as well as a CBCF.
- Martin Sweeney (Cleveland City Council) said that site approval for a CBCF “would not be a problem,” but that the city, like the county was interested in addressing the total needs of all offenders.

- Commissioner Hagan endorsed this “totality” of approach, and suggested that planners be brought on board as soon as possible to “move expeditiously” to address both needs.

9. The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting of the Governing Board is at 9 a.m. September 11, 2007 in the training room in the Justice Center.