



Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes
November 26, 2024, 4:15 pm
Law and Justice Center, Atrium Conference Room, First Floor

Mission: Lewis and Clark County's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council exists to improve the safety of the citizens of Lewis and Clark County and ensure the equitable and efficient treatment of defendants, offenders, and victims.

1. Call to Order & Reading of the Mission – Judge Abbott

- Judge Abbott called the meeting to order and read the mission statement.

2. Introductions - All

- Members Present: Judge Abbott, Morgan Davis for Suzanne Seburn, Leah Lingren, Tom Cordingley, Brett Petty, Mike Sanders, Judge Piskolich, Tom Rolfe, Gina Boesdorfer, Kevin Downs, Troy Christensen for Leo Dutton
- Members Absent: Drenda Niemann, Judge Peterson, Andy Shirliff, Sue Podruzny
- Staff Present: Kellie McBride & Jillian Danesi
- Guests Present: Mark Nay

3. Action Items – Judge Abbott

- September 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes were approved.

4. Jail Population Task Force – Task Force Members – the taskforce would like to reduce the jail population in L&C County. The taskforce spoke to encouraging Probation & Parole to be proactive in court as they are knowledgeable about their caseload.

- a. Diversion** – Gallatin County to present, via zoom, on the Pretrial Felony Diversion Program (high intensity program) on December 5, 2024, 12:00pm. The taskforce will also look at Missoula County's diversion efforts.
- b. Meaningful First Appearances** – Office of Public Defenders (OPD) goes to the Detention Center at 0830 to meet with individuals attending the 0900 court after receiving the court agenda. Public Safety Assessments (PSA) are not always received, leaving the attorneys without the knowledge of the charges when appearing in court, but often request Detention staff alert them of the charges. OPD states the transition has been successful and are able to make meaningful bond arguments. 0900 court time conflicts with other courts scheduled, but at this time is manageable. OPD plans to meet with individuals prior to Justice Court to assist with their hearing but will not begin the meaningful first appearance at this time. Christensen and McBride are working to ensure PSAs are sent out at 0730 to ensure OPD and the courts have the information they require. Collection of data, to determine level of impact on the meaningful first appearances, is being tracked via the bond roster. Office of Court Administrator (OCA) will provide an overview of the PSAs, to the Jail Population Task Force on December 12, 2024. Illinois has a no bond approach and strictly utilizes the PSA, leading to either incarceration or assignment to Pretrial Services. This approach would not work for Montana as the state constitution states all individuals have a right to bond. Assault example was used as the PSA did not reflect the severity of the crime allegedly committed.
- c. Cash Bond Reduction Hearings** – consideration of the Taskforce.

- d. **DOC Sentences and P&P Holds** – Numbers differing between Detention Center and Department of Corrections.
- e. **Department of Health and Human Services** – Tracking these numbers.
- f. **Pretrial Services** – Taskforce is working to determine, via the bonds roster, the number of individuals detained with both a cash bond and Pretrial Services assignment. The taskforce would like to see a reduction in those cases.

5. Jail Staffing Restructure – Troy Christensen

- Troy Christensen is the Jail Commander. Lewis and Clark Sheriff's Office (LCSO) have promoted two Lieutenants, and recently hired four Officers. LCSO would like to reduce overtime for Officers and are looking at new places to post their positions. Currently 34 of 48 Officer positions are filled. LCSO would like to hire one nurse, or possibly two with budget approval. Wages are competitive for nursing staff. LCSO has received Montana Opioid Abatement Trust (MOAT) funds to contract with a Physician to be onsite two days weekly. The Physician will increase access to care and reduce strain on transport officers. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be released for services.

6. CJS Update – Kellie McBride

- Two AmeriCorps Vista positions have been posted on CJS socials - Diversion & Early Childhood Intervention Programs to be researched and designed for a 1-year commitment beginning February 10, 2025. McBride has been elected to the NAPSA board as their Director of Northwest Region. Dashboards being developed by Analyst, with assistance from County communications, and MADave, to consist of data that everyone can understand. Changes will include a rebranding of CJS. Drop-In Center RFP due today at 1600. RFP Committee to review and announce the awardee. CJS purchased a company vehicle – Officers to locate individuals, transport to court and appointments, and be out in the community more often.

7. Citizens' Advisory Committee – Tom Cordingley

- Meeting on November 15, 2024, consisted of a discussion with Helena Police Chief Petty regarding the Jester's Bar incident. CAC was thankful for Petty's attendance and providing the information he was able to share. Questions on if LCSO, EHPD, and HPD should be an ongoing agenda item for updates.

8. Public Comment

- No Public Comment.

9. Next CJCC Meeting

- January 28th, 2025, 4:15 pm, Law and Justice Center

10. Next CAC Meeting

- December 20, 2024, and January 17, 2025, 12:00pm, Law and Justice Center

11. Adjourn