



Governor Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor Adam Gregg  
San Wong, Director

## Justice Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Google Meet  
Thursday, September 23, 2021

- Present:** Josh Opperman for Beth Barnhill; Kim Cheeks; Sarah Fineran; John Haila; Eileen Meier; Tina Meth-Farrington; Cody Samec; Ardyth Slight; Sherri Soich; Kurt Swaim; Bruce Vander Sanden; Dale Woolery Ex-officio: Hon. Jeffrey Neary, Chair; Hon. Romonda Belcher; Sen. Kevin Kinney; Rep. Mary Lynn Wolfe
- Staff:** Steve Michael; Mindi TenNapel; Julie Rinker; Cheryl Yates; Tammi Blackstone; Jill Padgett; Brianne Messer; Abby King
- Others:** Chief of Police Michael Tupper; David Hicks; Dr. Eric Howard; Bill Freeland; Evan Johnson; Cheryl Nolan; Allison Ver Schuer; Isabel Waller; Arnold Woods

### I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Hon. Jeffrey Neary, Chair, welcomed all in attendance at 10:08 a.m. A quorum was present shortly after the start of the meeting. Action was taken at that time. The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet.

### II. Approval of Minutes—May 20, 2021

Tina Meth-Farrington moved to approve the minutes from the May meeting, seconded by Eileen Meier. The motion was unanimously approved.

### III. Division Update

Steve Michael provided the following update:

- Two research positions are vacant: Statistical Research Analyst and Justice Systems Analyst.
- Grants: Applications for the following federal grants have been submitted:
  - Federal Title II Formula funds grant;
  - Bureau of Justice, Statistical Analysis Center grant;
  - Prevention/Pre-Charge Diversion (discretionary grant);
  - and a discretionary grant for treatment and services for deep-end girls.
- AmeriCorps Staff: 5 youth have been hired to staff several youth-related groups—Youth Action Squad, State of Iowa Youth Advisory Council, Iowa Youth Congress, Youth Participatory Action Research, and NYTD Ambassadors
- Youth Participation Payment Policy: A policy has been developed to encourage and support youth participation in specific projects.

Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning

#### **IV. Presentation: MPACT — Marshalltown Police and Community Team**

Marshalltown Police Chief Michael Tupper and David Hicks, YSS, provided an overview of the Marshalltown Police and Community Team (MPACT).

The project began through conversations on ways to help citizens in crisis without arrest or system involvement. Data were gathered on the types of calls handled by law enforcement. Having a social worker accompany officers on certain calls could help reduce arrests for minor offenses and unnecessary trips to the ER, while increasing law enforcement time spent on criminal issues and public safety.

Tupper and Hicks met to develop the program. Last fall, a 12-month pilot project to transform law enforcement services and provide resources was proposed to the City Council. The request was for \$25,000, with a total price of \$150,000. The council awarded the larger amount.

The project went live on February 1, 2021. Prior to that, policies and job descriptions were developed and YSS began the hiring process. Training included social worker ride-alongs to understand procedures and build trust. Social worker(s) are in the police department each day, with two social workers on Fridays from 2:00 p.m. to midnight.

Once an officer responds to a call for service and the scene is stabilized, there is a warm handoff to the social worker who finds resources for citizens, allowing officers to return to law enforcement-related activities. YSS provides case management services and follow up.

Tupper and Hicks reported that since this type of program does not exist anywhere in Iowa, they wanted it to fit the needs of Marshalltown. Thus far, it has been a great program with support from officers and the community.

Through August, there were 207 calls and 330 people were assisted. Needs range from mental health, homelessness, food shortage, rent, substance abuse, family conflict, and welfare checks. Of those served, 95% have accepted services. They continually review barriers and gaps in services.

A survey to measure results was conducted with police officers. Almost all thought it was a great program. The only complaint was that they would like it to be 24/7.

Tupper noted the amount of positive community support. The biggest challenge is funding beyond the first year. Too often, citizens were arrested for low level crimes. Services are needed right away—not tomorrow morning or Monday. He thinks this will transform how law enforcement services are provided.

Neary and others applauded the project, “it focuses where law enforcement needs to spend time and recognizes that some issues are outside of their training”. He asked what this Board could do to assist.

Tupper was hopeful that after seeing success and community support, that some funds would be appropriated. Hicks added that they are looking for larger grants, but probably need three years of data to show what does/not work.

Haila echoed Neary. He thought it was a great way to reduce prison population and that it should be reviewed on a state level. He asked if the number of mental health-related calls had reduced.

Hicks responded that a majority of calls are for mental health. Since the start of the program, there has been a 70% increase in mental health sessions. He noted the need for more licensed clinicians.

Hon. Romonda Belcher asked if data were tracked by race and gender. Hicks responded that Marshalltown has higher populations from other cultures—Sudanese, Burmese, and Hispanic. The language line is used for barriers.

Belcher also asked if residential services were provided. Hicks reported that a shortage exists. They work with the ER when needed. He noted the importance of responding in person versus telehealth. They are working with Unity Point. However, those with the most needs get beds due to COVID and hospital bed shortages.

Woolery asked if other law enforcement agencies were interested. Tupper responded that he has been contacted by several agencies who are interested in replicating the program.

#### **V. Presentation: Standardizing Iowa's Specialty Courts**

Dr. Eric Howard Statewide Problem-solving Court Coordinator, Judicial Branch, presented information on Iowa's specialty courts. His role is to provide guidance and support to courts to build better outcomes. Through his efforts and that of a multi-disciplinary group, formal standards for adult criminal drug court were developed. The next focus will be mental health courts. There are approximately 38 specialty courts in Iowa.

Howard reported that the mission of drug courts is to reduce alcohol- and drug-related criminal activity, reduce recidivism, and provide stabilization and support.

Iowa's specialty courts utilize a phased system—12-18 months with 1-5 phases depending upon community. Guidance developed by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals was used to create Iowa standards along with guidance from the National Center for State Courts. A final copy was shared with members.

Howard reported that a case management system is under development and includes outcome data. Individuals referred to drug court are identified as high-risk/high-needs, usually those facing felony charges and significant incarceration time.

There are 12 family treatment courts in Iowa. Treatment focuses on the whole family to improve outcomes.

He noted the importance of involving compassionate judges and providing training for judges and other system stakeholders. The standards include a succession plan for judges. A funding request for several local coordinators with human services/social work backgrounds was submitted.

Eileen Meier noted concerns with guidelines for drug treatment courts. Currently, offenders are mandated to return home through court commitment. However, to avoid using again, they would like to remain in the area.

Howard agreed. He noted the importance of helping individuals connect to resources. He hopes to have the aforementioned coordinators develop connections between specialty courts and service providers, especially in rural areas.

Vander Sanden agreed. He noted the importance of offenders avoiding former contacts. There is a need for funding to move from 'county of origin' to pay for mental health services.

Howard discussed a computer tablet program with the Department of Corrections. The goal is to provide tablets to parolees with access to a variety of services—court hearings, employment applications, continuing education, telehealth, substance abuse classes, etc. He noted the importance of utilizing technology as a tool.

Haila asked Dr. Howard if there was information that should be shared with legislators to advance efforts—funding, support, or policy?

Howard responded that problem solving courts have 25 years of empirical evidence. Investing on the front end saves a lot on the back end. However, those savings should be reinvested in services. Problem solving courts begin the recovery process, connect people to resources, education, employment, and housing for long-term success. Because of its size, Iowa is the perfect sample size for measuring success. He wants Iowa to be the best model in the nation. Iowa has a huge opportunity to impact lives and give people a second change.

Michael noted potential research opportunities for specialty courts and MPACT. He noted past research on drug courts. The matter could be revisited as standards are introduced, providing assistance and possibly an evaluation on either program.

## **VI. JAB 3-Year Priorities – Where are We and Now What?**

Mindi TenNapel demonstrated a web portal where members can readily access a variety of documents and information. The 'JAB Portal' would be used to review the current status of projects, priority areas, past reports, and meeting materials. The portal is in the draft stages and more resources will be added. She asked for comments.

Haila asked if meeting recordings could be shared. There was consensus to add recordings as they are made available.

Michael stated that the next step for the Board is to complete an update on the three-year plan. The update should include past projects, what needs to be completed, and how it will be accomplished.

After a brief discussion, there was consensus to have staff generate a draft for member review. The draft will include information on the importance of specialty courts and information on Marshalltown's MPACT program.

A meeting will be held in October to provide further discussion and final approval would be conducted during a meeting in November. Calendar notices will be shared once those dates are identified.

## **VII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**VIII. Issues for Next Meeting**

Meth-Farrington asked for more information on the tablet program for offenders transitioning from prison to the community that was discussed by Dr. Howard. Neary offered to contact him.

**IX. Adjournment**

Kurt Swaim moved to adjourn, seconded by Haila. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker  
Administrative Secretary