Public Safety Advisory Board

Minutes of Regular Meeting

Iowa State Capitol
Legislative Dining Room
1007 E. Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa

May 17, 2017

Present: Tom Walton, Chair; Mardi Allen; Tiffany Allison; Kim Cheeks; DeAnn Decker; Tom Ferguson; Mary Kovacevich; Michelle Leonard; Dale Woolery for Steve Lukan; Lettie Prell; Kurt Swaim; Ex-Officio: Hon. Romonda Belcher; Hon. Jeffrey Neary; Rep. Mary Lynn Wolfe; Sen. Brad Zaun

Staff: Cheryl Davison; Sarah Fineran; Julie Rinker; Lanette Watson

Others: Laura Book; Cathy Engel; Bill Freeland; Anna Hyatt; Erica Nichols-Cook; Beth Skinner; Arnold Woods

I. Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

Tom Walton, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:54 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of Minutes – November 16, 2016

Mardi Allen moved to approve the minutes from the November meeting; seconded by Michelle Leonard. The motion was unanimously approved.

III. Cocaine Research

Sarah Fineran reviewed the draft report “Cocaine Penalties by State” which contained summaries of cocaine disparities and amended drug amounts in other states, and convictions and prison admissions in Iowa based on current legislation as well as scenarios if amounts were adjusted. In 2017, the Iowa Legislature amended the amount of crack cocaine levels to be more in line with powder, although there is still a disparity in amounts. The legislation that passed was similar to a proposal brought forth by this Board.

Discussion included the following:
• Dale Woolery asked CJJP staff to monitor and provide more information this fall.
• Arnold Woods, NAACP, requested time to review the report and respond.
• Tom Ferguson noted that the Iowa legislation raised the amount of crack. He requested that monitoring include reducing the level of powder to crack rather than the opposite. He added if the goal is to get the ratio 1:1, he would like to see reductions in powder cocaine.
• Woolery asked if monitoring could include substance abuse trends. He suggested looking at the Department of Public Health substance abuse treatment data and admissions. Prell noted that DOC no longer does substance abuse assessments upon admission due to the fact that treatment may not begin for several years. A cognitive-based intervention is now used and would not indicate the type of drug used. Prell stated the number one treatment program is for alcohol.

Woolery moved to approve the report pending public comment from the NAACP, seconded by Prell. The motion was unanimously approved. The report will be published on the CJJP website.

IV. Presentation – ACTV Domestic Abuse Program

Prell provided an overview of the Achieving Change Through Values-Based Behavior, a domestic violence offender treatment program. The program was developed in partnership with the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, and the Department of Corrections. It replaces the Duluth model in all but the 7th Judicial District.

The program addresses negative behaviors through an awareness and acceptance of emotions and empathy. There are 24 weekly sessions. Facilitators provide a non-judgmental, non-shaming focus. Each session addresses the many reasons and tendencies for abuse. Offenders can enter the program at any given session as long as each of the 24 sessions are completed. Since implementation, one-year recidivism rates have dropped dramatically.

The Board recessed for lunch from 11:30 to noon.

V. Presentation – Opioid Abuse in Iowa

Dale Woolery, Governor’s Office of Drug Control Policy, provided an overview of opioid abuse in Iowa which includes prescription drugs, synthetics, and heroin. Woolery noted the relationship of pain relievers to heroin. While Iowa ranks low in overall use, opioid-related deaths have risen over the past 15 years and heroin use has begun to spread across Iowa beginning on the eastern side.

Iowa has responded to this national trend in increased opioid use through drug awareness and prevention information; “Take-Back” programs; and prescription monitoring programs. Legislation has legalized access to Naloxone, a medication used in treating opioid-related overdoses.

Senator Zaun stated an interim committee plans to study opioid abuse and possible legislation for the next legislative session.
Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VI. Issues for Next Meeting

The following suggestions were made regarding issues for the next meeting:

- Representative Mary Lynn Wolfe requested information and thoughts regarding six-month driver’s license revocations for drug offenders. She would like more information regarding the public safety aspect/benefit of this. She thought the subject would be addressed during the next legislative session and would like more information prior to that. She noted concerns on how this could affect federal funding that Iowa receives and was curious how other states have addressed this issue.
- Ferguson would like to re-review issues for driver’s license revocations that are unrelated to driving safety.
- Judge Neary discussed concerns regarding individuals who have had one domestic violence-related conviction and how this can affect employment as well as Second Amendment and voting rights, etc. Some states provide mechanisms to restore these rights. He would like the Board to further study this area including the expungement of records after a period of time for individuals who’ve had no other convictions.
- Walton suggested a review of other state laws relating to the expungement of alcohol and domestic violence-related crimes and a restoration of rights.

Walton noted that dating violence is not considered to be domestic violence in Iowa. She expressed concern regarding the restoration of firearm rights for domestic violence offenders as there is the potential they may use the firearm on future victims. Wolfe agreed, however, she would like to further review legislation from other states that provide statutory mechanisms to restore rights to some felons and/or those who’ve been convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence as well as any public safety concerns.

VII. Adjournment

Leonard moved to adjourn, seconded by Ferguson. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Rinker
Administrative Secretary
Div. of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning
Iowa Department of Human Rights