



Dane County

Minutes - Final Unless Amended by Committee

Commission on Sensitive Crimes

Consider: Who benefits? Who is burdened?

Who does not have a voice at the table?

How can policymakers mitigate unintended consequences?

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

8:30 AM

Remote via Zoom

A. Call To Order

Staff and guests present: Ashiantii Collier-Slaton, Anthony Cooper, Krista Ewers-Hayes, Marlys Howe, Ellen Merker, Joe Parisi, Dana Pellebon, Carrie Pomije, Shawn Tessmann, Howard Thomas, Faye Zemel

Chair Crowley called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Present 6 - SHANNON BARRY, AMY BROWN, Chair HEATHER CROWLEY, BETH FREEMAN, SHARYL KATO, and JAN MIYASAKI

Absent 4 - BARBARA MCKINNEY, Supervisor MAUREEN McCARVILLE, KAT RILEY, and VANESSA STATAM

B. Consideration of Minutes

[2020](#) MINUTES FROM OCT. 20, 2020
[MIN-279](#)

Attachments: [2020_1020_COSC_Minutes](#)

C. Action Items

None.

D. Presentations

1. Budget Discussion with County Executive Parisi and DCDHS Director Tessmann

County Executive Joe Parisi stated the primary goal entering the 2021 Dane County Budget process – to maintain current service levels in the midst of major revenue decreases due to the COVID-19 pandemic – was achieved. In addition, initiatives such as the Dane County Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Resource Center were annualized.

Sales tax revenue alone decreased about \$12 million in 2020 due to the pandemic. Dane County's general fund, which had grown to nearly \$50 million in 2020, was tapped for \$15 million for budget purposes.

DCDHS Director Shawn Tessmann stated the department met the mandate to trim General Purpose Revenue from its 2021 budget request by evaluating all revenue sources, maximizing revenue on the books, seeking new revenue opportunities and holding open staff vacancies. 2021 contracts with Purchase of Service agencies will remain mostly at 2020 levels, preventing reductions in services.

Tessmann thanked Parisi for allotting \$300,000 in the 2021 budget to begin work toward opening a triage center – a place where individuals experiencing a mental or behavioral health crisis can go in lieu of jail or a hospital emergency room. A consultant will be hired to determine best operational practices for a triage center in Dane County.

E. Reports to Committee

1. Agency/Legislative Updates

- Tessmann reported work toward opening Dane County's Behavioral Health Resource Center continued throughout the pandemic. The BHRC's "soft opening" is scheduled for 23 November. The City of Madison is creating a pilot program that will change the response to mental and behavioral health calls to include paramedics and social workers – an initiative that's expected to benefit many DCDHS clients. DCDHS continues to form its five-year strategic plan. Commission members are encouraged to view the new mission, vision and value statements, as well as a context statement regarding racial equity, on the strategic planning website. As part of the strategic planning process, DCDHS will conduct four public listening sessions this week to receive input from current and former clients.

- Barry reported DAIS is fully staffed after hiring Ana Price as Crisis Intervention Services Manager. Price was most recently the executive director at Deaf Unity Wisconsin. There are some DAIS case managers who may be interested in serving on CCR committees. The shelter wait list is 35-60 households. People with high lethality index scores are being placed in hotels when possible. Case managers are working more closely with those on the wait list. The Legal Advocacy Department has hired a bilingual legal advocate. There have been no COVID-19 cases in any of DAIS' shelter programs or among staff.

- Pellebon reported the Rape Crisis Center is seeking candidates to apply for a vacant mental health therapist position. Applicants must be licensed in Wisconsin. RCC is particularly interested in candidates who are a person of color and who have worked with or identify with the LGBTQ community.

- Brown reported the staffing crisis continues in the District Attorney Office's Victim Witness Unit and thanked Supervisor Maureen McCarville for sponsoring 2021 Dane County Budget Amendments that would have added staff. Services mandated by the adoption of Marsy's Law to the state constitution continue to create a significant increase in court accompaniment services, with the strain on staff expected to increase when jury trials resume from the COVID-19 pandemic pause. Cases are not being resolved at the pre-pandemic rate, driving up case-load numbers. Brown, who has 145 pending cases, and two other managers are providing direct service. Howe is managing 367 cases. General Victim Services case managers are carrying between 695 and 863 pending cases. All of trauma specialists embedded in the Crime Response Program are almost exclusively providing intake services to keep the office within Marsy's Law mandates rather than providing sensitive crimes trauma services. Child abuse case managers are reducing the amount of multi-disciplinary work. Assignments intended for two new case managers, one with a focus on juvenile crime and the other with a focus on restorative justice, are providing general case management services.

- Howe reported the DA's Office worked with Family Service Madison Inc. to start new 10-week program for domestic violence offenders whose crimes were fueled by a pandemic-related stressor. The DA's Office sees this as a better fit for cases that don't warrant the 26- or 52-week programs. The program is accepting referrals.

- Ellen Merker reported she expects to receive her counseling license soon, which will allow her to bill Medicaid for mental health services. Merker works with clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with a focus around trauma and relationships.

- Crowley reported a significant number of the court cases the Dane County Youth Justice Division is seeing are generated by parents calling the police about their children and asked if the DA's Office could look into a ways many of those cases could be deferred. The belief is many of the police calls are generated more by parents' inability to work with their children than by the youths trying to cause harm in the home setting.

2. CCR Updates

Child Abuse & Neglect: The Prevention Subcommittee met last week and heard reports from neighborhood center directors and City Childcare Specialists. Medical student interns are helping plan a media event to address parent isolation during the pandemic. The Mental Health Subcommittee continues to work on all facets of the system. The Safe Harbor Review Committee has developed sex trafficking and drug and danger workgroups, which are being added to the consortium. The overall consortium meeting is on 18 November. Chairs of all subcommittees are meeting to develop a platform of priorities for children, youth and families. The Trauma-Informed Community Advisory Council's planning summit is scheduled for 20 November beginning at 8:45 a.m.

Sexual Assault: The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault CCRs have been meeting in recent months to consider joining the groups to maximize resources in responding to victims. It's expected the groups will begin meeting jointly in January, a development that isn't expected to impact subcommittees. The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Subcommittee will meet on 18 November for first time since spring. A top priority will be resuming the planning of training on special considerations and issues for victims with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Department of Children & Families Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator Asia Jackson will speak at the meeting. Safe Harbor is taking the lead in creating an MOU for agencies responding to youth sex trafficking.

Domestic Violence: The Legal Issues Subcommittee, which has not met since spring, will resume meeting again in January. The planned format is to have a speaker presentation for half of each meeting and to work on court system initiatives in the other half. Creating a mission statement is a priority.

Elder Abuse: Outreach Madison LGBT Senior Advocate Ticia Kelsey spoke about culture and terminology during the October meeting. The Financial Assistance Services Team continues to meet. The Domestic Violence in Later Life Conference was held virtually for the first time on 1 October and drew 264 participants, which is double the average in-person total. Planning is underway for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June 2021.

Intellectual Disabilities: Ellen Merker, who will assume leadership of the CCR in 2021, introduced herself to the commission.

F. Future Meeting Items and Dates

Next meeting: Tuesday, 19 January 2021, 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

G. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda

None.

H. Such Other Business as Allowed by Law

Tessmann thanked Crowley for her service to the commission. Today is Crowley's last meeting as Chair, but she will continue as a commission member.

I. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Howard Thomas,
Administrative Assistant, DCDHS Office of the Director*