

Manitowoc County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council  
Minutes January 4, 2023  
Communications and Technology Building, Manitowoc

Attendance: Council members Present: Attorney John Bilka, County Board Supervisor James Falkowski, Lori Fure, Chief Paul Granger, Sheriff Dan Hartwig, Clerk of Court April Higgins, Patricia Koppa (council secretary/non-voting), District Attorney Jacalyn LaBre, Attorney Ann Larson, Chief Benjamin Meinnert, Cindy Oswald, Judge Mark Rohrer (Chair), Jennifer Zick, and County Executive Bob Ziegelbauer.

Others Present: Darlene Wellner, Ellen Floate, Nancy Slattery.

Meeting called to order by Judge Rohrer at 4:53 PM. Attendance sheet circulated.

Chair Judge Rohrer asked for any corrections to the November 2, 2022 minutes. No corrections were offered and Chair Rohrer asked for a motion to approve. Attorney Ann Larson made the motion, Ms. Jennifer Zick seconded and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Ellen Floate reported on Drug court: currently 17 active participants; three applicants are waiting to begin. The last few months have allowed adjustment to new staff and providers. Judge Rohrer noted the death at the beginning of December of a graduate who had been doing very well and was supporting others in the community. His tragic overdose death highlights the value of continued care and support for this population as well as how susceptible they might be to relapse.

Executive meeting report given by Attorney Larson. The meetings will return to in person meetings and will be held on Thursdays at 12:15. Discussion showed that the second Thursday of the month would be the best alternative. So next meeting is January 12. All should watch the announcements to find the room number when it can be determined what room is available.

As to the Bylaws, the executive committee needs guidance regarding the need to get approval from the County Board regarding amendments. The requirement is not reflected in the Bylaws but Supervisor Falkowski believes it is mandated by state law found in Chapter 59 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Supervisor Falkowski also believes public comment must be limited to the procedure in use by the county board. Ms. Koppa provided her recollection of the passage of the amendments; other amendments that were once proposed but not worked on (including about public input); the dropping of the issue without resolution of the underlying issues. Proposed that a list of questions be submitted to Corporation Counsel to gain the knowledge needed.

There was then discussion again about the role the Council or the Council's executive committee plays in obtaining the Drug Court grant. Lori Fure explained how application for the grant is a function of the Human Services Department, but that a letter of support is required from the council. Supervisor Falkowski noted he had had additional questions after reviewing the grant application, but he will discuss further with Ms. Fure.

The discussion moved to whether the Council should take a position regarding legalization of controlled substances given the position of Drug Court. Several members spoke out against such action; felt it was not within the role of the Council as a group and prohibited for multiple individual members. County Executive reminded everyone the council is advisory only. All agreed any political position should be avoided. There was a question as to whether the organizing resolution provided that the Council advises the County Board or whether it was advisory as to the member agencies. District Attorney LaBre suggested the primary purpose of the Council is to resolve issues. A position such as proposed isn't within the scope of the mission. Chief Granger stated the goal of trying to help each other improve within the system. Attorney Bilka noted that an informed position on such a topic could involve many hours of research. Consensus was to not explore stating a position, even on behalf of the Council as a whole.

Attorney Larson addressed why she asked for the discussion about the Wisconsin CJCC's Race Equity, Inclusion and Access Committee on the agenda. The group is not focused on defendant's rights or the rights of a particular racial group. The goal is to assure fair treatment for all considering implicit bias that everyone has. The purpose is not to address a particular issue but to increase awareness. Access issues may apply to victims as well. There may be specific issues at the state level, but that was not apparent from the meeting attended or from reviewing materials on the website. Atty. Larson stated that she would like a group to be set up to investigate local access and treatment options and assess whether any problems need to be addressed.

Discussion followed regarding the risks involved in creating a subcommittee as many treat this issue as political. There could be unintended consequences of increased bias or discrimination by drawing attention to particular groups. However, creation of any subcommittee is a decision given to the Executive Committee and it can be addressed at the next meeting.

The next meetings were announced as January 12, 2023 at 12:15 for the Executive Committee and March 1, 2023 for the full Council.

Attorney Larson moved to adjourn. Supervisor Falkowski seconded the motion and the meeting was ended at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted

  
Patricia A. Koppa, Council Secretary