

Champaign County Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 13, 2017
6:30 pm
Champaign County Brookens Administrative Center

I. Call to Order

Sam Byndom called the meeting order at 6:36pm (there was no quorum at the time of order called).

II. Roll Call

Members Present

S. Balgoyen, L. Branham, S. Byndom, E. Dee, A. Felty, R. Hughes, E. Patt, H. Ross, D. Turner, G. Walter. *S. Lerner arrived at 6:42pm.*

Members Absent

M. Ar-Raheem, A. Evans, D. Harber, A. James, S. Lerner, C. Randolph, A. Shelton, S. Silver.

III. Approval of Agenda

This item was tabled until a quorum was met. See below.

IV. Approval of Minutes

This item was tabled until a quorum was met. See below.

V. New Business

Recap of April 1 Data Workshop

Sara, Esther, and Gerry gave a quick update on how the data workshop went. It was well attended (25 people) and the presentations were very helpful for the students working on the data analysis. Esther praised Katie Blakeman for her help at the event; the Circuit Clerk is updating their website soon. There was support for automated text message alerts for court dates. Gerry highlighted that having the County and the Circuit Clerk in the same room was very useful. There was no apparent follow to the workshop.

Recap of C.O.W. Meeting Tuesday, April 11

Ryan updated the group about the presentation to the County Board. He gave a quick update about the task force's work so far and the plan for the next few months.

A quorum was met at 6:42pm.

Approval of Agenda

Gerry moved to approve the agenda. Esther seconded. The motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Sara moved to approve the minutes. Esther seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Draft Report Section on Pre-Trial and Financial Release Conditions

Lynn updated the group on the draft that her group created. The request for comments was in regards to content. She walked through the different parts of the draft including the recommendations listed. Copies of the draft section were available for the public. Scott asked about the conditions of the risk assessment tests. Lynn explained generally that they have been streamlined, but they would still include personal contact. Esther recommended adding the public defender to appointees to the court order in recommendation number 1. Esther asked about the discretion of the sheriff to issue a notice to appear. Lynn said the court order may not be implemented every time, and implementation would be a part of the recommendation. Esther noted that the percentage of people held in jail who are represented by public counsel could be an indicator of low-income as well. Demario asked if there were examples in other locations of the court order that Judge Difanis issued in 2016. Lynn suggested that the working group would likely need to look into this. She stated the purpose of the recommendation.

Ryan asked about the working group being pointed by Judge Difanis. He also suggested that the recommendations of who should sit on the working group should be worded more strongly. Esther agreed with Ryan's second point. Gerry suggested that the working group should include the prosecutor. Scott disagreed with the need for the prosecutor to sit on the working group. The group discussed who should sit on the working group.

Lynn shared the process for moving forward. Her subcommittee will finalize the draft and bring it to the task force for formal approval.

VI. Presentations

Restorative Justice and Restorative Practices

Sara and Lynn presented about these topics. They discussed the definition of restorative justice, the purpose of restorative justice conferences, the approach/outlook to the people involved, the points in the criminal justice system that the program can be implemented, and the differences between restorative justice and restorative practices. They also discussed how this can be implemented into the report and recommendations.

A quorum was lost at 8:17pm.

Esther asked about using restorative practices prior to trial. Amy thanked Sara and Lynn for their presentation and Lynn for her model of the report section. She also explained how she can reference a restorative justice section of the report in her section of the report.

VII. Task Force Member Comments/Member Updates

Sara shared that Katie Blakeman expressed that if the task force asked for a few items that the Circuit Clerk is reporting to the state to be placed on their website, her office could possibly make that happen.

Sara said that we need someone to volunteer to write a section on implicit bias for the report. Sam will send an email about this.

Sara also asked about dismissing individuals who have not attended in a long time. Sam will look into this.

Amy shared that they are planning the next expungement fair.

VIII. Public Participation

Stuart Levy

Stuart thought the April 1st meeting was a good start. He hopes there are follow up meetings because there is a lot more to talk about. He thinks a data portal could be a valuable thing to establish, and the task force has the power to create one through the County. He asked that the data portal process continue. He also noted the risk assessment tool from Virginia that was referenced in the ILPP report. He said that it does not ask for anything incriminating.

IX. Subcommittee Meetings

This item was tabled.

X. Adjournment

Esther moved to adjourn.