

MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COUNCIL (PSC) FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE, MENTAL HEALTH, & SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A meeting of the Public Safety Council for Criminal Justice, Mental Health, & Substance Abuse (hereafter referred to as the PSC) was held on Friday, February 24, 2023, at 12:00 PM in Conference Room B1-501 of the County Administration Building B, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida. You may hear an audio of the meeting and review the agenda on the IRC website at www.ircgov.com/Boards/PSC/2023.

PSC Members Present

Eric Flowers, Vice Chairman, Indian River County Sheriff
Amanda Busbin (for Ann Berner), SE Florida Behavioral Health Network (SEFBHN)
Donna Morris (for Suzanne Caudell), Director, Comprehensive Offender Rehab & Education
Mike Davis, FL Department of Corrections
Joseph Flescher, IRC Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
Kathy Jones, Women's Recovery Assistance Program Manager, Substance Awareness Center
Irene Cauwels (for Carrie Lester), Executive Director, Substance Awareness Center of IRC
Dorothy Naumann (for Diamond Litty), Public Defender
Rayme Nuckles, Treasure Coast Homeless Services (TCHS)
Cynthia Cox (for Tony Schwab), Chief Judge, 19th Judicial Circuit

PSC Members Absent

Thomas Bakkedahl, State Attorney
Dawn Boulding, Circuit Administrator, 19th Judicial Circuit
Kent Campbell, IRC Sheriff's Office (IRCSO) Chief Correctional Officer
David E. Currey, Chairman, Chief of Vero Beach Police Department
Dedilia Finlayson, Detention Facility Director, FL DJJ
Carol Martin, Director of Consumer Services, Mental Health Assoc. of IRC
Nicole Menz, County Judge
Nathan Peterson, Chief Probation Officer, FL DJJ
Valerie Smith, National Alliance on Mental Illness
William Wims, President/CEO, New Horizons Treasure Coast

Others Present

Linda Kane, SE Florida Behavioral Health Network (SEFBHN)
LaKiesha Linen-Neal, SE Florida Behavioral Health Network (SEFBHN)

IRC Staff

Dylan Reingold, County Attorney
Ed Offutt, Commissioner Assistant, Recording Secretary

Call to Order

(12:00 PM) Vice Chairman Flowers called the meeting to order; a quorum was not present (only ten members were in attendance, where 11 would form a quorum). At the suggestion of Mr. Reingold, introductions proceeded around the table.

Approval of the PSC Minutes for November 18, 2022

(12:01 PM) Deferred due to lack of a quorum.

Election of Officers for 2023

(12:01 PM) Chairman: deferred due to lack of a quorum.

(12:01 PM) Vice Chairman: deferred due to lack of a quorum.

Expansion to the SE Florida Behavioral Health Network Grant (Amanda Busbin)

(12:02 PM) Ms. Busbin declared that the current SEFBHN grant from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) would end on June 30th, but that her organization had received BCC approval to apply for a federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant, with a suspense date of March 11th for completing the application. She revealed that Judges Cox and Menz had asked the IRC Hospital District for funds to cover the three-month period (July 1st through September 30th) between the end of the current DCF grant and the start of the new BJA grant on October 1st. Ms. Busbin noted that the Mental Health Court had identified 38 high-utilizers since the beginning of the current grant cycle, and that 17 of these individuals had fully graduated from the program and another 17 were getting the services they needed to stay out of jail and free from provisions of the Baker Act.

(12:05 PM) Judge Cox recounted that the program had started with funding from the IRC SO but was awarded a three-year, \$1.2M grant (\$400K annually) in 2020 to provide “wrap-around services” (i.e., utilizing a team to implement a strengths-based, needs-driven approach). She added that the Mental Health Collaborative of IRC, which had started the Mental Health Court, had formed a committee to address the future of Mental Health Court and was looking to establish permanent funding for its “core services,” either from the IRC Hospital District taxing district, the IRC SO, or the BCC. Vice Chairman Flowers declared IRC was one of 16 Mental Health Courts across the state that was facing similar funding challenges due to the changes in DCF’s grant system. Judge Cox avowed that housing costs were consuming a large portion of the grant’s funds, and that the Mental Health Collaborative’s new committee would look for ways to lessen those expenses in the future.

Use of Opioid Settlement Agreement Funds (Dylan Reingold)

(12:09 PM) Mr. Reingold reported that, on December 6, 2022, IRC received an initial payment of \$139,604 from opioid lawsuit settlements. He recalled that several years ago IRC was party to an agreement with the State of Florida that would distribute proceeds from various opioid litigations throughout the state, over differing time periods, and from different “buckets” (specifically, state, regional, and city/county allotments). Mr. Reingold disclosed that he’d already reached out to the IRC SO and the county’s Emergency Services Department to gather their thoughts on how the funds might best be used, but he was also hoping to gain ideas from the PSC as well. Ms. Naumann suggested that the IRC Jail could use expanded programs and facilities to treat the many inmates with substance abuse problems; she cited St. Lucie County’s “Journey Forward” program, a collaborative effort that includes a 90-day curriculum taught in a segregated jail pod using a cognitive behavioral approach to addiction and recovery. Vice Chairman Flowers agreed to the general idea, but lamented that the IRC Jail is not designed properly to place inmates in a segregated wing. Mr. Reingold read from the state’s earlier letter and felt confident that funds could be also used for drug and mental health disorders. Ms. Kane remarked that Substance Awareness Council’s and Treasure Coast Community Health’s medication treatment programs for substance disorders were funded by SEFBHN, and they would support use of any funds in this manner. Vice Chairman Flowers concurred.

(12:21 PM) The PSC then proposed other ideas for opioid settlement funds. Vice Chairman Flowers suggested a new device that could scan substances inside of sealed packages, avoiding the need for law enforcement to open the packages and expose themselves to dangerous drugs. Judge Cox offered that funds could be used to increase accessibility to the drug court, since it currently serves only those who can afford to pay for testing. Additionally, she proposed the idea of hiring a screener who would meet with clients at the time of intake to determine who’s eligible for the various “problem-solving courts.” Vice Chairman Flowers next expressed the IRC SO’s need for Narcan (a medication used to reverse or reduce

the effects of opioids) in auto-injectors, citing the difficulty of using nasal applicators on some people deputies encounter; the members brainstormed different ways the IRC SO might acquire Narcan at no charge.

(12:33 PM) Mr. Reingold advised that he would bring an item before the BCC in late March or early April, collecting some of the ideas that had been mentioned in the PSC for use of the opioid funds. He also stated that he would try to achieve better understanding of the flow of funds to the county, both the amounts and timeline.

Commissioner's Matters (Commissioner Flescher)

(12:36 PM) Commissioner Flescher declared that he was eager to see the item from Mr. Reingold come before the BCC for discussion, then asked Vice Chairman Flowers for an update on the Pre-Trial Services (PTS) program. Vice Chairman Flowers reported that IRC SO was saving a considerable amount of money using its own personnel to staff the PTS office, and that the program had grown to 95 total enrollees, including 25 using GPS ankle monitoring. Judge Cox concluded that the "extra set of eyes" the PTS staff offers were an "invaluable" resource to the court system, and that the staff was doing a "great job" in making sure people met the terms of their probation. Ms. Naumann alleged that clients in the PTS program could benefit if caseworkers had more discretion and fewer inflexible rules; Judge Cox stated her belief that the judges had addressed that shortfall in their latest orders. Ms. Naumann commented that PTS could be combined with lower bond amounts, but Judge Cox countered that bond amounts were set based on the risk of flight and perceived danger to the community.

Committee Members Matters

(12:45 PM) There were none.

Chairman's Matters (Vice Chairman Flowers)

(12:45 PM) Vice Chairman Flowers asked for support for the Indian River County Sheriff's Office 29th Annual Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches BBQ on March 1st.

Public Discussion Items

(12:47 PM) Mr. Reingold recounted a recent meeting with a friend who works for the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and offered to assist the county with navigating SAMHSA's bureaucracy; he wondered aloud if there were any requests he might forward to his friend. Ms. Busbin stated that SAMHSA was typically well-funded for training requests, and any assistance in that regard would be welcomed. Mr. Nuckles added that he also had contacts at SAMHSA and was happy to make inquiries.

Adjournment

(12:50 PM) There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting of the PSC is scheduled for **May 26, 2023, at 12:00 PM**, in Building B, Conference Room B1-501, at 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, FL.