

DANE COUNTY CRIMINAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 19, 2011 MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: McDonell, Parisi, Foust, Esqueda, Ozanne, Mahoney

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Alan Kalmanoff, Kerry Widish, Pat Bolch, Supervisor Paul Rusk, Gail Richardson, Jeff Hook, Jeff Kostelic, Tim Saterfield

County Board Chair McDonell called the meeting to order at 12:10PM. There was no public comment.

Motion by Foust/Esqueda to approve the minutes of the September 7, 2011 meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

There was no report from the Criminal Justice Group.

Parisi and Mahoney arrived.

Alan Kalmanoff from the Institute for Law and Policy Planning was present to brief the council on the follow-up study he is currently conducting to his 2007 Criminal Justice System Assessment. His goal today is to initiate some discussion about recommendations from his 2007 study that were not implemented and what the barriers are to implementation. His current follow-up study will be on a short time frame, and he wished he had been engaged sooner.

He said that funding cuts are coming from all levels, state and federal as well as local. He wondered what planning had occurred to deal with significant cuts – in the 35-40% range – that might come. Foust said he has met with Gail Richardson, district court administrator, and Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Courts, to look beyond the next year, to look 2 or 3 years into the future and review priorities. Parisi said he would implement a process, similar to this year's budget process, in which departments could develop scenarios at various funding levels. Mahoney thought public hearings should be held to gather public input on justice system priorities. Parisi said mandates should be reviewed, and Ozanne pointed out almost all of what the District Attorney's Office does is mandated. Mahoney said that regardless of funding cuts, it is unlikely that arrests would decrease. It might mean returning to transporting inmates to other county jails. McDonell said it would be unlikely there would be any funds to transport prisoners.

Kalmanoff said he still doesn't have a good feel for the actual process the county might use to get into that level of planning. He indicated the need for a facilitator for the Council. He asked what might happen to the system if the county "got out of the misdemeanor business" – stopped arresting and booking misdemeanants? Foust said that wouldn't be nearly 30% of the funding for the justice system, perhaps something like 6%. Esqueda said small claims court might be the lowest priority. Foust said perhaps there could be a greater use of mediation in civil cases.

Kalmanoff asked whether there might be savings in privatizing the criminal justice system? Parisi you couldn't necessarily assume that would save money. Ozanne said the state did save some money in the short run by shipping prisoners to private out of state prisons, but that it was not better for inmates.

Kalmanoff said his recommendations in this follow-up study might include some "black sky" planning, to look at worst case scenarios.

Kalmanoff expressed concern that the County didn't embrace his previous recommendation to hire a facilitator for the Council. This was done in Allegheny County/Pittsburg. He feels it is helpful for the facilitator to set the agenda and move discussions along. Parisi said he needed more information about the Council and how it could interact better and move forward. He expressed concern with the outcome when "fingers are pointed". Foust said there had not been much trust over the years among the Council members. Kalmanoff clarified the roles of the Council and the Criminal Justice Group (CJG). Foust indicated the CJG is larger, and has a broader membership. Esqueda characterized then as "breeding ground of ideas", which the Council then could make decisions to implement. Ozanne said there may not have been trust in the past, but that the current group should be able to work together, and should be able to work for now without a facilitator. Foust said the CJG works at a level of detail that the Council doesn't need to be involved in, and that the "hands on" folks at the table in the CJG provide good input for new ideas. He expressed concern for the way some of the budget decisions had been made in the past, that didn't enhance trust or sharing on the Council. McDonell said that the amount of local tax levy in the criminal justice system justifies the involvement, and that there needs to be a way to "push for change". Parisi indicated a belief that the members can work together and make progress, and can improve the process. Mahoney said he opposed "11th hour changes" and calls for more savings.

Several members expressed a desire to reconsider the goals and purpose of the Council, and review its focus. There was a consensus the public defender's office could be a good contributor to the discussions. McDonell said the Council should agree to meet regularly and work on issues so that when budget time comes there is already some level of buy-in from Council members.

Motion by Mahoney/Foust to adjourn at 1:00PM. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Saterfield, Recorder

Note: These minutes are the notes of the recorder and are subject to change at a subsequent meeting of the committee.