

# Rockingham - Harrisonburg Community Criminal Justice Board (CCJB)

## Minutes

In-Person Meeting – 20 East Gay Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
Monday, September 13, 2021 - 4:00 p.m.

### **Board Members –**

Rick Chandler – Rockingham County Board Member / CCJB Chairperson  
Laura Dent - City of Harrisonburg Council Member / CCJB Vice-Chairperson  
Marsha Garst – Commonwealth’s Attorney  
Eric Campbell – City Manager  
Kelley Warner – Chief, Harrisonburg Police Department – Absent (Captain Jason Kidd Attended)  
Chaz Haywood – Clerk of Circuit Court – Absent (Danielle Ritchie Attended)  
Bryan Hutcheson – Sheriff, Rockingham County & City of Harrisonburg  
Ellen Harrison – Rockingham Harrisonburg Community Services Board  
Nancy Insko, Rockingham-Harrisonburg-Page Re-Entry Council  
Stephen King – County Administrator  
Celest Williams – Director, Department of Social Services  
Oskar Scheicl – Rockingham County School Superintendent  
Judge Bruce Albertson - *Absent*  
Michael Richards – Harrisonburg City School Superintendent – *Absent*  
Joshua Lutz - Chief, Probation & Parole District 39  
Judge John Hart - Absent  
Judge Anthony Bailey - Absent  
Gene Hart – Defense Attorney  
Monica Martin – Chief Magistrate – *Absent*

### **Non-Board Attendees**

Anne Marie Freeman – Director, Court Services  
S. Frank Sottaceti- Harrisonburg / Rockingham Criminal Justice Planner  
Ruth Jost – Alternatives Committee  
Becky Sours – Reentry Specialist, Department of Social Services

- I. Welcome and Introduction by Chairperson Chandler
- II. Chairman Chandler moved for Approval of the June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Minutes, motion made by Mr. Stephen King, seconded by Vice Chairperson Dent, and Approved by the Board.
- III. Executive Director Kristen Howard, from the Virginia State Crime Commission (VSCC) provided an overview of the VSCC mission and activities. She gave an overview of the Pre-Trial Data Project, Pre-Trial Diversion and Cash Bail. Detailed information regarding the VSCC and the on-going Projects can be found at <http://vscc.virginia.gov>. The CCJB leadership plans to stay-in-touch with the VSCC and monitor its activities.

Mr. King stated he will be sending Executive Director Howard a follow-up email regarding the following issues: 1) State Responsible Inmate Transfers, 2) Equitable Compensation for

law enforcement, Commonwealth Attorneys, and correctional personnel, 3) What Code of Virginia modifications could be changed to address incarceration numbers.

Vice Chairperson Laura Dent commented that lobbying activities should be commenced to influence the State Responsible Inmate Issue. Mr. Campbell added that if other Localities join the lobbying, then the Commonwealth would not consider this to be just an issue for our Community.

IV. Frank Sottaceti provided an update on the activities of the Criminal Justice Planner.

An unidentified female attendee in the room questioned the validity of the data presented by Mr. Sottaceti when compared with the “Moseley Study.” The person asked if we paid \$150,000 for a Study whose data is incorrect. The individual was instructed to contact Moseley regarding where they drew their data from for their Study. The individual questioned the incarceration metrics to which the Sheriff responded by providing clarification and historical context.

V. Alternative/Sub-Committee Workgroup - Ms. Jost spoke about how the Alternatives Committee was created approximately six years ago when discussions were being held regarding building a new local jail. She said in the span of years since then that we have an expanded menu of Alternatives. She said we are like everywhere else in the Nation that has had a huge 40-year rise in incarceration. Our incarceration situation is still urgent enough that we are now looking at expanding or renovating Middle River Regional Jail for a range from \$90 Million to \$14 Million. Ms. Jost stated that we are not recommending a Mental Health Court and we will not ask the criminal justice system to solve a public health and societal issue. That the Committee is looking at two separate tracks – 1) Social and Community Issues (housing, mental health, education) and 2) Policy Issues

Vice Chairperson Dent stated that there is important work that needs to be done “upstream” from where people become involved in the criminal justice system.

Mr. King added that the need for work release is one of the most important issues but that the Middle River Regional Jail (MRRJ) Project does not include the ability to expand Work Release. Vice Chairperson Dent said that she would like to have the ability to offer Work Release in our local jail. Mr. King stated that in discussions with the Sheriff there is no space to support that Program from the local jail. The Sheriff said that the project back in 2014 which the Community decided against was exactly that; to construct a facility that was for Work Release and substance abuse and was a dormitory-style facility. When that project was scuttled, we ended up renting beds at MRRJ and eventually buying-into the MRRJ as Partner Localities.

Vice Chairperson Dent said that if a person can be on Work Release, then maybe they do not have to be in jail. The Sheriff stated that if a Judge allows that then it is an option. Commonwealth Attorney Garst stated that using Home Electronic Monitoring is an option to support non-incarcerated Work Release; but that one of the largest issues to successful reentry is low-barrier housing.

VI. Informational Updates

- A. Rockingham Harrisonburg Regional & Middle River Regional Jail Statistics  
See attached report for details. The ADP is rising at MRRJ and there is a potential that beds will have to be rented at other Regional Jails.

The unidentified female asked if beds would have to be rented due to Staffing issues. The Sheriff stated that it was due to safety issues and the ability to provide adequate housing for inmates.

Mr. Sottaceti asked the unidentified female what Agency she was representing, and the individual stated they were “a concerned citizen.” Mr. Sottaceti reminded the individual that there was a Public Comment period on the Agenda and that is the appropriate time to make comments.

- B. Harrisonburg Rockingham Community Services Board (CSB)  
Executive Director Harrison provided a written report for an update on CSB activities. See attached report for details.
- C. District 39 Probation and Parole  
Chief Lutz reported on the statistics for the period. See attached report for details.
- D. Court Services – See attached report for details.

#### VII. Reentry Coordinator Update

- A. Director Celest Williams provided an update on the Reentry Specialist Program at the Department of Social Services that began in December 2020. The Program has served 25 individuals.

#### VIII. Old Business

Updated Bylaws for the CCJB will be distributed prior to the next Meeting

#### IX. New Business

None

#### X. Public Comment

The unidentified female stated she did not understand the metrics regarding MRRJ from 2018 and other years and how beds were being rented to other jurisdictions when MRRJ was overcrowded. She said that if it is a “staffing issue” then call it that because the way it is being handled “doesn’t build trust.”

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5:40 pm Meeting Adjourned

The next CCJB Meeting will be held on Monday, December 6, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.