

# Rockingham - Harrisonburg Community Criminal Justice Board (CCJB)

## Minutes

In-Person Meeting – 20 East Gay Street, Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
Monday, July 11, 2022 - 4:00 p.m.

### **Board Members –**

Rick Chandler – Rockingham County Board Member / CCJB Chairperson – *Absent*  
Laura Dent - City of Harrisonburg Council Member / CCJB Vice-Chairperson  
Marsha Garst – Commonwealth’s Attorney  
Ande Banks – City Manager (Acting)  
Captain Pollard (Kelley Warner– *Absent*) – Chief, Harrisonburg Police Department  
Chaz Haywood – Clerk of Circuit Court  
Bryan Hutcheson – Sheriff, Rockingham County & City of Harrisonburg  
Ellen Harrison – Rockingham Harrisonburg Community Services Board  
Richard Jackson, Rockingham-Harrisonburg-Page Reentry Council  
Stephen King – County Administrator  
Celest Williams – Director, Department of Social Services  
Oskar Scheicl – Rockingham County School Superintendent – *Absent*  
Judge Baugher (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*  
Ann Marie Ritchie, Director, Court Services

### **Non-Board Attendees**

S. Frank Sottaceti- Harrisonburg / Rockingham Criminal Justice Planner

- I. Welcome and Introduction by Vice Chairperson Dent
- II. Vice Chairperson Dent moved for Approval of the April 24, 2022 CCJB Minutes.
- III. Informational/Operational Updates
  - A. Rockingham Harrisonburg Regional & Middle River Regional Jail Statistics Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting. No questions or comments were raised.
  - B. Harrisonburg Rockingham Community Services Board (CSB) Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting. No questions or comments were raised.
  - C. District 39 Probation and Parole

Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting. No questions or comments were raised.

D. Court Services

Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting. No questions or comments were raised.

E. Reentry Coordinator

Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting. No questions or comments were raised.

F. Criminal Justice Planner Report

Report was posted and disseminated prior to the Meeting.

Sottaceti highlighted that misinformation continues to be pushed by advocates and activists about Harrisonburg/Rockingham driving the incarceration rates at the Middle River Regional Jail (MRRJ). Sottaceti provided the latest figures that do not align with the information in various Editorials and mass media news stories that have been published.

#### IV. Old Business

Vice Chairperson Dent appointed Mr. Richard Jackson to be the Chairperson of the Exploratory Committee on Establishing a Public Defenders (PD) Office.

Vice Chairperson Dent then opened discussion regarding who other members of the Committee will be. Mr. Haywood mentioned that for potential Fiscal reasons of standing-up a Public Defenders Office that the County Administrator and City Manager should be on the Committee or appoint someone in their place to serve on the Committee. Commonwealth Attorney Garst said that Christopher Bean would be representing her Office on the Committee and suggested Gene Hart represent the Defense Bar. Mr. Hart agreed to be on the Committee.

Vice Chairperson Dent stated that it is important to answer the question of what issue/problem we are trying to solve and does a problem exist that would be solved by having a PD Office in our area. She further stated that it's difficult to measure costs when we are talking about people's lives. She also wants to determine what the outcomes would be and whether there are alternatives to establishing a PDs Office that address the same potential issue(s). Dent also stated that "wearing her City Council hat" these same concerns and questions are what she hopes will be addressed by the Committee.

Mr. King stated we need a timeline for the Committee. Sottaceti responded that the Committee would be prepared to present its preliminary workplan at the next meeting of the CCJB. Discussion followed that Sottaceti would find a representative from a PD Office that is operational in Virginia to come to the CCJB Meeting in October 2022 to speak with our CCJB. Commonwealth Attorney Garst and Chief Lutz recommended Timothy Coyne be contacted. Sottaceti agreed to contact Coyne.

## V. New Business

- A. Vice Chairperson Dent mentioned that a citizen at a City Council Meeting stated that the City isn't doing anything to prosecute violence against women. Dent said she contacted Chief Warner, Commonwealth Attorney Garst and Sottaceti regarding same. Garst stated that prosecution declined does not always mean that the Commonwealth Attorney's Office has decided not to prosecute. It can mean that the victim no longer wishes to prosecute or the elements of the crime are not satisfied. Garst mentioned that Ms. Eldridge of her Office will be reaching out to Dent to further discuss the issue being raised by the citizen.

Vice Chairperson Dent mentioned that the City has purchased a permanent homeless shelter. Ande Banks said that the construction will take 12-15 months and will be run on a contract basis by a local provider.

Sottaceti mentioned that there are two new Grants received since the last CCJB Meeting. The first is from the Sentara RMH Foundation for \$180,000 for the Community Paramedicine Program to purchase a response vehicle and all the equipment for that vehicle. The second is for the Crisis Intervention Team and is for ~\$50,000 to purchase a virtual reality training platform. Ande Banks mentioned that the RMH Foundation in addition to the above-mentioned funding provided many additional funds to other organizations throughout the Rockingham/Harrisonburg Community.

Mr. King mentioned that Superintendent Jeffery Newton from the Middle River Regional Jail retired and was replaced by Superintendent Eric Young after a nationwide search was conducted.

## VI. Public Comment

None

---

4:27 pm - Meeting Adjourned

The next CCJB Meeting will be held on Monday, October 3, 2022, at 4:00 p.m.