Hamilton County Community Corrections
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2019

The following members were present: Honorable Gail Bardach, Jim Barlow, Christi Bebee, Bob Bragg, D. Lee Buckingham, Honorable Paul Felix, Susan Ferguson, Mike Fogarty, Stephenie Gookins, Trusa Grosso, Leeann Murray, Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush, Dan Stevens, Kylene Toney, and Amy Wilson. Barbra Scott and Stephanie Ruggles were also in attendance.

A quorum was present. Ralph Watson, Jennifer Armstrong, and Tom Gehlhausen were also in attendance.

Susan Ferguson called the meeting to order.

Mr. Watson introduced Amy Wilson as our newest Board member. She was recently appointed by the Hamilton County Commissioners. Ms. Wilson will be filling the vacancy that occurred with the resignation of Bill Cech.

Susan Ferguson called for the approval of the February meeting minutes. Honorable Gail Bardach made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Following a brief summary by Mr. Watson, Susan Ferguson called for approval of the February fiscal reports. Leeann Murray made a motion to approve the reports as presented. D. Lee Buckingham seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Director’s Report

A written report was submitted and reviewed by the Executive Director.

Old Business

There was no old business on the agenda.

New Business

The Department of Corrections (DOC) grant application is due March 31st. Mr. Watson is schedule to present the budget at the March 25th commissioners meeting. There were some changes in the application. The most significant is that the DOC is no longer requiring the distinction between base grant dollars and HEA 1006 funds for Community Corrections requests as they have in the past. Another change includes their requirement that expenses to be identified as either a general operating expense or an administrative supervision expense.

Mr. Watson provided a handout and explained the budget by series number. He noted that expenditures are $400,000 more than projected collections. This is due to some significant one-time equipment costs, as well as an increase in personnel compensation levels and benefits that are established by the County Council. He noted that 87% of the budget is personnel costs.

Several Board members had questions. Honorable Paul Felix asked if there was an overall increase or decrease in the budget when compared to the one for FY 2018-19. Mr. Watson thought there was an overall increase as a result of the increase in compensation levels, but upon closer examination there was actually a decrease. This can be attributed to some unexpected departures of senior personnel. D. Lee Buckingham asked how 60% of the budget not being grant funded compared to other counties. Mr. Watson said other counties generally do not receive county
assistance or misdemeanant funds, so it is likely that the majority of their finding is the result of the grant. Amy Wilson inquired as to how many grants the agency received and Mr. Watson noted that the DOC grant was the only one. Susan Ferguson asked if there were concerns with the Project Income fund not meeting collection projections. Mr. Watson reported that the agency is examining how we are addressing arrearages and how quickly they are being addressed. It appears that our capacity is similar to past years, so the revenue decrease would seem to warrant that we review our collection process. The loss of a powerful sanction for failing to pay fees, deprivation of credit time, likely has some impact.

Dan Stevens made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Stephanie Ruggles presented a handout for the Pretrial Services grant application. She stated that this year they are required to submit a second grant application, however they are still part of Community Corrections grant. The grant request is for personnel only. They are requesting $36,000 more in funding due to salary and benefit increases. The grant funds the compensation and benefits for 3 individuals. Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush made a motion to approve Pretrial Services budget as presented. Honorable Gail Bardach seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Honorable Paul Felix noted that it appeared that the agency was at a record high capacity for the residential program. Mr. Watson confirmed that and reported we had anticipated such an increase as a result of the changes in the possible sentencing options for Level 6 offenders. However, the growth in population has not been as rapid as expected. Also, we have recently experienced a decline in our population for the Electronic Monitoring level of supervision.

There was no further business to be presented and Susan Ferguson adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be April 4th at noon.