Hamilton County Community Corrections
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
August 1, 2019

The following members were present: Honorable Gail Bardach, Bob Bragg, D. Lee Buckingham, George Buskirk, Steve Dillon, Roger Drayer, Honorable Paul Felix, Susan Ferguson, Mike Fogarty, Stephenie Gookins, Sheriff Dennis Quakenbush, Krista Radican, Barbara Scott, R. Dan Stevens, Kylene Toney, and Amy Wilson.

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

Susan Ferguson called the meeting to order.

Susan Ferguson called for the approval of the June 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 May and June fiscal reports. Dan Stevens made a motion to approve the reports as presented. Roger Drayer 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

At the June meeting the Board requested Mr. Watson provide data from the Hinds Career Center for the High School Equivalency (HSE) class. Mr. Watson provided a summary of the 2018-2019 fiscal year data. There were 19 participants that increased their education level and 13 participants that completed their HSE during that time period. The agency was pleased with the success.

Mr. Watson provided a summary of the most recent Electronic Monitoring Process and Outcome Report conducted by the University of Cincinnati. This covered the last 4 fiscal years. There were many findings and recommendations similar to the previous Residential Level of Supervision report. The agency had made some improvements in response to the Residential report, unfortunately they were not implemented in time to positively impact the data in the current report. Overall the agency was pleased with the University’s process. Amy Wilson indicated it would nice to have some data on employment after a participant leaves the program. Mr. Watson stated that it had been discussed, but it there are several challenges to overcome in order to obtain the information.

The agency has yet to transition to the new dining hall. There have been some minor challenges that must be worked out before the transition can occur. The ice machine failed and there was a change in meal delivery protocol as a result of Health Department Guidelines. Our agency is working with Food Services at the Hamilton County Jail to redesign the delivery process. Mr. Watson reported that there are also some electronic doors that are not functioning properly and will need repaired prior to the agency transitioning to the new dining hall.
The 2nd floor of the facility, where participants are currently housed, has not been painted since the agency first occupied the building in 2009. Mr. Watson has been working with Building and Grounds to obtain quotes to repair wall damage that has occurred over the years and to re-paint the entire 2nd floor. Building and Grounds has agreed to pay for the cost of the materials, if our agency assumes responsible for the labor costs. Mr. Watson asked that the Board approve an additional appropriation of $35,000 from our Project Income fund in order to finance our part of the project costs. If approved by the Board, Mr. Watson would next approach the Hamilton County Council for approval at their August meeting. The work would need to be completed by December in order for it to be covered by the grant extension period budget, otherwise the process will have to be repeated in 2020. Roger Drayer made a motion to approve the appropriation as presented. Dan Stevens seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Watson reported that the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) notified local agencies that the manner in which local jails will be reimbursed for housing sentenced Felony Level 6 offenders will change. Previously the local jails were reimbursed on a per diem basis for each day they held an inmate that met the reimbursement conditions. The IDOC recently introduced a funding method resulting in the local jails being reimbursed a fixed amount annually. Mr. Watson provided a brief synopsis of the manner in which the IDOC determines the fixed amount for each county.

On July 15th an emergency rule was passed that added to Title 210 of the Indiana Administrative Code a provision authorizing a Community Corrections Program Director, or designee, to deprive earned good time credit from a person placed in a community corrections program for a violation of one or more rules or conditions of the program. On July 18th Mr. Watson sent notice to all participants of the change and that Hamilton County Community Corrections would begin using the sanction effective July 22nd. It will be used after all other options, except for a referral to court, are exhausted.

Mr. Watson noted that during our last visit by the Indiana Association of Community Corrections Act Counties Residential Guidelines Committee it was suggested that the Board’s by-laws have a conflict of interest statement added. Stephanie Gookins drafted proposed language to be considered for approval. Barbara Scott made a motion to accept the language as written. George Buskirk seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Recently Mr. Watson was notified by the IDOC that the 2020 Grant Application approval letter from the Advisory Board should have included prioritization of the requested funding. Mr. Watson explained that the request had not been a part of past applications. The Board inquired if any additional direction had been given with the request and he reported that none had been received. The IDOC did say that prioritization was requested in the event that they were unable to fund the entire amount included in the application. The Board discussed several prioritization options, but concerns were noted with all those mentioned. Roger Drayer made a motion that the IDOC be informed that everything we requested in the application was a priority for the Board. Stephanie Gookins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

There was no further business to be presented and Susan Ferguson adjourned the meeting. The next meeting will be September 5th at noon.