

Treatment Oversight Committee Meeting
10/24/2023 Minutes

In-person Appearances – Judge Patricia Baker, Jed Dodge, Cass Cousins, Kasie Borchardt, Jamie Kiener, Taylor Soule, Rob Golla, Zach Bishop, Andrea Starr.

Virtual Appearances - None

Judge Baker called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m. in Branch III Courtroom

1. Approval of the Minutes from May 2, 2023, Meeting

Baker asked for comments or edits related to the 5/2/2023 minutes and hearing none, declared the minutes approved by consensus.

2. Proposed Changes to Treatment Court Procedures

Baker indicated that after the May 2, 2023, Oversight Committee meeting, a meeting took place with the Stevens Point Police Department, Portage County Sheriff's Office, and the District Attorney's Office where the three offices make requests of the Treatment Court. Some of the requests were the level of accountability of the participants, the lack of home visits from law enforcement, and the model of how Treatment Court is set up. At the end of the summer, law enforcement and the District Attorney felt that not enough changes had been made so they withdrew from Treatment Court.

Currently, the District Attorney's Office has expressed an interest in returning to Treatment Court if certain expectations have been met. Two meetings have taken place with the District Attorney, Kasie Borchardt, DOC Supervisor, Judge Baker, and Andrea Starr regarding possible changes; with the largest being changing the model of Treatment Court. It is being proposed that the Portage County Treatment Court be changed from a post-conviction model to a post plea, pre-conviction model. This change is modeled after Wood County Treatment Court. An example would be that an individual would be placed on probation for a low-level offense but placed on a Deferred Entry of Judgement (DEJ) for a higher level of offense. If a participant graduates from Treatment Court, he or she will have the DEJ charge dismissed. Additionally, the new model allows for the Treatment Court Judge to have more authority on jail holds and/or allowing a participant to remain in custody while awaiting a treatment bed to be available. Alternative to Revocation (ATR) will continue to be referred to Treatment Court.

Starr stated that this initial meeting is to discuss the proposed changes and have policies put together for the November 7th meeting. Judge Bakers hopes to have the new changes implemented by January 1, 2024.

Cass indicted that he would like the District Attorney's Office to rejoin if the changes are made that his office has requested; however, law enforcement may take some more "persuasion" even after the proposed changes are made.

Judge Baker discussed that Treatment Court standards that Treatment Courts can move ahead without law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office, but it isn't best practice. It is Judge Bakers goal is to have law enforcement and the District Attorney's rejoin the Treatment Team.

Taylor from the Public Defender's Office stated that she is in favor of the change in the model as she sees it more as a positive for her clients to have a felony charge dismissed if they successfully complete Treatment Court. She stated that the "hammer" of imposed and stayed prison isn't the most useful because it is "so far off."

Cass indicated that his office will continue to make referrals to Treatment Court.

3. Next Meeting November 7, 2023

10. Adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Starr
Justice Programs Director/Recording Secretary