

MINUTES
Justice Coalition Executive Committee
December 12, 2023

Members Present: Judge Patricia Baker, Judge Michael Zell, Judge Louis Molepske, Jr., Public Defender Taylor Soule, County Executive John Pavelski, District Attorney Cass Cousins

Members Unavailable: County Board Chair Al Haga, Clerk of Courts Lisa Roth, Corporation Counsel David Hickethier

Staff Present: Andrea Starr, Justice Programs Department, Chris Schultz, Purchasing Department

Chair Baker called the meeting to order at 8:00 am in Branch III Jury Room in the Portage County Courthouse.

1. Approve Minutes of September 14, 2023 Meeting

Members approved the September 14, 2023 minutes by consensus with the change mentioned. Judge Baker said that the September minutes indicated that on the next agenda it was going to be recommended that Health and Human Services (HHS) join the Justice Coalition Executive Committee, due to some crossover with HHS and Justice Programs. That was not added to the agenda but will be at the next Justice Coalition Executive Committee meeting.

2. Review of Justice Programs Statistics from the Previous Quarter

Starr discussed and highlighted data that was provided in the agenda packet.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the referral process and the length of time it takes for a referral to be made to Treatment Court. Recommendations were made on how to reduce the days between arrest and admission into Treatment Court.

3. Discussion Regarding Changes to Day Report, Pretrial Supervision, and Post-Trial Supervision Program.

Baker indicated that during the RFP process, JusticePoint asked that drug/alcohol testing be reduced due to research indicating that drug/alcohol testing has no bearing on whether someone will appear for Court or if they will commit a new crime while on bond. The Judges were provided the research on drug/alcohol testing. Judge Zell stated that there may be an argument to not drug/alcohol test and he knows the struggle someone must refrain from drugs and/or alcohol if they have an addiction. Judge Baker and Judge Molepske stated they use the information given to them regarding the individual's drug/alcohol testing results during their hearings. A discussion took place regarding 5th and 6th OWI's, and other serious offenses not being tested under the new proposed testing schedule; this is a concern for the Judges. Judge Molepske indicated there is a public perception that when individuals are out on bond, they will be drug/alcohol tested. Judge Molepske would like input from the Sheriff and the District Attorney before he agrees to any changes. The Committee would like to postpone this discussion until the next meeting.

Starr provided the Committee with the change of hours of operation to the Day Report office.

4. Discussion of Adult Treatment Court

Judge Baker indicated that conversations between her and the District Attorney continue regarding changes to Treatment Court. Additionally, she said there is a "large" vacant spot because the District Attorney's Office is not on the Treatment Team. DA Cousins has a couple of suggestions on the changes proposed and will share them with Judge Baker soon.

The Treatment Team went to a standards training together and came up with several ideas on how to improve Treatment Court. They are working on making those changes.

5. Discussion of Agenda Items for January 11, 2024, Justice Coalition Meeting

Judge Molepske would like enhancements to Court security.

Judge Baker stated that a citizen group has approached her to do a short presentation at the Justice Coalition regarding the design of the jail. Judge Baker and Chair Haga believe it is too premature to have them present at the January meeting. Judge Baker will contact the group and have them present at the April Justice Coalition meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Starr
Justice Programs Director/Recording Secretary