

JRAC meeting minutes

Location: Bluffton Courthouse

Date: June 13, 2023

Time: 11:30 AM

Attendees: Probation Officer, Chair, Greg Werich

Wells Circuit Court, Judge Kenton Kiracofe

Secretary, Jenny Broderick, Parks Center

Wells County Sheriff, Scott Holliday

Bluffton Chief of Police, Kyle Randall

Wells County Prosecuting Attorney, Colin Andrews

Director of Wells County Community Corrections, Blake Poindexter

Wells County Council, Vicki Andrews

Wells Superior Court, Judge Andrew Antrim

Wells County Jail, Karen Thompson

Agenda items

1. Minutes were Presented

Blake made a motion to accept as submitted. Seconded by Judge Antrim. Minutes were passed unanimously.

2. Quarterly Electronic Monitoring Report

Director Poindexter has completed the first quarterly report of electronic monitoring which was submitted through INCite. Discussion was had regarding the proposed report. Director Poindexter made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Judge Antrim and the same was approved unanimously.

3. Future Meeting Adjustment

Discussion was made regarding the due dates of future quarterly electronic monitoring reports. Currently future meetings are scheduled for September 26th and December 12th. However, the JRAC quarterly reports are due on August 29th, November 29th, and February 28th. After discussion, Judge Kiracofe made a motion to allow the JRAC Chair to submit the report by the due date without the JRAC committee's full review. Motion was seconded by Judge Antrim and approved unanimously.

4. Mental Health

Sheriff Holliday discussed recent meetings regarding mental health issues that occurred in conjunction with Parkview Behavioral Health. Local law enforcement has had two trainings on Parkview's SOS program. Overall the program has been welcomed by the law enforcement community and can be utilized by family members of those needing assistance. Further discussion by Judge Kiracofe about a change in procedure occurring with local individuals who are taken to Allen County for assessment. Historically further assessments were handled with the Park Center Behavioral Health and any follow up hearings were held in Allen County Mental Health Court. After discussion with Judge Williams in Allen County, the agreement was any further hearings would be held in the Wells Circuit Court, which is the mental health court of Wells County.

Judge Kiracofe also discussed an upcoming change to the hearing requirements of Mental Health commitments that will occur on July 1, 2023. No further discussion.

5. Wells County Jail

Sheriff Holliday advised that the updates to the Wells County Jail are nearly complete and currently the jail enrollment is at sufficient level to allow other repairs in jail pods. Sheriff Holliday also mentioned that currently we appear to be the only county in the area which will take parole holds.

Chairman Werich discussed with Sheriff Holliday regarding the possibility of technical violations. Sheriff Holliday indicated the jail would be willing to accept short term commitments for technical violations of probation rules without requiring a warrant to be issued. Karen Thompson advised that it would be helpful if the admission and dismissal time of the jail was clearly designated on any documents provided to the jail. Otherwise, the standard release time at the jail is Sundays from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Finally, Sheriff Holliday indicated he is no longer willing to consider a work release program and believes that a better benefit would be for home detention or an electronic monitoring, rather than a work release program.

6. Juvenile Services

Discussion was had whether or not juveniles could be listed in the Spillman system. Both Sheriff Holliday and Police Chief Randall were willing to add juveniles who are currently on probation to the Spillman system. Judge Kiracofe discussed the possibility of Wells County considering a juvenile detention alternatives initiative (JDAI) due to the reduction in secure detention services which were available. Judge Kiracofe and Greg Werich discussed status of an assessment tool to determine when law enforcement officers should contact probation for consideration of detaining juvenile delinquents.

7. Pretrial Services

Currently the Wells County Probation Department conducts Pretrial Risk Assessments. Discussion was had regarding whether Wells County Community Corrections would consider handling the pretrial assessment process going forward. Director Poindexter indicated that because he is an executive branch office it would require a contract between the Courts and his department. Further discussion by Judge Antrim questioned whether or not Wells County Community Corrections employees would be afforded the same liability protection that the Probation Department employees would have for conducting assessments. Finally, Judge Antrim discussed the need to allow Wells County Community Corrections access to criminal history reports in conducting their assessments.

8. Members

Greg Werich has attempted to contact the new Chief of Police of the Ossian Police Department, but has been unsuccessful. Sheriff Holliday indicated he would make contact with the new Chief and inform him of the JRAC meetings.

Currently no one represents the public defenders of Wells County on the JRAC committee. Because Wells County currently employs public defenders on a contract bases, discussion was had whether or not the Judges could or should represent the public defenders on the JRAC committee. In the alternative, Judge Kiracofe discussed the potential of a public defender office in Wells County. Discussion was had regarding possible costs, risks, and other needs for the process for the county to follow to obtain either reimbursement of its public defender costs by the Indiana Public Defender Commission or developing a public defender office.

9. Future JRAC Activities

This topic was tabled by Greg Werich in order to have the meeting conclude within the allotted time. Next meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2023.