

# **Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Justice Project**

**Monday January 30, 2023**

**1:00 - 2:00pm**

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Feedback on Presentation to Council on Feb. 7**

**Participants:** Cliff Langley, Arlene Feld, Michael Lilliquist, Kristin Hanna, Jack Hovenier, Barry Buchanan, Starck Follis, David Goldman, Peter Frazier, Atul Deshmane, Stephen Gockley, Rebecca Mertzig, Perry Mowery, Deborah Hawley, Wendy Jones

**Support:** Holly O'Neil, Facilitator; Mardi Solomon, Notes; Cathy Halka, County Staff

#### **Overview of process for Council to Accept the Needs Assessment**

- On Feb. 7, Barry, Jack, and Stephen will be presenting to Council.
- On Feb. 21, the Council will hear a resolution and will vote to accept the Justice Project Needs Assessment.

#### **Purpose of the Feb. 7 presentation to Council**

- The presentation on Feb. 7 will address next steps. We will use the Needs Assessment Report as a guide for developing the implementation plan.
- In the coming months, there will be a lot more public process with workshops and focus groups, and another Town Hall Gathering in May.
- Hope to have an ordinance to Council in early June.
- Want to frame our emphasis on the Needs Assessment Report.

#### **Group Brainstorm: Key Points that Should be Made in Presentation to Council**

- We need to frame our appeal in a brief and simple way. Focus on what Council wants. The value of the services we are proposing to fill in the gaps, will provide greater public safety. We expect fewer people in the jails and more people receiving services to prevent incarceration.
- Create an overview for Council to keep in mind rather than summarizing the recommendations. Use the theme that this is about greater public safety.
- The recommendations are meant to work together. It's about far more than the jail.
- The SAC represents many different stakeholders. This large group came together and came up with a compromise. This work is in progress and this Needs Assessment is a good step.
- People have not been paying close attention since 2017, except when they are victims of crime or see people with mental illness on the streets. We should go back to the work in the listening sessions and look at what people were asking for. Let them know that this community has bent over backwards, not only the SAC, but also the progress that has been made re jail diversion (LEAD, GRACE, Crisis Stabilization Center, children's initiative).
- Identify to Council all the new, original input that went into the Needs Assessment process.
- Accentuate the behavioral health component. Some of the stats are important, and the resources the SAC put together to meet needs. Make sure that is fresh in the Council's mind.

- Stress how this approach is different from previous approaches. This isn't a proposal for a new jail. It is a new approach to criminal justice. The jail is a part of that, but what that facility will look like is dependent upon a change in approach. When the jail failed, the main criticism was people didn't want a bigger facility to house more people. We need to stress that the approach is to lower the numbers. The size and appearance of the jail will reflect that. [Group expressed a lot of agreement with this approach.]
- We're not looking at the jail in isolation, it all has to be looked at holistically.
- What the jail looks like will be dependent on whether other programs will be implemented. If you bring the numbers down, the jail won't have to be as big.
- We know from the Vera Rpt. – The biggest factor affecting the size of the jail is system policies and practices.
- None of this process would have occurred had the previous vote not failed. All the problems with the jail brought to a head that we need a new facility. Had to force out programs so we could house people. A lot of the programs are important and necessary. Don't know if we will get a reduction in the jail population as a result. Across the nation, people have been trying to figure out how to have fewer people in jail. The failure of the building brought other needs to light.
- The Executive branch policies need to be examined. The main changes that need to happen are with the Prosecutor's Office, and diversion programs that could happen pre-charging (in the 1<sup>st</sup> 48 hrs. after booking). The Prosecutor's Office needs to get programs going to reduce numbers. We need a place to bring people in initially.
- Stress that we did work hard to come together with agreement and cohesiveness.
- Modern day criminal justice is a balanced approach. It's not lock everybody up or give everyone a free pass. Crucial we get it right this time around.
- It's not about building a new jail, but changing the approach. That's what the voters want to hear. The Prosecutor's Office needs to be involved. If we don't see change in every part of the system, it will cause a roadblock.
- Hope to weave through the presentation that the jail is a reactive entity. Something can change at a local, state, federal level that will make new demands on the jail. For ex., Wendy just received an email that the Governor is working on a bill that would shift responsibility for inpatient restoration treatment to county jails. They would have jails establish programs that are now facilitated in state psychiatric hospitals. Our facility doesn't have space to treat the people who are here. Wendy feels it is not appropriate for the jail to become an inpatient restoration center. Need flexibility, in addition to services.
- Talk in thematic terms without going into detail.
- Address why Council should pay attention to this particular report. Show how it stands out from previous efforts. We worked for a year. We had a broad cross-section of the community. Outreach to unvoiced communities, diversity of views on the SAC. The distillation of all this input coming into this report should give it great weight for the Council. Want them to hear of the care that went into building this report.
- The Council's guiding principles for this group alluded to the type of system we came up with. We made it real.
- Draw attention to fact that some areas received broad support (e.g., pg. 16 of the TVA survey report). All prioritized investing in incarceration prevention. Draw attention to that.

- We are talking about altering the balance of funding for law enforcement and for social services. Don't want to withdraw funding from law enforcement, but want the other side of the equation bumped up to a level that allows us to close the gaps in services to our community.
- It's important to remind Council what the current state of the jail is and what it means for people (incarcerated and staff). Hope they have taken a recent tour and understand the consequences of booking restrictions, and understand the consequences of failure if we have no new jail. The status quo is inhumane and we don't want to see another 10 years with this jail. It's a liability.
- Barry: Showed the jail video to the whole Council. Will encourage them to tour the jail in person.
- Seeing the jail in person is huge. Caleb talks about the importance of trauma-informed design.
- We have a lot of data to offer. Reinforce points in the presentation with data where we can.
- Start by demonstrating that what we are doing now is not working for individuals who are incarcerated or for the community. Then move into where we have common ground about how to fix it.
- The SAC was limited in what we could address and this is our proposal to impact what we can.
- Represent that this is an impressive group of different opinions coming together (e.g., Chief of the Jail, Public Defender).