

Via Zoom 12-1pm

Attend: Marcia Owen, Jatoia Potts, Mike Sstrom, Dwayne Campbell, Rose Werth, Kelly Andrews, Renee Shaw, Libria Stephens, and Leslie Nydick.

Minutes prepared by Mike Sstrom

We decided to postpone until the summer further examination of pre-arrest diversion until after Kelly Andrews has been able to convene a MDP stakeholders' (DPD chief, Sheriff, DA, CJRC) meeting to discuss potential expansion of the current MDP program. Kelly is already planning to meet with DPD Chief Andrews April 6. That stakeholder meeting likely won't happen until June. We'll know later if any CLS RT members can be included in that or if we'll wait to meet with those stakeholders later.

Marcia summarized the meeting Marion Bailey, Libria, and she had with DA Deberry on February 24th. See also the separate file of meeting notes Marcia prepared and uploaded to the Victims' Support Google Drive folder. That notes file also includes a link to the DA Office's web portal; a source of additional information. *[Mike's observation, not Marcia's, on this meeting: While Marion made clear ahead of time they wished to focus the meeting on victims' support issues and the questions they'd submitted ahead of time, DA Deberry seems to have taken up the majority of their meeting time with a general presentation on the DA's office covering a range of issues. They actually spent the least amount of time on victims' support; the intended focus of the meeting. Much of DA Deberry's presentation/talking points seem to reiterate the content of the DA's office's 2021 annual report. We might want to keep all this in mind for the next meeting we request with the DA or her office on the other topics we want to discuss in order to politely request more focus on the topic at hand and the questions we submit ahead of time.]*

- The DA noted the distinction between the number of cases/defendants and the total number of charges listed in statistical reports. Most defendants have multiple charges.
- 50% of the cases the office handled in 2021 were traffic/DUI cases
- Overall, 20% of their total caseload were felonies. Of those 12% were violent felony charges.
- *[the DA made some comment relating to bonds in violent crimes with victims involved, but I (Mike) didn't catch it well enough in my notes. Marcia will need to clarify later.]*
- The DA's Office does not accept any case referrals from the public schools except in rare instances of violent assaults.
- In 2021, 80% of cases came from the DPD. [Other 20% from the Sheriff's Office?]
- 90% of the cases referred to the DA's office did not go to trial. *[Result? Dismissal, diversion, and/or plea deals? Reason for dismissals? Lack of evidence?]*
 - The DA's office made 27 Post-arrest Diversion referrals in 2021
 - The office does not track the numbers of other diversions individual ADAs might do more ad hoc.
 - The office does not track the number of dismissals.
- Insufficient evidence was the main cause of the backlog of homicide prosecutions.

- The city and county do fund two ADA positions. *[Where does the rest of the DA's budget come from? The state?]*
- DA Deberry mentioned the fund to help cover crime victims' parking fees for court appearances and the clothing donation service. No other victim's services were mentioned.
 - Marcia noted that we will need to follow up with the DA's office on our other proposals for improved victims' services under the purview of the DA's office, including better notification for victims and their families, including homicide victims, on verdicts, dismissals, etc...
- Marcia et al asked the DA in general what resources they "need."
 - She replied 5 more ADAs and 5 more support staff.
 - More childcare services for people attending court
 - More general improvements to the court house, especially for crime victims and their families.
- The DA's Office already has all their ADAs and relevant staff undergo Trauma Informed Training. *[This and the CJRC's Seeking Safety trauma training program are models we can make use of later.]*

We discussed a potential research request for Dwayne to take on would be to try to track dismissal vs. diversion rates over some period of time by the DA's office. This could also lead to a potential recommendation for the DA's Office to

Leslie also asked about a line in the DA's 2021 annual report claiming that diversion efforts had "not effected crime rates" in Durham. She wondered if the report meant that post-arrest diversion efforts had not increased crime rates? But then also that they had not decreased them either?

We spent the short remainder of the hour on our other intended main agenda item; planning how to approach the Family Court topic this month and next. Toia noted five main areas that should guide our inquiry. *[Mike and Toia will work on this content more later and may create a Google Document work plan to organize our work.]*

- 1) Reunification of parents and children. Both to:
 - a) study the rate over time—a research request, and;
 - b) To examine ways to increase the total number of reunifications and reduce the time for them when charges are dismissed or whatever court-ordered conditions for a parent have been met.
- 2) Representation in the court, especially for parents
- 3) Department of Social Services' role in the system.
 - a) The extensions DSS staff get when unprepared for court that drag out the process
- 4) The Guardian ad Litem's role
- 5) Visitation rights for parents and family. During the Family Court process and especially after cases are resolved or dismissed.

We also discussed the main stakeholders, community partners, agencies, etc...to engage. We divided up the responsibilities for who over the next week or so would begin the process of that correspondence and scheduling meetings. *[Jessica, you were not at this meeting, but note where Jessica suggested you could help. Muffin, you were not at this meeting, but you've expressed interest before in working on the Family Court issue. Please see which of these areas you can assist with and let us know about that when we next meet on March 16th.]*

- The Family Court team–Libria suggested Jessica Fludd could take the lead on this.
- DSS-Leslie and Jessica
- Youth in foster care. The local non-profits that provide housing for homeless foster children. Life Skills Foundation. Strong Able, Youth Speaking Out (SAYSO).--Kelly Andrews
- Alliance Mental Health. Especially Anne Oshall (sp?) relating to the status of their Becoming grant.--Toia and Marcia
- Listening Sessions with children and families who have been through the Family Court system. Also designing a survey for children and families who don't wish to be part of a Listening Session

We agreed to meet next on March 16th. We will meet biweekly from then on. We cannot decide week-to-week when we will meet next. All Task Force Round Tables have to have a consistent meeting schedule.

Our agenda for the 16th will be to discuss post-arrest diversion with Kelly Andrews in the first part of the hour before she has to leave for another meeting. We will then continue with the Family Court discussion outlined above.

Time permitting, we may move on to discussing how to plan our follow up on expansion/improvement of the Office of Pretrial Services/Pretrial Supervision program. See the [CLS Work Plan Document](#) section for more detail on the elements of this inquiry. See also the [CLS RT Mtg Minutes 8/18/21](#), [Magistrate Evans Mtg Notes 9/15/21](#), and [CLS RT Mtg Minutes 9/22/21](#) to prepare for this discussion. We'll also decide which RT members are willing to take the lead on this follow up over the next month and into April. Leslie has expressed interest in helping with this before. Mike can take the lead.