



**Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council**

**Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting: October 28, 2021 12:00 PM**

**Courthouse Annex Extension, Fort Walton Beach/  
Zoom**

**Public Safety Coordinating Council Members**

Present	Name	Agency
x	Paul Mixon	Board of County Commissioners
x	C. Eric Esmond	Chief Corrections Officer
x	Judge Gontarek	Circuit Judge
	Judge Grinsted	County Judge
x	Craig Coffey	Deputy County Administrator
	April Madden	Assistant State Attorney
x	Charles Russell	Assistant Public Defender
x	Robert Kemp	Circuit Administrator, Florida Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Services
x	Kelli Huckabee	Pretrial Services
	Tina Ferland	Judicial Corrections Services, County Probation Provider

**Other Attendees:**

Sheila Fitzgerald, Deputy County Administrator  
 April McDaniel, Captain, Department of Corrections  
 John Schwarz, Captain, Department of Corrections  
 Tammy Matthews, Department of Corrections  
 Desiree Hartwig, Department of Corrections  
 Dennis Knighten, Department of Corrections  
 Susan Priddy, Corizon Health Services, Department of Corrections  
 Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center, Inc.  
 Bonnie Barlow, Bridgeway Center, Inc.  
 John Anderson, Okaloosa Clerk of Court Office  
 Valerie Broxson, Clerk of Court Administration  
 Julie Gaither, Florida Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Services  
 Dale Carter, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
 Cassie Reed, Assistant State Attorney

Meeting opened at 12:00 pm.

**Meeting conducted via Zoom.**

**Welcome:**

**Minutes/Commissioner Report**

1. a. Commissioner Mixon opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

- b. The minutes were approved as sent.

## **2. Old Business**

- a. The HIV/Syphilis MOU between the Health Department and OCDOC was discussed. The agreement allows access to vaccinations and treatment for high risk populations in the community as well as inmates in custody. This partnership is successfully making the community safer where these diagnoses are concerned.
- b. Chief Esmond provided accolades to the Reentry and Programs team for continuing to build on the programs they are able to provide to inmates. Mr. Knighten completed the OSHA instructor class and is now authorized to teach OSHA 10 General Industry and Construction for the inmates in custody; Mr. Knighten is working on a lesson plan and hopes to begin classes soon. Ms. Hartwig is conducting the Serve Safe program and testing.
- c. There are no current inmate/staff positive COVID cases. The number of quarantine sections has decreased with new commits quarantined as a precaution prior to being placed into population. Multiple-section quarantines make inmate movement, appointments, and court difficult. OCDOC is still affording vaccinations to those who want them.
- d. OCDOC is continuing to move forward with court procedures and inmate allowances such as religious services, haircuts, education and AA. Visitation is still restricted to off-site virtual visitation. The option for virtual visitation to restart on site without a cost to the family is anticipated soon.

## **3. Jail Report**

- a. Chief Esmond presented the statistics report. The ADP remains over design capacity with the current population around 680. Courts, pretrial, and Law Enforcement are working hard to keep the population low. Cold night shelters were discussed. The information is provided to department staff to disseminate to at-risk individuals when released to help prevent homeless individuals from intentional arrests during the cold months. The department held a blanket drive past year to provide support to the homeless upon release.

## **4. Pretrial Services Report**

- b. Kelli Huckabee provided a report for review on pretrial services statistics. Having COVID numbers decrease allows them to see more individuals and get them started on pretrial and released from jail more quickly. There are just over 80 cases on GPS which is the highest they have had. The majority of defendants on GPS would likely be in jail, so their numbers have had an impact on the jail population. The mental health cases are around ninety defendants. The diversion program can accommodate fifteen at a time and has been remaining at capacity. Pretrial has a vacant position in mental health and a new hire is starting next Monday.

## **5. New Business**

- a. Chief Esmond discussed the FMJS inspections which were recently

conducted. The medical inspection occurred in September and the security operations inspections was conducted in October. The Florida Sheriff's Association allows a waiver form to be filed due to covid-19 as opposed to an on-site inspection, but the department opted for the inspectors to come in person. The medical inspector was impressed with all the staff as well as the comradery throughout the jail when it comes to medical, mental health, and dietary needs. The operations inspector was also complimentary of the staff. Standards in both inspections were in compliance which is a good indication the department is ready and in compliance with regards to the FCAC reaccreditation assessment next year.

- b. The new body scanner purchased and installed by the department was discussed. The device assists with checking inmates as they enter custody and inmate workers. The scanner helps protect from contraband coming in due to finding things we can't see with the naked eye. The scanner is a deterrent since inmate often turn in the contraband since they know it will be detected.
- c. Inmate tablets were disseminated yesterday by the programs team. Most inmates have access to their own tablet. The tablets provide opportunities for reading, educational and religious materials as well as movies, and music. The tablets are a valuable behavior modification tool.
- d. Cost-free vaccinations are still being provided to the inmate population both for COVID and the seasonal flu. 104 flu shots have been provided so far. This serves to keep the community safer, especially where high risk populations are concerned.
- e. Chief Esmond spoke on the commitment plan for inmates sentenced to prison. The department has to wait for authorization for inmates to be transferred which is taking longer due to staff shortages at the prisons and work camps. The number of inmates accepted each week has been reduced. Chief Esmond is working to get the number increased.

## **6. Closing Announcements**

- a. Commissioner Mixon introduced and welcomed Sheila Fitzgerald, the new deputy county administrator.
- b. The State Attorney's Office for the south end will be moving to the public works building from their location in Shalimar.
- c. There has been a proposed plan to create a judicial services building near the court house where inmates could be booked in and remain for about 2 weeks to get them through first appearance. The public defenders and state attorneys would have areas in this building to facilitate meetings with each other and the inmates housed there.
- d. Lt. Huisken's daughter has leukemia and everyone is asked to keep the family in their thoughts and prayers.
- e. The proposed PSCC schedule for 2022 was approved.

f. Mr. McFarland reported the cold night program will do another season.

g. Commissioner Mixon wished everyone a safe holiday season.

Meeting ended at 12:36 pm.