

MINUTES:

Quorum is present.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Carmen Pacheco-Jones called the meeting to order at 11:34 AM.

Pacheco-Jones introduced Vice-Chair Elect Melissa Haney to the committee and requested that she introduce herself.

Haney informed everyone that she is a county public defender and has been a part of the Racial Equity Committee since its inception, primarily taking an observer role.

Other attendees introduced themselves.

Committee Member Kurtis Robinson was congratulated on his appointment to the Washington State Justice Training Council. It was requested that his new position would be discussed at the April meeting and would be on the agenda.

Committee Member Natasha Hill was congratulated on her appointment to the workgroup overseeing county commissioner redistricting. She was invited to speak on this topic at the end of this meeting or be placed on the April agenda.

2. Minutes

No discussion of minutes took place.

3. Discussion of the Equity Tool Kit

Pacheco-Jones gave a brief history of the racial equity toolkit’s development in Spokane County. The toolkit was one of many recommendations given by the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC)/MacArthur Foundation Grant. The county received GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) and REJI (Race Equity and Justice Initiative) training and assistance with toolkit development. However, for various reasons which were alluded to but not discussed, the toolkit never materialized. Pacheco-Jones turned the discussion over to Law and Justice Administrator Maggie Yates for further discussion.

Yates explained that the county received another award from the SJC to create an equity toolkit specifically for the legal system. The idea is to bring together a committee of system actors and RE committee members to create a user-friendly tool that officials across the legal system can use as they make decisions. The tool can be a synthesis of the REJI and the GARE tools that already exist, and the workgroup can tailor them to relevant legal systems. Yates provided therapeutic courts as an example. As system professionals work to create an additional therapeutic court, they can use the tool as they create eligibility criteria with the goal of creating equitable access to services.

Pacheco-Jones then mentioned that the workgroup would include two committee members and asked for volunteers. Committee members Boone and Fjeld expressed interest in serving on the workgroup. Community activist Liz Moore (PJALS) also expressed interest but believed she might not have the capacity to serve on the workgroup.

Pacheco-Jones provided more information. She stated that \$3,000 had been allotted for toolkit development and that could provide stipends for those involved in toolkit creation. She stated that \$25,000 had been allocated in the past, but the toolkit never was delivered.

Pacheco-Jones stated that the city was also in the process of developing a toolkit. She asked Alex Gibilisco, Manager of Equity and Inclusion Initiatives for the City of Spokane, if his office might match those funds. Gibilisco said he would speak with the City Council President about matching funds, but currently the only city involvement that has been established is Gibilisco's involvement in the county workgroup. There has not been any established city-county collaboration on toolkits.

Pacheco-Jones requested that community members interested in volunteering for the workgroup send an email and cc Haney, Yates, Pacheco-Jones and Tomeo-Sam.

Committee Member Curtis Hampton had several questions.

Hampton asked if the toolkit would be used retroactively to look at past cases; Pacheco-Jones asked if he meant on cases as in people who had already experienced conviction. Hampton concurred.

Yates interjected that the tool was not being used on case-level decision but rather it would direct the form and scope of initial [Yates' internet connection was cut.]

Community member and scribe Frohnhoefer interjected stating that her understanding of racial equity toolkits is that they do not go back to look at previous cases since those cases were conducted prior to any racial equity intervention, however those cases could be used to identify issues and inform toolkit development so that the same mistakes would not occur in the future. Hampton reasserted his perspective that it wasn't clear how previous decisions had been came to be and it was worth looking back to see how it was done.

Committee Member Kurtis Robinson offered his perspective, stating that the system's past inequities are relevant and warrants a look back to get clear data-based trends to inform the toolkit as it is developed and to address massive miseducation on the past and doing so will be a good way to develop better toolkits.

Pacheco-Jones asked Yates (who was able to reconnect to the meeting) to speak more to the strategic planning for the Office of Law and Justice and to share this information on the FB page, on the webpage, and send it electronically. Yates agreed and stated she would be glad to share it with anyone who requests the draft charter. Yates' assistant, Candace Aguiree, dropped a link to the document in the chat.

Committee Member Rick Matters arrived to the meeting. The toolkit discussion was summarized for his benefit. Pacheco-Jones added that the money allotted for toolkit development would include stipends for community members who are involved and she asked again that anyone interested, including Matters, to volunteer or to send an email to Pacheco-Jones, Gibilisco, Yates and Tomeo-Sam.

Pacheco-Jones had to leave the meeting, and turned the floor over to Vice-Chair Elect Haney. Prior to leaving, Committee Member Boone asked if Pacheco-Jones could share her thoughts and comments on the Intake and Release Center.

4. Update on the Intake and Release Center

In response to Boone's request, Pacheco-Jones stated that the IRC data has been less than transparent. She stated that as far as she was aware 50 individuals had been processed through the center and those who were processed were individuals who had already experienced a great deal of privilege within the system. She expressed concerns that law enforcement are not taking recently arrested individuals to the center and that the IRC has not reduced disparities or jail population.

Yates stated that she was happy to address these issues in her presentation. Vice-Chair Elect Haney asked if Yates could begin her presentation. [The entire presentation can be found in the RE presentation link on the Law and Justice website].

The highlights of the presentation include:

- CARES funding was used to create the IRC with the goal of reducing the jail population and promoting social distancing during the COVID pandemic
- The IRC is staffed with an onsite Naphcare medical professional
- The IRC's primary concerns are public health and increasing efficiencies in the booking and release system
- An additional goal is to stabilize people who are in contact with the justice system
- The IRC is on the county court campus in a modular unit located between the jail and the Public Facilities Building
- A video describing the goals and purpose of the IRC will be released to the public later this month
- The IRC is a pilot project with limited hours (Mon-Fri)
- It has been in existence for three weeks
- A peer navigator will be placed in the IRC starting 3/15
- Peer services are voluntary; a justice-involved individual does not have to meet with a peer navigator but peer services can provide hygiene materials, food, transportation, assessments and connections to resources
- The IRC books and releases those with eligible charges

Haney asked what charges are eligible. Yates replied that low level misdemeanors are eligible. Yates also took this time to answer Pacheco-Jones' concerns regarding those who are chosen to be processed.

Yates stated that there are two populations currently being served by the IRC. The first group are individuals who have been arrested by law enforcement on low level misdemeanors and are taken to the IRC to be booked and released. The second population are those who are court-ordered book and release. They have already been seen by a judge and need to be processed before being released. Prior to the IRC's opening, these individuals would have been transferred to Geiger in order to be fingerprinted, or would have to arrange a means to get to Geiger on their own. These services are offered to anyone who needs to be fingerprinted.

Pacheco-Jones other concern, that LE are not bringing eligible people to the IRC was addressed by Yates who stated that system people are meeting with LE and others to increase admissions to the IRC by addressing appropriate training and protocols. She also stated that the IRC has been operational for three weeks and does not have enough data available to address issues of disparity yet.

Committee Member Curtis Hampton asked what capacity expectations there are for the IRC and if there is any indication of how many people might pass through it on a given day.

Yates answered that the anticipated capacity is one person per hour and so far the IRC is processing approximately six individuals per shift.

Hampton asked how many houseless individuals passed through the IRC and what happens to those individuals when they are released.

Yates stated there are no statistics on unhoused people at this time. She further stated that one of the reasons for hiring a peer navigator is to provide resources for individuals who need assistance. Peer navigators can ensure that that someone in need of a service or housing does not experience a gap in services. A navigator can direct an individual to a warming shelter, for instance, and right now that kind of service is not offered upon jail release.

Hampton followed up his question by asking if a person who is released at 5 am but it is cold outside, would they be allowed to stay in the IRC until the weather warms up.

Yates responded that that is a question for detention services, however, she does know that bus passes are provided and that one of the touch-points being highlighted by MacArthur is transportation provision for justice-involved individuals.

Committee member Kurtis Robinson expressed his thanks to Yates for the changes that were made in the video. He explained that several community members on the advisory board had made suggestions and that those suggestions were taken. He also stated that the advisory board is tracking data collection on who is going in and out of the IRC and having that information broken down by race, gender and ethnicity in order to address the inherent disparities in the system and catch them before they get too far down the path.

Yates followed up stating that that her office is waiting for one month to get a full data pull but that race is one of the performance indicators that is going back to the community advisory committee.

Robinson also requested follow-up on an issue regarding video surveillance of the IRC. He explained that there is a history of corrections and other law enforcement officers participating in retaliatory and off-the-record physical attacks of arrestees in surveillance blind-spots. Robinson said that he knows first-hand that there is a “cliquey” culture of brotherhood between corrections officers and law enforcement that results in POC being “roughed up” and he wanted to be real about that and raise those concerns with Yates. Robinson wanted to know if blind-spots exist in the current camera placement.

Yates responded that her office is following up on those concerns.

Vice-Chair Elect and current county public defender Melissa Haney asked for clarification on the IRC’s booking process. For instance, when a prosecutor sends out a summons and an individual is expected to be booked and released, do PDs and defendants still have to call Geiger.

Yates responded that detention services is still developing the protocol but the RE committee can request that Director Sparber come to the committee to explain the process.

Haney also wanted to know if there were a list of misdemeanors that were eligible for IRC processing.

Yates responded that there are general orders out of municipal court and individuals are sent to the IRC by the judge.

Municipal Court Judge Antush stated that this is the first he has heard of this and will reach out to Sparber since municipal court had not been contacted.

Committee member and public defender Michiko Fjeld asked if eligibility is based on past criminal history or the current charge.

Yates replied that it is based on the current charge. However, if someone is actively combative they will be sent to the jail since the IRC is a low-level security facility.

Chair Elect Angelique Tomeo-Sam asked if about disqualifying pending charges.

Yates replied that if individuals have a warrant for their arrest then they can still be served by the IRC unless the warrant states the individual must be held.

Tomeo-Sam asked what if an individual doesn’t have a warrant.

Yates responded that detention services could speak to that better than she was able to.

Fjeld asked about municipal and district court warrants and FTAs.

Yates stated that those individuals could be processed through the IRC unless there is a mandatory hold. She further explained that the pilot is in Phase One which is a launch phase. Future phases will consider first appearance hearings that are held later in the evening to reduce the need for individuals to spend the night in jail, however there are current logistical challenges in developing a new first appearance docket and the county is awaiting funding to complete that model.

Haney asked what determined whether or not an individual were combative.

Yates restated that any sign of combative behavior would result in jail referral as the IRC is low-level security.

Committee member Rick Matters asked for more information on communication between departments and the public so as to avoid a shooting like the one that occurred several months prior when a woman was shot and killed in the jail lobby by a corrections officer. Matters wanted to know about the protocols that are keeping people safe.

Yates replied that those were great questions. She explained that law enforcement has been informed of the IRCs location. She added that an intercom is at the door of the IRC with a communication panel between those on the inside and outside. Lights and cameras are also located outside the facility. Yates would like to hear any other

thoughts or suggestions regarding public safety and signage around the IRC.

Boone asked if there were signage or any other instructions outside of the IRC.

Yates responded that she was not aware of any.

Before moving on to micro-grants, Yates confirmed that she will reach out to Director Sparber on Robinson's request regarding camera placement and on Judge Antush's need to be in communication with Director Sparber regarding referrals to the IRC. She also stated that links to the transportation initiative and the impact use assessment tool were available in the chat feature.

5. Brief Update on Microgrants

Yates began her micro-grant briefing with the amount of money allotted to the program. Seventy-five thousand dollars will be distributed to community based organizations that are directly involved in the goals of the MacArthur Grant Safety and Justice Challenge, namely reducing the jail population, increasing community engagement, and addressing racial disparities throughout the justice system. Three organizations will be awarded 25K each, but that amount is flexible given the scope of the organization's solution.

The micro-grant program is being overseen by two system actors: Superior Court Judge Maryann Moreno and Spokane County Public Defender Director Thomas Krzyminski. They will be joined by members of the Law and Justice Community Advisory Board so long as the member does not have a conflict of interest. Better Health Together will provide facilitation and support by reviewing the RFPs and making suggestions.

The micro-grant committee is scheduled to begin meeting in April and it will take a few months before the details are established but all information will be made publicly available and provided to the RE committee.

Haney asked Chair Elect Tomeo-Sam to introduce herself and to make any comments she wished about the micro-grants. Tomeo-Sam introduced herself as the Chair Elect and thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said she looked forward to all of the good things on the horizon.

6. Closing

Before adjourning the meeting, Haney wanted to discuss the resolution that was brought before the Board of County Commissioners by Prosecutor Larry Haskell. The resolution proposed the termination of the Spokane Regional Law and Justice Council and, by extension, the Racial Equity Committee. Haney was also concerned about the resolution's recommended committee which would not include the public defender's office.

Yates contributed to the discussion stating that the resolution was not voted on during the BoCC meeting, that it was a proposal and no action had been taken. Based on Yates' understanding the SRLJC would be pared down to those in the statute and the PD might not be in the statute. The resolution would be discussed at the next SRLJC meeting on the 10th and more information will be available at that time.

Committee Member Matters voiced his thoughts and those of other community members who he said "listened in on the hearing." He stated he was unhappy with the resolution as it changes the make-up of community representation to five or six individuals across the county and that seemed to intentionally shrink the voice of POC communities and "water it down" so that someone with white nationalist views in another part of the county would be given a community spot.

Haney voiced her concerns that the lack of representation from the public defender's office would result in a lack of a voice representing the people in the system. She wanted to know if her office could participate in the meeting.

Matters said that he believed that as soon as the BoCC vote it would go into effect and that does not give the community a chance to respond.

Hampton wanted to know if there were a place-holder spot for community comment.

Yates requested that the RE committee submit a list of speakers to her office by the ninth.

Hampton asked who would like to speak for five to ten minutes.

Chair Elect Tomeo-Sam volunteered. She stated that she has looked into the policies and procedures for the SRLJC and has seen impacted people being omitted from committees and limited in participation. This has concerned her from the beginning and when it was brought up in council it was tabled. She believes that the council should be equipped with a guideline that there is a RE committee. Further, she believes that it is no mistake that this was intentional move on the part of the prosecutor and BoCC to omit the voices of BIPOC from the discussion and instead they should be looking for a racial equity lens. She stated she was sorry but white people's opinions and white supremacy has been damaging and she thinks it is important for people to testify for about four minutes each and to work together.

The internet connection was dropped.

Aguirre and Yates emailed attendees requesting that they rejoin the meeting. Several individuals logged back on, but the majority did not. Some joking ensued about the connection dropping as soon as white nationalism was brought up.

Matters asked those present if it was confirmed that two individuals would speak for five minutes each at the meeting on the 10th.

Hampton suggested that they follow Tomeo-Sam's lead and arrange four or five people to speak and coordinate so that everyone is on the same page.

Matters suggests writing a community letter.

Hampton suggests that Matters and Tomeo-Sam meet to get "new voices out there" and everyone should meet again to arrange how it will be done.

Matters again suggests writing a community letter. Tomeo-Sam will put a call out to community organizations to sign it.

Hampton wants to know what is left on the agenda and if the meeting is over. He suggests establishing a group for the tenth and ending the meeting on that note.

Tomeo-Sam and Matters exchanged phone numbers in the chat.

Tomeo-Sam thanks everyone for attending. She wanted to know who the project manager was for the new community court but since the meeting was running out of time she would like to set up an introduction for that at another meeting. She asks if anyone has anything else.

Matters stated that although institutions of incarceration are using rapid COVID testing it is difficult to get testing accomplished as many people are not trained and those who are trained have transitioned into giving vaccines. He said that they are trying to hire more people for rapid testing so that people can get out of the door as soon as possible, but unfortunately there is more testing on the way out than on the way in, but that people 50 and over, both those incarcerated and staff, are being vaccinated so that is a good thing and that is where they are at right now.

Tomeo-Sam said that Raiz of Planned Parenthood is hosting a clinic in cooperation with Smith-Barbieri specifically for LatinX, Hispanic and Indigenous populations on Sunday and that there will also be food distribution. She continued that anyone high-risk, 18 and older, living in a multi-generational household are all welcome and can make an appointment with Lilli Navaratte at Raiz. Tomeo-Sam will distribute the number across the RE committee.

Hampton stated that he went to the vaccination site at the MLK Center and it was extremely smooth and it wasn't long at all.

Vice Chair Francis Adewalde logged into the Zoom and apologized for being late. He thanked Haney and Tomeo-Sam for chairing the meeting.

Silence ensued.

There being no motion to adjourn, the scribe asked when to state the meeting adjourned, if it had adjourned at all.

Hampton and Matters said one o'clock.

Adjourned 1:00 PM

SCRIBE: Annemarie Frohnhoefer

Next Meeting: 4/1/2021