

# Madison County Justice Reinvestment Advisory Council

## Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2025

12:00pm

### Madison County Prosecutor's Office Conference Room

Members Present: Heather Anderson, Betsy Baxter, Sheriff John Beeman, Carl Chambers, Lesley Chodkowski, Judge Mark Dudley, Andrew Hanna, Judge David Happe, David Kane, Austin Parrish, Judge Angela Sims, Bryan Williams

Discussion Topic: Reimagining the Madison County Criminal Justice System

- Andrew Hanna discusses current county budget issues and proposed resolution through local income tax to public safety fund.
  - The state has forced the County's hand due to budget cuts at both the state and federal level.
  - The goal is to change the LIT to move from property taxes.
  - Very much need the County Council's support as this is the only proposed option thus far that increases revenue.
  - Local Income Tax Council eliminates in 2028 and will then fall to the County.
  - Will be difficult to revamp the criminal justice system without funds to support efforts.
  - JRAC members present communicated support of this plan.
- Judge Angela Sims communicates desire to have conversation about funding, resources available in our community, completion of the jail and services provided along the way, and the future of the correctional complex and work release.
  - The goal is to reimagine how we operate and why we do with a grand need to ensure a complete plan that ensures success, promotes consistency, and functionality that affects our mission as a system.
  - It has been proposed that MCCC no longer exist, or at least as is.
  - Services should be offered at the jail and consistent among programs.
- Judge Sims opens the conversation to determine the viability of Work Release as is and communicates:
  - Annual \$1.5 million financial commitment.
  - Participants are often placed at work release due to lack of other options and aren't a good fit for the program.
  - Possibilities include improved evaluations/criteria, or not at all with increased electronic monitoring.
  - David Kane communicates previously having advocated for the closure of the work release program and advises that it is a viable program with the correct criteria, the right people in the right services, and a meaningful purpose in the program. David speaks to the following:

- The program is currently staffed by part time employees which is detrimental due to ongoing turnover among staff.
- Currently operates as a homeless shelter and drug treatment center.
- Population should include individuals that can and desire to be rehabilitated.
- Current participants are often unemployed and behind in paying fees.
- Work release budget is heavily tied to the grant.
  - Grant budgets are expected to be cut further.
  - Closing Work Release could have a significant impact on grant funds available to our system.
- MCCC seems to be the more appropriate complex for the Work Release program.
- Participants should either be employed or employable.
- Work Release is a critical component of the Continuum of Sanctions model.
- Proposes a short-term commitment as a sanction with no further hearings, etc.
- Suggests a risk-based application/review process as to whether a person is appropriate for community corrections.
  - Judge Happe proposes this evaluation taking place during the pretrial assessment phase.
  - Bryan Williams suggests the evaluation taking place later due to transient nature of our population.
  - Carl Chambers advises that community corrections staff completes the prescreening form in most counties.
- Judge Happe speaks to increased homelessness and DOC commitments if Work Release were to cease.
- Work release started in the 80s with the GM model and became a separate facility in the 90s.
- Bryan Williams speaks to the original purpose of Work Release being to prevent offenders from losing good jobs.
- Discussion held about possibility of contracting with the state to house offenders at MCCC. Parties agreed that this is not possible due to the dormitory style set up over cells.
- Andrew Hanna speaks to liability associate with MCCC housing offenders.
- Judge Sims speaks about the possibility of moving other community supervision providers, including probation, to this facility.
- Andrew Hanna speaks to possibility of DPAs crafting sentences in plea agreements in a different fashion to avoid initial placement at Work Release.
- Bryan Williams suggests building plea agreements to include evaluations for either Work Release or In Home Detention and include a fall back of DOC time if offender doesn't complete the evaluation or is determined ineligible.
- Andrew Hanna reminds all that jail sentences are possible.
  - Currently 3 - 4 people serving jail sanctions.
- Andrew Hanna advises that Continuum of Sanctions does not exist by statute.
- Bryan Williams suggests Work Release becoming a transitional piece of sentences, much like the Community Transition Program.
- Judge Dudley communicates seeing no purpose in Work Release due to lack of purpose and goal.

- David Kane speaks to a fair number of Continuum of Sanctions participants that lose residency overnight and Work Release offering reliable housing over homelessness.
- Judge Happe communicates utility in Work Release and lack of willingness to scrap it at this point.
- Judge Dudley and Carl Chambers speaks to the improved technology associated with the 24-hour GPS monitoring systems and all ankle bracelets being GPS at this point.
  - David Kane communicates absent and exclusion zone, real time monitoring is not happening.
  - Andrew communicates grand need for 24 hours GPS monitoring center with check ins and home visits as there is no one is currently monitoring participants around the clock and participants know it.
  - Judge Dudley agrees that in-home detention needs changes to promote public safety.
  - David Kane advises that some element of the Work Release center budget could be cross applied to a monitoring center and that the primary need to implement is personnel.
- Andrew speaks to statewide downward trends in funding and likelihood that this continues over time.
- Judge Dudley suggests the possibility of testing the suggestions thus far to include:
  - No Work Release in plea agreements.
  - COS is left open to the board.
  - Beginning to sentence IV-D population to MCCC.
- Judge Happe speaks to the population that has already been sentenced to Work Release that is coming down the pipeline.
- Judges agree that Work Release is most utilized as a sanction when In-Home Detention is violated.
- Judge Sims proposes lowering the bed capacity (currently 93) and repurposing to ensure a more appropriate population.
- Judge Happe inquires about possibility and other counties that run Work Release out of their jail.
  - Sheriff Beeman and Judge Sims advise that Posey County is one of few, and that the counties are typically smaller.
- MCCC capacity is currently 132.
- David Kane communicates need to identify the purpose of Work Release and that it is currently a default for parties that relapse or find themselves in crisis.
- Judge Sims communicates the need to get Commissioners involved once JRAC has drafted a strong plan to implement and force them to make some tough decisions.
  - Andrew proposes discussion and negotiation as a starting point and issuance of reports, community involvement, etc. as needed.
- Bryan Williams again proposes that we lose the mindset that Work Release is a punishment and promote a short-term transitional period.
- David communicates the possibility of using grant funds if work release houses, even a few beds, as a misdemeanor facility (possibly for IV-D).

- Judge Happe again touches on the significant number of DOC and in-home detention commitments that will be triggered by the loss of Work Release.
  - Judge Sims speaks to ability to sentence to the jail for short periods of time.
  - Judge Happe communicates concern with offenders losing jobs and housing in those short-term stents.
  - GPS commitment is currently approximately \$4.00/day.
  - Estimated cost of Work Release is approximately \$140/week with approximately a 50% collection rate.
    - Andrew notes the need for the county attorney to pursue some of the areas.
  - Regular In-Home Detention is an Adult Day Reporting Model and costs approximately \$30/month.
    - This includes no monitors, only home checks.
  - Judges speak to the number of public defender fees have been ordered at sentencing.
  - Judge Sims speaks to the revolving door associated with misdemeanor crimes and the need to hold them for at least a short period to connect individuals to resources and services.
  - Judge Sims speaks to the strong desire to make significant changes now to prevent falling back into old ways due to all parties being creatures of habit.
- Action items:
- Add topic to Judge's meeting agenda to discuss with all Judges and schedule a second meeting prior to discussion with the Commissioners.
  - Andrew to send email that eliminates Work Release as initial placement.
  - Andrew to host an attorneys meeting to train on plans moving forward.
  - Carl to gain a copy of the pre-screener form.