

# **Louisiana State Bar Association Criminal Justice Committee Meeting**

Monday, December 12, 2022  
2:00 PM Central Time

## Meeting Minutes

### **Participants:**

Jean Faria, Attorney at Law (Co-Chair)  
Barksdale Hortenstine, Orleans Public Defenders (Co-Chair)  
Norma Dubois, Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office  
Richard Bourke, Louisiana Capital Assistance Center  
Shannon Dirmann, Louisiana Sheriff's Association  
Monica Doss, Rapides Parish District Attorney's Office  
Jennifer Eagan, Louisiana Supreme Court  
Meghan Garvey, Attorney at Law  
Scherri Guidry, 15<sup>th</sup> JDC Public Defender Office  
Jimmie Herring, Attorney at Law  
Elizabeth Hyman, Attorney at Law  
Mithun Kamath, Orleans Parish District Attorney  
Simone Levine, Orleans Parish District Attorney  
Katherine Mattes, Tulane Law School  
Mercedes Montagnes, Promise of Justice  
Jared Elijah-Akeem Nelson, Liskow & Lewis APLC  
Charlie Raymond, Forrest Cressy and James, LLC  
William Snowden, Vera Institute of Justice  
Briana Spivey, City of Shreveport  
Edward Tarpley, Attorney at Law  
Adrienne Wheeler, Louisiana Appleseed  
Sarah Whittington, Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana

### **Guests:**

Kimberly Dickerson, Vera Institute of Justice

### **Staff:**

Monte Mollere, Louisiana State Bar Association  
Amy Duncan, Louisiana State Bar Association

#### **I. Approval of Minutes from September Meeting**

*Norma Dubois*

Minutes from previous meeting were approved as written.

#### **II. Mental Health & Criminal Justice Working Group**

*Barksdale Hortenstine* informed the committee that a working group has been formed. Members Jennifer Eagan, Richard Bourke, Angela Waltman, Briana Spivey, Norma Dubois, and Jean Faria make up the working group and have met twice since the last

meeting. Barksdale turned it over to Jennifer Eagan who presented the results of a recent survey she distributed at a judicial conference to stakeholders regarding mental health and the justice system. The PowerPoint was provided in meeting materials.

- a. **Comments from Survey Presentation:** AOT courts as a solution. Can the Committee determine the success rate/outcomes of AOT programs? Propose benches taking on specialty court and specify AOT as a specialty court seat.
- b. **Training Opportunities** - Jean Faria discussed potential opportunity to host sessions at Louisiana Mental Health Association's annual meeting and connect criminal justice system stakeholders with social workers, peer support specialists, licensed professional counselors and school counselors. This is their 6<sup>th</sup> annual education conference, in which they anticipate 350+ professionals. They offered to allocate several sessions to topics that will appeal to both the criminal justice legal community and mental health professionals. The conference will be offered virtually and offer CEU hours for SWs, LPCs, and Peer Support specialists. We would like to offer CLEs for the sessions we host and there is a possibility of a reduced cost fee for attorneys and lawyers to attend these sessions. They prerecord the sessions and ask presenters to attend the day of the event to answer question and facilitate discussion. On a call with LAMHA we received a few topic suggestions, such as education on AOT courts – what it is and how to set it up; the need for intermediate resources and services (in addition to short and long term); and legal help for families with members suffering from mental illness. Please send topic recommendations to Amy Duncan by December 19<sup>th</sup>. RFPs are due December 31. The conference will be held in April.
- c. **Mental Health Working Group Update** - Barksdale Hortenstine shared that this group has met twice. During the first meeting in September, members discussed the opportunity to invite stakeholders outside of the legal community to join – Coroners, social workers, licensed professional counselors, sheriffs, law enforcement, probation and parole, and substance use disorder counselors. Recommendations are welcomed. Also decided a first project will be to document the issues and stages in the criminal justice process that impact mental illness. The group met again in October and spent several hours documenting everything from pre-offense factors to issues at post-conviction proceedings. Continue to work on this and possibly use as a guide for listening sessions with some of the stakeholders mentioned to gain differing perspective on their issues and find commonalities among groups. If anyone has recommendations on who should be included in these discussions or the ongoing work in the subcommittee, reach out to Barksdale Hortenstine.

### III. 2022-2023 Committee Initiative(s)

- a. Norma Dubois presented survey results of proposals available [Here](#) which barely made it to a quorum with 22 total votes. The rankings were very close when weighted together. The breakdown of the proposals ranked #1 are below:
  - i. Uniform Court System (11 voted this for #1) with some of the following suggested action items: Identify the different working groups and the parameters of those groups and Convene stake holders/ various groups to assess).

- ii. Improving Forensic Services/Analysis in Criminal Cases (6 voted as #1)
  - iii. Alternative assistance for criminal justice stakeholders (5 voted as #1)
- b. Jennifer mentioned the reformation of the Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (ICJIS) Policy Board to look at how criminal justice system information is shared between agencies. Jennifer suggested committee members attend the meeting. Focus is on court systems that speak to each other and records to go online. Unified case management program is challenging. The LASC is working on this from a ground up approach, through the creation of uniform court websites and resources as well as remote hearing access. Possible amendments to District Court Rules. Clerks are needed to be included in this conversation.
- c. **Discussion** - Considering the breadth of this initiative, the lack of survey responses, and modest number of volunteers willing to take this on, we ask the committee members for your comments and how you see this moving forward. Chairs met internally to discuss and agreed that there is a need to know the Court and other stakeholders' positions before moving forward. This may be an opportunity to not necessarily take this up as an initiative this year but convene groups that have been mentioned as already working on projects for information gathering purposes to better identify what needs to be done. Jennifer suggests keeping an eye on what the ICJIS Board is doing, help with the work, and identify potential gaps. Jared Nelson offered law enforcement perspective based on his experience as a law enforcement officer for several years. Shannon Dirmann mentioned that the Louisiana Sheriff's Association has been in discussions about a uniform system and it comes down to the costs associated.
- d. Richard Bourke wants to repropose initiatives at next meeting; Charlie Raymond suggests proposals over a two-year period. Meghan Garvey suggests that you need buy in and a working group, but if you don't have the full force of the committee behind it, it will not be successful.

#### IV. **Discussion Items**

- a. Vera Institute of Justice New Orleans Kimberly Dickerson and William Snowden gave an overview of Vera, its work, and their new Dashboard, which is in the concept/design phase expected to be launched in Q1 2023. The latter will be a statewide perspective of jail populations to identify systemic issues from a quantitative and qualitative analysis perspective. Key data points may include demographics, average length of stay, costs, and locations by parish. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

#### V. **Next Meeting** – March 1, 2023, at Noon