

County Chief Adult Probation and Parole Officers Association of PA
General Business Meeting
Wednesday, September 20, 2023
Penn Stater Hotel & Conference Center, State College and Zoom

Chief POs in attendance in person: Alan Pelton (Allegheny), Regina Himes (Armstrong), Ian Thomson (Beaver), Dan Heydt (Berks), Amanda Moore (Blair), Matthew Kimmel (Carbon), Ryan Smeltzer (Centre), Chris Pawlowski (Chester), Trevor Oates (Crawford), Darby Christlieb (Cumberland), Chad Libby (Dauphin), Danielle Hibberd (Delaware), Jen Quagliani (Elk), Chris Kessler (Erie), James Caccimelio (Fayette), Doug Wilburne (Franklin), Dan Miller (Fulton), Len Hahn (Huntingdon), James Decker (Indiana-interim), Tracy Gordon (Jefferson), Michelle Beaver (Juniata), Gene Eiden (Lackawanna), Mark Wilson (Lancaster), Audrey Fortna (Lebanon), Pamela Sheffer (Lehigh-proxy), Ann Marie Braskey (Luzerne), Nick Wolfkiel (Mifflin), Bernie Sikora (Monroe), Kathy Subbio (Montgomery), Paul Singley (Northampton), Roger Miller (Perry), Jeffrey Angradi (Pike), Colin Devanney (Snyder), Troy Freeman (Tioga), Scott Kerstetter (Union), Jon Ridge (Washington), Eric Leydig (Westmoreland) and April Billet (York)

Chief POs in attendance via Zoom: Justin Popovich (Bradford), Christine Shenk (Bucks), Andrew Hathorn (Cameron), Kristine Shaffer (Clarion-proxy), Shawn Burkhart (Clearfield), Jason Fultz (Clinton), Mark Rhoads (Forest), James Jendrysik (Lawrence), and CJ Begansky (Schuylkill)

Others in attendance in person: Renawn Harris (Allegheny), Richard Jopek (Beaver), John Scolastico (Berks), Brendan Harker (Berks), Owen Scott (Berks), Frank Cardo (Berks), Jessica Boder (Berks), Scott Bailey (Blair), Amanda Jackson (Butler), Amy Petricca (Butler), Steven Fingado (Cameron), Craig Geisel (Chester), Joe Kmetz (Chester), Sandi Larson (Chester), Rebecca Showers (Chester), Meredith Zurin (Dauphin), Andrew Cooper (Dauphin), Gretchen Anderson (Dauphin), Jeff Roney (Delaware), Christine Katch (Delaware), William Decker (Elk), Ellen Eckert (Franklin), Dave Eckert (Franklin), Kevin Zook (Franklin), Amber Snedeker (Huntingdon), Amanda Yurky (Indiana), Adam Oakes (Jefferson), Abby Krepps (Juniata), Meghan Osborne (Lackawanna), Alfredo Pisa (Lackawanna), Jennifer Nissley (Lancaster), Matthew Haines (Lancaster), Jennifer Luciano (Lancaster), Benjamin Moyer (Lehigh), Kristin Berke (Lehigh), Shane Schmeckenbecher (Lehigh), Claudia Fisher (Luzerne), Carmen Lopresto (Luzerne), Colton Spade (Mifflin), Todd Bergman (Montgomery), Reneé Ficzko (Montgomery), Megan Morrison (Montgomery), Robert Wolff (Pike), Steven Russell (Union), Naaman Morris (Union), Karen Lebar (Washington), Lisa Salak (Wayne), Pat Nuzzo (Westmoreland), William Shifko (Westmoreland), Jon Caranese (Westmoreland), Dawna Miletics (Westmoreland), Christy Scott (Westmoreland), Michelle Casear (Westmoreland), Terry Barnot (Westmoreland), Jim Amatucci (Westmoreland), Rachel Grabiak (Westmoreland), Kelly Ross (York), Rhys Kershaw (York), Seth Forry (York), Jamie Forry (York), Don Overmoyer (York), Michael Stough (York), Katherine Gruver (York), Holly Wise (York), Sue Claytor (York), Melissa Turner (York), Zaria Emswiler (York), Trail Linton (York), Tyler Coyle (York)

Helene Placey (CCAPPOAP), Amelia Marsh (JNET), Nevin Warner (AOPC), Tom Backenstoe (PA Sentencing Commission) Kathy Clarke (PCCD), Frank Scherer (PCCD), Vance VanOrder (PCCD), Nancy Heisler (PCCD), Dennis Hoerner (DOC)

Others in attendance via Zoom: Ashlee Lynn (Allegheny), Joe Berke (Carbon), Bill Mann (Chester), Ed Hosler (Clinton), Geoffrey Willet (Franklin), Roger Voight (Somerset)

Rick Parsons (Carey Group), Leo Hegarty (PA DUI Association)

Note: There were other individuals on zoom that were not able to be identified.

Meeting called to order: by President April Billet at 9:00 am

Secretary Len Hahn and Helene Placey took roll call of all county chiefs in attendance. It was determined a quorum had been established.

President's Welcome:

April Billet welcomed all those attending the meeting.

OFFICER'S REPORTS

President

April recently met with Jason Snyder who is the Director of Substance Use Disorder Treatment Services, Behavior Health Division with the Rehabilitation and Community Providers Association (RCPA) to discuss changes in PA's drug & alcohol confidentiality laws. With these changes it eliminates the requirement that a D&A provider can only release 5 points of information even with a release. The new regulations are in line with standard HIPPA regulations. DDAP has given no guidance to providers though, so providers continue to fall back on the old, outdated regulations. April participated in a panel discussion to raise this issue. She was asked to join a workgroup that is being formed to resolve this issue.

Chad Libby recently approached April about the association forming a Safety Committee. April inquired if it was possible for the association to partner with the PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers since the council already has a Safety Committee. At the Council's general membership meeting on 9/15/23, Chief Libby, who is the President of the PA Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, presented this request to the Juvenile Chiefs. The Juvenile Chiefs approved the motion to partner with the association in sharing a safety committee. Chief Libby spoke to the Chiefs on the advantages of partnering and what the Safety Committee could offer (officer safety info and trainings, sharing of info on safety risks and threats, etc.) Chief Libby indicated that the committee meets about 10 times through the year. A lot of safety information is provided on the Council's website (members only) which makes it easy for Chiefs to access. He wants this feature to be available to the Adult Chiefs. Chief Libby indicated that he wants to contact the members on the Council's safety committee to see about changing the membership to better represent both the council and association. Specifically, he indicated that he may ask some members to withdraw so that he can add some adult Chiefs from smaller rural counties to join so he can have a better representation of the state.

Vice President

Doug Wilburne had no report.

Secretary

Len Hahn reported that a draft of the minutes from the June 23, 2023 General Membership meeting were disseminated by Helene via email. Len informed the association that there was an error in the minutes that was first sent out, so Len made the correction with Helene's help. Helene then sent out the corrected minutes.

Action Item: Len asked for a motion to be made to approve the minutes. Mark Wilson made the motion and Chad Libby seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Helene reminded the Chiefs that all of the general business meeting minutes are posted on the Chiefs Association website for review under the member's only section.

Treasurer

Christine Shenk reviewed the 3rd quarter Treasurer's report for 2023 showing an ending balance (as of 9/12/23) of \$248,738.78 after all expenses (Helene's 2nd quarter salary & expenses, Graduate -June Meeting, Dauphin Co. Conference Refund, Franklin Co. Conference Refund, Northampton Co. Conference Refund, Lebanon Co. Conference Refund) were paid and revenue from 2023 membership dues, conference registrations, activities & exhibitors and Premier Biotech 2Q dividend was deposited. However, expenditures for the conference and Helene's 3rd quarter salary and expenses still needed to be paid and deducted. These expenses will be deducted in the 4th quarter.

Executive Director Report:

Helene Placey reported the following:

- EBP implementation grant (for training)- ended in March of 2023
- EBP Coordination grant (Carey Group)- ended in May of 2023
- New grant: EBP Coordination and Implementation grant was recently awarded from PCCD; it will provide funds for continuing implementation of EBP with the help of the Carey Group, various train the trainer courses (ORAS, MI, CCP, EPICS, T4C, WRANA), EBP trainer workshops and the Data dashboard project
- Reminder that the 2024 assessments will be increased by 10%; assessments haven't been increased since 2008; due to increase in costs the association had to raise the assessment fee
- Helene will provide a Conference recap at the December membership meeting; Helene reminded members to complete and return their conference evaluation forms

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy & Legislative Committee Report

Report from Todd Bergman, Chair

- Todd proposed an action item of amending the by-laws; changing “offender” to people on community supervision; this will align with the new EBP Strategic Plan; prior to today’s general membership meeting the executive committee approved the changing of the language in the by-laws and Helene emailed to all the Chiefs the proposed changes to review prior to today’s vote
- Action Item: Darby Christlieb made the motion to amend the by-laws and Chief Wilson seconded the motion; the motion to amend the by-laws as proposed (offender to people/person under community supervision) passed unanimously
- Probation Reform bill (SB 838) was passed in the Senate on 6/27/23; pending in the House
- Reform Alliance is pushing for probation/parole reform but is willing to listen to the association’s position on this issue; Reform Alliance was informed that offenders are not being “locked up just for committing technical violations” so as a result could they tone down the rhetoric
- Todd inquired if there was a consensus from the Chiefs on recommending changing Standard C.1 (An entry level probation or parole officer possesses a minimum of a bachelor’s degree or has completed a career development program that includes work related experience training or college credits providing a level of achievement that is equivalent to a bachelor’s degree) from its current language to simply stating that “an entry level probation/parole officer shall possess a minimum of a bachelor’s degree
- Several Chiefs (Dan Heydt, Mark Wilson, Maria Ann Braskey, Chad Libby and April Billet) spoke in favor of recommending to CAPPAC’s Standard Subcommittee to change Standard C.1 to **require** a bachelor’s degree for entry level probation or parole officers; Several Chiefs were opposed to requiring a bachelor’s degree as they were having difficulty filling vacant positions
- An email will be sent to all of the Chiefs to get a consensus so that the association can be proactive in our position on recommending changing standard C.1 or not
- It was recommended that a recruitment/retention ad hoc committee be created in an attempt to come up with solutions for departments having issues filling vacant positions

Chiefs EBP Committee Report

Report from April Billet, Chair

- Original EBP Strategic Plan was adopted in 2016 – 2018; extended 2019 – 2021
- Accomplishments:
 - Several videos
 - 2 stakeholder forums (over 300 county stakeholders)
 - 2 regional planning workshops (42 counties attended)

- o Over 80 skills-based virtual training to over 1440 adult probation staff
- o MI rollout; training provided to over 1000 POs
- o Over 1600 MI-20 licenses distributed
- o 2 RN assessment guides; RN webinar
- Action Item- approval/adoption of EBP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025; Chief Pawlowski made the motion to approve/adopt the EBP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025; Chief Shenk 2nd the motion; motion passed unanimously
- 5 New workgroups (Implementation, Training, Effective Interventions, Communications, Data & quality assurance) were established and convening their first meetings
- BJA Smart Probation grant activities are still ongoing; The 14 counties that were awarded the Planning Grants are meeting and reporting monthly to the Carey Group
- Rick Parsons from the Carrey Group presented to the association via Zoom on the progress of EBP implementation; unfortunately, it was hard to hear what he was saying due to issues with the audio
- Most of Rick’s presentation to the Chiefs was discussing the outcomes from the “Caseload Guidelines: Strategies and Recommendations” report that was prepared by the Carey Group for the PA Partnership for Criminal Justice Improvement
- The Caseload Guidelines: Strategies and Recommendations report can be found on the Associations website under the EBP Stakeholder Resources tab
- Rick mentioned that the associations website is a great resource for EBP information

Communications Committee Report

Report from Doug Wilburne, Chair

- Newest survey results posted on members only page (Specialized Risk Assessment by County and Caseload Size & Structure by County)
- Doug informed Chiefs to email him or Helene for the member’s only link if they didn’t have it
- Doug indicated that he plans on conducting another salaries survey in 2024; this survey will include salaries for Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Supervisors, POs and support staff

Inter-County Affairs Committee Report

Report from Pam Sheffer, Chair

- Intercountry affairs plan to discuss expanding early termination language in the current Intercountry Transfer Guidelines that were approved & posted Dec 2021
- Intercountry affairs committee updated all info in the Intercountry Transfer information section; including specific policies/information for some county’s transfer criteria
- Pam informed the Chiefs that if they have any changes for the point of contacts in their department, please let her know and she will make the change on the website
- Pam indicated that her committee only has four members including herself so they are looking for more members to join; only meet two or three times a year; if anyone is interested in joining, please contact Pam

Training & Education Committee Report

Report from Chris Pawlowski, Chair

- Continuing Education workgroup
 - 2023 “lunch & learn” webinars continue
 - 2023 virtual “lunch & learns” completed in (Jan-June) were Interstate 101-104 and Sovereign Citizens; Completed in (July-Aug) were Suicide Intervention, JNET, MH/Depression
 - Due to the amount of “no shows”, Chris asked the Chiefs to stress attendance to their staff/Training Supervisors if signed up; If unable to attend, Helene needs to be notified immediately so that she can contact those on the waiting list
 - 2023 Future Webinars (July-Dec)- Mental Health 101, Medical THC Dispensaries, Gang Culture, Victims, and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; plus, possible repeat webinars
 - In process of scheduling October 2023 to June 2024 webinars
- Chris inquired from the Chiefs about updating our audio and visual capabilities for our General Membership meetings; he is going to get some info and/or quotes on costs of getting better quality speakers and camera; once he gets the info on costs, he will advise the executive committee

Racial Diversity Committee Report

Report from Renawn Harris, Chair

- Committee met on August 17th
- Workgroups (Resources, Job Fairs and Mission Statements) continue to meet independently
- Resource workgroup is continuing to add resources and updates to the resource document on the chief’s website
- Job Fairs workgroup is working on strategies to increase minority hiring (recruitment), promoting and retaining once hired; job fairs for criminal justice employees has seen low turnouts
- Renawn indicated that he discovered that potential employees have now started using an app called “handshake”; probably why lower turnouts at job fairs
- Missions Statement workgroup is working on developing mission statements and policies that emphasize diversity and inclusion
- Training resources on DEI hopefully will be available soon

Nominations Committee Report

Report from Darby Christlieb, Chair

- Will be seeking nominations for December Elections (December 8th membership meeting)
- President, Secretary and Treasurer (2nd terms expire on 12/31/23)
- Vice President (1st term expires on 12/31/23)

- At Large Members (2 positions- 2nd term expires on 12/31/23)
- The slate of candidates will be presented to the voting members 30 days prior to the election per the By-Laws (November 8th)
- Darby will be sending out an email later this week requesting nominations

CAPPAC & CAPPAC SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Funding Subcommittee – Vice Chair, April Billet, reported that the funding subcommittee met on 6/23rd to discuss updating the funding formula to be used for GIA. Meeting again soon to discuss updating IP funding formula.

Standards Subcommittee – Vice Chair, Scott Kerstetter, indicated that the standards subcommittee was supposed to meet on 11/16/23 but the meeting has now been moved up to 10/30th. If any Chief has questions on the standards, please email them to Scott.

Firearms Subcommittee – Members Tim Heitzman, Michelle Beaver or Chad Libby had nothing to report.

Training Subcommittee –Chair, Dan Heydt, indicated that there was nothing new to report from the training subcommittee.

STATE AGENCY UPDATES

JNET

Report from Amelia Marsh

- Amelia informed the association that Todd Sackett took a new position with JNET so email and/or send her any communication questions
- The OTN expansion project went live
- If Chiefs need JNET training for their staff, they can email Amelia to get it set up; can be in person on site or virtual; all in person trainings require a minimum of eleven attendees; Regional trainings are acceptable
- Chief Pawlowski will be given a demo on “JNET for the Probation Officer” with Amelia at the upcoming PA Association of Treatment Court Professionals 2023 conference (October 11-13, 2023)
- JNET will have their conference on December 14th and 15th; PA Sentencing Commission will be giving a training at their conference
- Services are available through their JNET’s help and support catalog
- Chris Pawlowski discussed how AOPC informed the association that it doesn’t have the capability for integration of the RMS’s and PAJCIS/CIPP; Chris will continue to try and set up a workgroup in order to address the integration issues; Chris will keep the Chiefs updated in his progress in setting up this workgroup

AOPC

Report from Nevin Warner, Problem Solving Courts Analyst

- Lunch and learns are continuing
- Treatment Court Institute (TCI) is offering regional trainings on drug testing
- Chiefs are to check with their Treatment Court Coordinators to see if they are getting their emails from AOPC
- Nevin reiterated that it's not feasible for PAJCIS (Problem-Solving Adult & Juvenile Court System) to get data from multiple systems; need a bridge to be built before this could happen; Problem Solving Courts Administrator, Angela Lowery, sent the association a letter in regards to this issue

DOC - Court Services

Written Report from Adam Alamo, Division of Court Services Director

- Tom Dougherty retired July 28th; Adam Alamo is now point of contact for Supervision Funds Agreement, special probation, etc. Adam's contact 717-783-7048 or aalamo@pa.gov
- Continue to send inquiries about special probation/parole cases to ra-courtsservices@pa.gov
- FY 2022-2027 Supervision Funds Agreement sent to counties for signature in August; to date, only received approximately half
- Anticipate Supervision Fee funds (Act 35) to be disbursed by end of 2023 or early 2024

DOC-Field Services

No update

DOC-Reentry

No update

DOC - Interstate Services

No update

PA Association of Case Management

No update

PCCD

Report from Kathy Clark, Criminal Justice Specialist Manager

- The 2024 CJAB Conference is scheduled to be held on April 9-10, 2024
- Funding Announcements; Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) and the Continuing County Adult Prob/Parole Grant 2023-24 to be released soon
- Kathy reported that the state budget has \$16,150,000 allocated for "adult probation & parole grant in aid"; FY 23-24 will keep the same funding for counties, but it's anticipated that starting in FY 24-25 the new funding formula is to begin
- President April Billet advocated for increased funding for County Probation/Parole since some counties are going to get a decrease in funding in the near future

- A financial statement and expenditures report for ACT 77 and 35 monies will need to be included in the FY 23-24 Continuing County Adult Prob/Parole Grant; an ACT 77 and 35 financial statement and expenditures report template will be included in the grant to download and attach
- Q&A can be found in appendix C of the funding announcement for “adult grant in aid”; regulations on ACT 77 will be coming
- Kathy also reported that on 9/18/23, PCCD announced the availability of up to \$1,000,000 dollars in Federal SCIP funds to support “new resources for Gun Violence and Victims Needs Assessment & Technical Assistance”
- PCCD’s training survey had a 51% completion rate by the Chiefs; PCCD will be meeting with Temple University to review the results of the training survey to assess needs
- DT and BTA curriculums have been completed by Temple University; surveys will be sent out to Chiefs to gauge counties needs for DT and BTA; also, locations to hold these trainings will be gaged
- DT train the trainer training will be offered
- A training management system is being developed; Firearms training will be the first trainings to be entered into this system; eventually all adult probation & parole trainings will be entered into the system so that Chiefs can keep track of their officers training hours; PCCD will offer a training on how to use this system
- BTA is going on now and the next one will be held on 12/4/23 through 12/15/23; the 2024 BTA dates will be released soon; there will be an additional BTA class in 2024
- County Probation & Parole 2021 Stat report to be released by PCCD soon; it will be posted on its website; the 2022 County Probation & Parole stat report will be released by the end of the year
- Dr. Orth (IUP) is gathering data to determine PA’s recidivism rate; he is currently gathering from counties that are participating in his research project their ORAS results to analyze; Recidivism rate average in PA for the past 5 years is at 35% (Phase 1-completd); Phase 2 has started
- Initial monitoring visit will be an introduction; these visits have started and are still ongoing

Commission on Sentencing

Report from Tom Backenstoe

- 8th edition of sentencing guidelines will go in effect in 1/2024 (offense based)
- 8th edition of sentencing guidelines was recently published in PA Bulletin; can be found on the Commission on Sentencing’s website
- A virtual training on the 8th edition was held on August 28th
- Commission trainings are underway, SGS web overview, Commission update, and sentencing and sentencing guideline fundamentals all monthly; registration is on PCS web site under the calendar section; a survey was sent out about 8th edition training needs (virtual/in person); if your department still needs in person or virtual training contact the commission to get it scheduled; currently scheduling for early next year
- SGS will be updated to include the 8th edition sentencing guidelines
- Sentencing Commission will be sending out updates on the 8th edition

- Deputy Chief Geoffrey Willet inquired if SGS will ever have the capability for Chiefs to run a report to find out what sentencing guidelines need done and/or are missing prior to the commission's deadline for submission of guidelines for certification; Tom informed Geoff that the commission is going to make this happen

PA Association of Treatment Court Professionals

Report from Abbey Gefken

- Overhauling their website
- Updating their strategic plan and By-Laws
- Annual Conference will be held in July of 2024; a Treatment Court 101 session will be held at the annual conference

PA DUI Association

Report from Leo Hegarty

- Leo has been acclimating himself to his position of Executive Director
- Leo provided his background (regional dui program administrator and retired PSP trooper) prior to becoming Executive Director
- Leo informed the Chiefs that Act 67 requires Alcohol Highway Safety School (AHSS) to be in person so all counties should be returning to in person
- Only exception for offender to be able to do Alcohol Highway Safety School online is if the offender is not a PA resident
- PA DUI Association has only three providers contracted and/or approved to provide AHSS online for offenders that reside out of state
- A push is being made to change Act 67 legislation to allow having AHSS classes online
- PA DUI Association's Annual Meeting, November 15-17, 2023 at the Harrisburg Hilton

OLD BUSINESS

- Jim Chapman (Wayne Co.) retired in June
- Current Chief Vacancies: Adams & Indiana County

NEW BUSINESS

- Recognized the new chief appointments
 - Alan Pelton, Allegheny County (July)
 - Keith Shaffer, Wayne County (July)
- 2023 Quarterly membership meeting:
 - December 8 @ the Graduate Hotel, State College
 - December 7 (evening) Chiefs only meeting

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Leonard R. Hahn, Secretary