**Community Corrections Advisory Board**

**Minutes – December 12, 2024 (In Person & Zoom)**

**Members Present:** In person: Dr. Michael Birzer, Capt. Cody Alexander, Benita Chaplin

Via Zoom: Becky Springer, Pastor Pamela Mason, Capt. Chad Beard, Aaron Breitenbach, Peter Shay

**Members Absent:**, Hon. Tyler Roush, Christopher Haney, Juanita Denise Ridge, Samuel Steincamp

**Staff:** In person: Tom Struble, Monica Harris, Sasha Teel, Lesa Lank, Julee Meslin, Samantha Mount, Christina Schrage

Via Zoom:,Chris Morales, Steven Stonehouse

**Guests**: Tim Hallsey, Alma Ann (Via Zoom)

**Introductions and Announcements: Dr. Birzer started the meeting, and announced the upcoming election for 2025 officers, and Lesa Lank noted we would discuss that item in upcoming action.**

**ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes from the prior meeting on September 12, 2024. *A motion to approve the Minutes from the September 12 meeting was made by Aaron Breitenbach, seconded by Peter Shay and unanimously approved.***

**ACTION ITEM*.* Approval of the 2025 Meeting Schedule. *Benita Chaplin made the motion to approve the meeting schedule, the motion was seconded by Peter Shay and unanimously approved.***

**ACTION ITEM: Discussion of upcoming elections for chair, vice-chair, and secretary. *Lesa Lank discussed the 2025 Officer elections, required by the bylaws to occur in January. Everyone was asked to submit nominations to Samantha Mount, so a voting ballot can be prepared for the January meeting.***

**Program Updates:** Tom Struble reported on the workplace environment survey results for 2024 compared to 2021. This survey was for the Department of Correction as a whole (including both Adult & Juvenile programs). During the presentation, Tom discussed what the DOC has done to improve the work culture and what is still being implemented. Some items noted were the change in dress code to allow jeans if working in office, sick leave rules being relaxed, monthly check-ins (PMIs), Ambassador groups that bring issues to the Directors, and better supplies. Also discussed was the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) program Sedgwick County is piloting that implements a coaching approach vs. referee approach starting with staff and then to clients. This change is positively influencing the work culture. The NIJ team has made in person visits quarterly and does bi-weekly meetings via zoom with the Continuous Quality Improvement team.

Sasha Teel reported on the Adult Residential/Work Release programs, discussing recent client events such as the Halloween party where the family members of the clients were able to attend. The Halloween event provided activities and treats for all who attended and was fun for the children of clients that were able to attend. Pathway church provided a Thanksgiving Dinner. Pathway Church also has regular bible studies and performs baptisms quarterly at which there have been several clients baptized. VitalCore is now providing services for ARES facility to distribute medications and assist with other medical needs for the clients housed there. With VitalCore there has also been notice of a program that provides free health insurance to clients in Corrections up to a certain timeframe after release. This implementation has allowed the shift supervisors to have more time on the floor supervising staff and clients. NexStep Alliance is a program partnership with Goodwill Industries and Wichita State Tech that helps those in the corrections system receive their high school diploma and technical certificates. NexStep recently had a graduation ceremony; seven of the ten graduates were from Sedgwick County Community Corrections’ Programs. Other news for ARES/WR are the updates to the camera system, intercom system, and remodel underway in the staff breakroom.

Monica Harris provided updates for Specialty Courts. Starting with the Drug Court program, there are currently 107 clients in the program, total capacity is 115. The current Average Daily Population (ADP) is 84, which is improvement since last year when the ADP was only 63. There were recently 25 graduates from the Drug Court program. During the graduation ceremony, there were speeches from previous graduates. There was media present at the graduation and they interviewed both current and previous graduates. A recidivism check is underway for the first time in several years. With this check, DOC will be able to provide a full five year determination of recidivism rates in the Drug Court program. Next Monica reported on the Veteran’s Treatment Court (VTC) program. There is currently a very low population in the program. This is partially due to some of the previous eligibility requirements. They are currently working with stakeholders to increase the population. There were also changes to the requirements such as removing the requirement to serve only VA health care-eligible veterans.. Capt. Cody Alexander asked how the Sheriff’s Department could assist in increasing the VTC population, Monica stated just to continue to collect information on Veterans that come through their department. Stakeholders need to work together to find eligible candidates for the program. The move the courthouse annex has been postponed until 2026. The annex still currently houses the District Attorney’s office and will need to be remodeled once the DA office moves out.

Tom Struble reported on Adult Intensive Supervision Program. With recent changes to mental health service providers due to various reasons, one of which being staffing issues, the DOC now has Mental Health Intensive Supervision Officers on staff. There are three ISO’s with the necessary backgrounds and able to connect with clients at intake to review any necessary mental health concerns from the beginning. The additional staffing is funded with the mental health grant funds that previously funded programs such as MHA. There were program staffing issue with both MHA and COMCARE, so the move was made to add the specialized care to the DOC staff.

Tom Struble reported an update on the upcoming Kansas Department of Corrections grant applications. The KDOC is developing a new formula for funding for 2026 grant applications. Previously the applications were due in March, but that date has since been moved up to January 31.

**Other Business**: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 a.m. Next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2025.