

**Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council**

**Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting: August 24, 2017 12:00 PM**

**Courthouse Annex Extension, Fort Walton Beach**

**Public Safety Coordinating Council Members**

Present	Name	Agency
x	Graham Fountain	Board of County Commissioners
x	Stefan W. Vaughn	Chief Corrections Officer
	Judge Brown	Circuit Judge
x	Judge Grinsted	County Judge
x	Jay Jones	Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Designee
x	Bill Bishop	Assistant State Attorney
x	Charles Russell	Assistant Public Defender
	Julie Gaither	Circuit Administrator, Florida Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole Services
x	Kelli Huckabee	Pretrial Services
	Tina Ferland	Judicial Corrections Services, County Probation Provider

**Other Attendees:**

Paul Farnsworth, Department of Corrections  
Tammy Matthews, Department of Corrections  
C. Eric Esmond, Major, Department of Corrections.  
Susan Priddy, Health Services Administrator, Corizon Health Services  
Shannon Brunson, Bridgeway Center, Inc.  
Jeremy Gilbert, Okaloosa Sheriff's Office  
Valerie Broxson, Court Administration

Meeting opened at 12:02 pm.

**Welcome:**

Commissioner Fountain welcomed all attendees.

**Minutes**

1. a. February minutes were approved as sent.

**2. Old Business**

- a. Capt. Jones and Sgt. Gilbert provided an update on cashless bonds. A policy is under final review and will be available soon. A few issues have come developed since beginning its use, such as working to tie the payment of the bond to the warrant. Chief Vaughn stated the jail has already started using the

system. Mr. Bishop stated some bonds won't be eligible due to serious charges or criminal history of the defendant. Chief Vaughn will be monitoring the use of the system compared to the population to determine utilization. Consideration has been given to developing the option of family logging in to pay the bond. This option has worked well for spring break.

### **3. Jail Report**

- a. Mr. Farnsworth sent out the statistical report by email. The report shows an increase in bookings, probable cause arrests, felony warrants, and felony VOPs. The charge of burglary has increased. Mr. Bishop announces a sweep of the jail for misdemeanor cases will be conducted on Friday through Judge Maney's court to assist in resolving cases.

### **4. Pretrial Services Report**

- a. Ms. Huckabee reported an increase in screenings, revocations, felony warrants, and felony VOP warrants. Most of the warrants have resulted in violations of No Contact orders and new charges. She stated the levels of GPS has been held at 20 due to the increased level of man power needed to monitor GPS cases. Routinely, GPS cases take longer to process through the court system.

### **5. New Business**

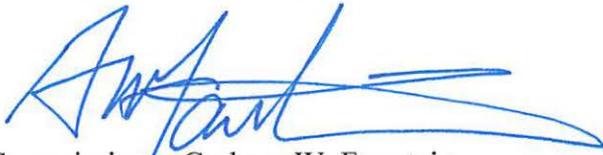
- a. Chief Vaughn discussed the county efforts to reduce the jail population. He has reviewed the study conducted in Escambia County similar to the one Okaloosa County conducted several years ago. The majority of the recommendations are for departments other than the jail that touch a case from arrest to disposition. One suggestion was assigning bonds to the highest charge with ROR on all lesser charges. Mr. Bishop stated the bond schedule is reviewed periodically and has been used appropriately. He does not feel bonds can be reduced further. At First Appearance, the bond is carefully considered by each judge taking into account current charges and history. Judge Grinsted reiterated that bonds are proposed when possible after consideration of loss of job or home if kept in jail.
- b. A discussion of continuances has begun to determine if they can be reduced without decreasing the integrity of due process. Mr. Farnsworth suggested using Plea Day as an opportunity to conclude cases as currently most inmates are not even transported for consideration. Capt. Jones stated most attorneys don't visit their clients while in custody, they wait until they are going into court to discuss a plea. Mr. Bishop stated it has been beneficial when the Judges offer an open docket so cases can be added and addressed quicker, such as when the Accelerated Docket was available. He stated the Public Defenders and defense attorneys have increased their number of cases which prevents them from getting to the jail to see their clients. The cases get continued because everyone must have their paperwork ready to plea. Mr. Russell stated the current caseload is around 80 cases per attorney. Continuances have increased, but now that attention has been brought to the issue, the court has shown a decrease from 900 to 820 cases.
- c. Mr. Bishop stated an expedited docket was introduced after the study was conducted with a retired Judge hearing the cases. Judges are currently willing to add docket days if the attorneys have cases ready for resolution to move the

process quicker. The current 4 week trial schedule makes it difficult to reduce the amount of continuances. Judge Grinsted stated it has been considered going to the same schedule as Escambia and Santa Rosa County which is a 6 week schedule. The courts loses only 2 weeks of court time each year, but gains 10 days to prepare for a case resolution. Capt. Jones suggested encouraging attorneys to visit through video similar to what occurs in video court. This may cut time necessary to prepare. The attorneys are currently utilizing courtroom space to have pre-court meetings with their clients. Ms. Matthews stated the option is available to attorneys through Securus video visitation.

- d. Mr. Farnsworth will send out the dates for the 2018 meetings.

The next full meeting for the Public Safety Council will be October 26, 2017. Consideration will be given for cancellation of the December meeting as it is very close to the holidays. Email reminders for upcoming meetings will be sent out.

Meeting ended at 12:57 pm.



Commissioner Graham W. Fountain  
Vice-Chair, Okaloosa County Commission  
Chair, Public Safety Coordinating Council