

**Second Judicial District Department of Correctional Services
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting with DOC
February 16, 2023**

Members Attending Zoom call:

Brittany Baker, Advisory
Daniel Campidilli, Hamilton County
Mark Feustel, Advisory
Paul Fitzgerald, Judicial
Reneè McClellan, Hardin County
Gary McVicker, Franklin County
Linda Murken, Story County
Bob Thode, Webster County

Others Present:

Amanda Milligan, District Director
Alfredo Rodriguez, Executive Officer
Ashley Lappe, Executive Officer
Pattee Yetmar, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order

II. Iowa State Alignment Bill Comments - Comments gathered during call

Notes from the meeting with Dr. Skinner and Sally Kreamer representing the Iowa Department of Corrections in an open meeting forum on Zoom with members of the Boards representing all eight judicial districts. Katrina Carter was also present in the meeting room with Director Skinner and Sally Kreamer. Executive Assistant Johana Herdrich took notes on behalf of Iowa Department of Corrections. This meeting began at 3pm via Zoom on Thursday, February 16, 2023. and concluded at 4pm. There were eighty-eight Zoom connections to this meeting.

Director Skinner started the meeting stating the purpose of the public meeting was for board members to voice comments and concerns. This is a forum and not a question and answer session, therefore, she would not be answering any questions. She wanted to hear from as many as possible and plans to take comments back to the Governor.

The following are comments/concerns voiced by board members:

- What is broken with our current system that requires realignment? Why do we need to change it if it's not broken? (Mark Feustel/Mason City2JD)
- Local CBCs have done a great job and are fiscally responsible. Every time we go to one centralized governance, one size fits all is not a good plan, not a benefit to local communities. Local boards and supervisors know what is best for their counties. Bigger is not better, it creates more problems than it will ever solve. Merging will not be any great improvement for us. (Bob/Van Buren County/8JD)
- Combining services at the state level is a declaration of saving money that doesn't occur. We know what works well for local areas. We know what our local needs are, very difficult when mandates come from a state office, they don't know what we need. (Diane Fitch/Supervisor, Madison County/5JD)
- Concern that the meeting with Dr. Skinner and the Board Chairs was cancelled and not rescheduled. Would expect that meeting would be re-scheduled. Not simply to ask a question like today, but so there can be an actual dialogue. I don't think you're going to find support among the districts for giving up local governance in lieu of centralized format. (Keith Rippy/Board Chair 6JD)
- Rhetoric about leveraging synergy, EBP, unnecessary barriers, etc. Don't ask us to give up control without a detailed plan of action, specifics, quantifiable numbers. Regarding continuity of services, reentry begins with the prisons and rehabilitation starts there. Rather than take on additional things, urge IDOC to look inward at the challenges they have with rehabilitative programs on the inside. (John Shook/1JD)
- There is shared responsibility with local control (Tom Hockensmith/Board Chair 5JD)

- States in comparative size with unified governance in corrections have much higher incarceration and recidivism rates than Iowa. Extremely concerned about lack of community relationships and participation. (Tom H./Board Chair 5JD)
- Served on the board for 20 years, never once has there ever been any communication with our boards from Sally Kreamer regarding poor performance necessitating this change, never heard this until now (Tom H./Board Chair 5JD)
- Is there anyone in favor of this? Please speak up now (Pat/Howard County/1JD)
- Reserving judgment because he does not yet understand the direction. Concerns about lack of representation in decisions, lack of innovation, etc. Would not have the level of creativity without local involvement. Equity is not the same as consistency, changes with jurisdiction. Greatest concern is the process of what is going on. The way it's been rolled out is wrong; state personnel meeting with district staff and excluding the boards. The fact that board members were not allowed to attend the staff town hall meetings creates liability. Creates unfair liability for the boards, counties, districts. Encourage a much different approach where the boards were engaged before staff. Cart in front of the horse on that. (Dan Srp/Clinton County/7JD)
- There has been a lack of supervisory oversight at the local level. Please tell the Governor that this bill implies a great lack of trust of county supervisors to do their jobs, this whole bill deals with that. Let the supervisors do their work (Denny/3JD)
- Local control trumps every time, almost without exception. This is the same sentiment or perspective that Governor Reynolds said was not right when the federal system tried to impose rules and regulations for the states (specific to COVID-19). Now this is happening at the local level, pushed down our throats. (Craig/3JD)
- Our current system benefits local communities, biggest issue is loss of local control, detrimental to the whole show. (Mike Olson/4JD)
- County supervisors were instrumental to her as a formal district director in serving in the best fashion possible. Take exception to IDOC saying IDOC had no oversight of community corrections. IDOC already has oversight through Iowa Code, the purchase of service agreement, accreditation process, and a process to report, and review and bring corrective measures if needed. (Linda Murken/Board Chair 2JD)
- We have a lot of individual expertise locally that is missed by not having local control. (John Degen, Iowa County/6JD)
- Echo all comments, newly elected supervisor, she brings 30 years of practice in law, echo the comparison for federal oversight of states as similar to what is happening here. Dire concerns about losing local control. (Jean Dickson/Scott County/7JD)
- If we lose local control, who becomes the judicial appointees? Who makes that choice? Is it more appropriate for someone local to make that choice or from Des Moines? (Shelby Humbles/6JD)
- Everyone talks about money. What about the quality of job that is being done? Doesn't get better than what's been done and what we've seen as board members in our areas. Crying shame if after all these people have spoken that this gets pushed through the way it is. (Bryan Petersen/Cherokee County/3JD)
- The Guidehouse study has been requested and has yet to be shared. Why wasn't there any contact with or input from any District Director when this study was being conducted? (Keith Rippy/ Board Chair 6JD and Linda Murken/Board Chair 2JD)
- How can the state give gag orders to District Directors who are not employed by the state (IDOC)? (Dan Srp/Clinton County/7JD)
- Fully support what everyone is saying here. There is no benefit to state taking over and taking away local voices, input, and impact in community-based corrections (Paul Fitzgerald/Story County Sheriff/2JD)

- As the Governor says, we know what's best for Iowans. Counties know what's best rather than Des Moines having one size fits all. (Mark Faldet/Winneshiek County/1JD)
- CBCs are a good value, appropriations fund 80% of each district's budget and the remaining 20% is funded through local funds. Appropriations do not cover all staff positions, nor many programs offered through the districts. Work in cost-effective manner. Current CBC system has checks and balances. If merged with DOC, it's likely that would be imbalanced. (Bob Waugh/8JD)
- There is a concern about the utilization of residential beds and the impact that this will have locally. (Bob Waugh/8JD)
- The Governor should be following our state motto, "Our liberties we prize, and our rights we will maintain." We have to do that at the local level. (Bob Waugh/8JD)
- Opposed to anything that changes the structure or gets in the way of great work we do in 6th. (Written comment by Shane Kron/Coralville Police Chief/6JD)
- The realignment goes with the chaos happening in Des Moines right now. Don't know why we are trying to make county government less productive-this is contrary to good government. This merger is the first step to privatization – pull everything back under the Governor, is a disservice to Iowa citizens, families, and neighborhoods. It will be who can provide these services for the cheapest price. Want to be on the record, if this is going to the Governor, I want my name there. (Ann McDonough/Dubuque County/1JD)
- The CBCs have already done a great job of helping lower the prison population in Iowa, what are we trying to fix? Buzz words like "synergy", "consistency" and "seamless" are being used without any explanation. What does this mean, specifically? (Tom H./5JD)
- Agree it's the first step toward privatization (Shelby Humbles/6JD)
- CBCs have very close relationships with community organizations. I run a non-profit for persons who are just released from incarceration. Great relationship with the 6th District. They help us out in many different ways. Very nervous about state coming in and having to re-energize all those relationships, etc. (Mike Niece-Jacoby/6JD)
- Been on board for 11 years. Why didn't we (respective boards) know about any concerns that require a takeover? Sally Kreamer comes to our meetings (Zoom), met in person, she has never talked to me about concerns, no one from IDOC has. If boards become "advisory" there is no control over consequences, no power. Feels the direction of advisory boards is to sit around and do nothing (in the proposed structure). Why would we need to exist? (Nancy McDowell/Board Chair 3JD)
- If anyone knows how the state takeover of IWD went in our area, they know what kind of a mess that's turned into. Scared to death this is what the state will do if they take over CBCs. Kick people to the side. We work very hard with our CBC to make sure everyone is working well together. Huge mistake to take away what we've worked so hard to get. Individual rights are being taken away. (Bob Thode/Webster County/2JD)
- Agrees with Bob, feels individual rights continue to be eaten away at over many years and now they are taking bigger bites. As taxpayer, citizen, voter, etc. need to stand up and say no, this needs to stay locally. (Waugh/8JD)
- What is broken? Why not come to us as boards of the agencies? How can state direct our personnel? Who is going to answer our questions? Where do we get our answers? Ask that you reinstate the meeting with board chairs so we can have a dialogue. (Linda Murken/2JD)
- We expect the minutes/notes of this meeting that will be presented to the Governor also be shared with the board members, in the interest of transparency and good faith, and to restore some faith in the process. We may do things a little bit differently across the state, but, ultimately, we've come together unanimously and it's quite shocking how this has rolled out and was presented to the boards. (Roth/7JD)

- Full support of all questions and comments being made. Wants to hear from the governor the reason for taking it over from the state vs. the way it's been operating (Reneè McClellan/Hardin County/2JD).
- Request for a more immediate response from Director Skinner, wants to hear about discussion with district staff that board members were prohibited from attending, purpose for exclusion of the boards, etc. Thinks that Dr. Skinner should be able to answer that without waiting on feedback from the governor's office. (Dan Srp/7JD)
- Would like to hear something from Director Skinner... Others weighed in agreeing the same. Director, the floor is yours... (Keith Rippy/6JD)
- Dr. Skinner was urged again to answer questions. If not today, when would questions be answered and by whom? Dr. Skinner said the concerns would be shared and a FAQ would be distributed to staff. This meeting was for voicing concerns only and she would not be answering any questions.
- Has great contact with the warden of Fort Madison and director in 8th. Director is always responsive, takes care of his people, pays his bills, and gets things done. Ensures plenty of conversation between us. Concerned that communication will get lost if it's someone in Des Moines in charge. Doubts anyone from Des Moines will come to Lee County and he won't know them, therefore, both missions will be limited and perhaps fail. You best believe he wants to keep an eye on stuff with Fort Madison (max security prison) in his county. Not sure why this is happening, concerning that no one is answering questions, happy to listen when ready to answer. (Sheriff Weber/Lee County/8JD)
- Reduced confidence in Central Office, no one will answer questions, typical government and it's upsetting (Waugh/8JD)
- When I hear it's going to be a transparent process, only thing I know, is that's not the case. If the Governor thinks we are just going to lay down and let this happen, she's woefully mistaken. (Keith Rippy/6JD)
- Centralization will result in public safety risks; lack of transparency reduces confidence. There appears to be no plan in place. Look forward to having an open dialogue with you and hear your plan of action. (John Shook/1JD)
- Meeting was mis-advertised. No information has been provided. (Linda Murken/2JD)
- Echoed by many
- When the state takes it over and in 4 years tries to ram it back to the counties because it's a mess, then we'll understand why (Bob Thode/2JD)
- Misleading, over 100 people on this call had different expectation, and feel disrespected, given the time spent supporting community corrections, governing community corrections and time on this call (Linda Murken/2JD)
- I'm hearing, "It's my ball and you can't play with it." (Bryan)
- This meeting has been used to gather information to get ahead of obstacles and to be used against us, rather than being partners with us (Dan/7JD)
- Echoed, sees no point in staying on the call. (Waugh 8/JD)
- Our concerns have been voiced, sees no point in staying on the call. (Keith/7JD)
- Specific request to have on record that many participants left the meeting out of disgust and abandoned the conversation (Dan/7th).
- Participants wanted the notes that were being taken by Johana Herdrich on behalf of Director Skinner, and presented to Governor Reynolds, to be shared with the districts' boards as it is important to know the concerns and messages have been heard by Governor Reynolds.
- Dr. Skinner was specifically asked if she was being kept from responding by Governor Reynolds. (Kathy Laird/Scott County/7JD)

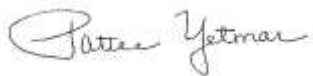
- When there was no response at all, Murken (I believe) asked if Director Skinner was still on the call, Director Skinner responded, "I'm still here for another four minutes."
- Dr. Skinner replied this was an opportunity to hear from everyone, thought she was clear on the 2/13/23 email that this would be for comments – in the text of the email. Apologize if they didn't get that message or see that. Working on FAQ to release to staff and they can share. Appreciates that this is difficult, hard conversations, open to listening. 3 more minutes to make final comments.
- Repeated request to share the Guidehouse report. (Murken/2JD)
- Releasing information to our employees of record before boards is backward. Order of operations is wrong. (Dan Srp/7JD)
- Cited email Director Skinner referenced, it says it was for board members to *receive information* about the reorganization bill, but haven't received information (John Shook/1JD)
- Someone referred to this as the old bait and switch.
- Thanks everyone for their time. Don't know if will be thanked otherwise, for the time they've taken today, to look into the issue, for the support of our staff. Above everything, support staff, as they deserve it. (Murken/2JD)
- Skinner thanked everyone for being there and supporting staff, sharing comments and concerns.

It was difficult to capture the comments of everyone, especially at the end of the meeting where the pace of the conversation picked up. Comments may have been inadvertently misattributed to an incorrect source.

Many board members disconnected from the meeting prior to the end of the meeting stating there was no purpose to remain on Zoom if there was no dialogue, no questions answered.

III. Adjournment – call ended by host at 4pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Pattee Yetmar
Secretary to the Board of Directors

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