

# OWI COURT

## JANUARY 21, 2025

**ATTENDEES:** Ms. Brenda Lee, Ms. Annette Zortman (Zoom), Ms. Dawn Susa, Ms. Sara Tienhaara, Ms. Jodi Baker, Ms. Roberta Marcus, Ms. Jillian Pfeifer, Mr. Ben Meyer, Ms. Breanna Magallones (Zoom), Honorable Mary M. Sowinski

**1. Call to order; Approval of Agenda:**

The regular meeting of the OWI Court Sub-Committee was brought to order at 8:31 a.m. by Ms. Brenda Lee. Lee noted that the meeting had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Laws. Motion by Ms. Jillian Pfeifer, seconded by Ms. Dawn Susa to approve the agenda as posted. All ayes; motion carried.

**2. Review Minutes from the January 7, 2025 OWI Court Sub-Committee Meeting:**

Motion by Ms. Jillian Pfeifer, seconded by Ms. Dawn Susa to approve the minutes of January 7, 2025. All ayes; motion carried.

**3. Update on DOC Contract:** Ms. Brenda Lee reported that she got an email from the DOC that they are short staffed and they do not know when the contract will be approved.

**4. Discussion with Ms. Roberta Marcus:**

Ms. Roberta Marcus explained the OWI Court process when it was going in the past:

- Met every other Tuesday in the Judge's Chamber for 30-45 minutes to discussed issues.
- Client was told to be in the courtroom no later than 8:30 a.m. and court was done by 10. The Judge would ask if they had any drug use. If they did they would get a lecture from the Judge. It needs to be one judge.
- There were therapy sessions after court at the Human Service Center weekly. There were four phases to the program and in Phase 4 they were weaned out of sessions.
- During group sessions Ms. Marcus would tell individuals in the group that they are picked for a UA after group. If they admitted to using then it would be more positive.
- There was programming through the DOC which Ms. Marcus explained that she used some of it.

Issues with the Court Process per Ms. Marcus:

- As the program progressed as a team you have to agree on consequences. Example: How many dirty UA's can you have before done with the program? What occurred was they would move back to phase 1 and could be in the program for 2 years which resulted in 10 days of jail time and 1 year probation hanging over their head. What is the point if they are in phases for two years? Need to have the whole team working together. This OWI Court is for 3<sup>rd</sup> drunk driving offense which they have to volunteer for the program. People became negative because they were in the program for so long. There has to be a boundary of how many times they can mess up. It was frustrating keeping people in the program for so long. Need to determine how the defendant should be confronted.

- Individuals still worked with Ms. Marcus after they were not in program because they still need the AODA, Driver's plan etc. Ms. Marcus didn't feel it did what it was meant to do. As a team we need to tell people what they did wrong but still need to pick them back up so they can continue. Need to work as a team and agree on things.
- There was also interpersonal dynamics between the people in the room and the defendant.

#### Things to think about for this OWI Court:

- Maybe Ms. Marcus could have a form of what needs to be shared with the Judge. What occurred from the last time they were in court?
- Team members need to say things to Judge Sowinski if there are things she should be doing/saying. The hope is the comfort level is there at the beginning when Judge Sowinski starting out and comfortable saying things like i.e. this isn't going to work because of this.
- Need to manage the expectations of the people in this room – going to take Judge Sowinski time to catch on and don't want to miss opportunities with people. Learning from them be better next time. This is their opportunity and we need to give them their opportunity.
- Can't keep people in the program for two years. Evidenced based is not to bring them back into Phase 1.
- Dirty UA's need to have consequences such as a weekend in jail.
- Positive incentives need to be built in rather than all negative. Previous court did not have incentives. Human Service Center had money and did incentives such as gas cards etc. and people appreciated that. Positive reinforcement for treatment works. People need to change their thinking before they can get clean.
- Can't perfect the person. Not looking for perfection. Some may want to learn to drink responsibly. If people learn to drink responsibly and never get into the legal system again we have accomplished something.
- Before Court the team needs to have a discussion to give the Judge an update and up to speed on the person before court begins. Then when we get into court the Judge deals with any issues or gives praise.
- Who in court: OWI Assessor, Probation Agent, Therapist, DA and Public Defender. Whoever is on the team need to show up for court. If Judge can clear their calendar then others can too.
- Perfect Team Member in Ms. Marcus' eyes: You have to be someone that talks every time and provide positive reinforcement every time and sometimes educate and offer them feedback. Have to be more than a warm body. Turn negative into a positive. Court should be group participation
- Need to determine if the Coordinator is part of the team. Recovery Coach assigned to OWI Court?
- There are things in the handbook that Ms. Marcus does not agree with. Ms. Marcus will meet with a smaller group of people in this room (DOC, Mr. Meyer, Ms. Marcus, Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Lee) to discuss handbook and then bring back to this meeting. Ms. Marcus will send Ms. Driscoll times that work for her and Ms. Driscoll will send out a Doodle Poll.

- Graduation they liked it when the Judge's came. Think that everyone should participate. Could do it right in the Courtroom.
5. **Provider Update:** Resolution to hire a provider as a county employee is being presented to the County Board today.
  6. **Public Comment:** None
  7. **Agenda Items for future meetings:**
    - Budget for positive reinforcement. Could Opioid money be used?
    - Handbook update.
    - DOC Contract.
    - Provider Update.
  8. **Adjourn:** 9:31 a.m.



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Ms. Brenda Lee

January 21, 2025

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