

# Coshocton Tribune

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COSHOCTON COUNTY

## Building a support system around mental health

*Coshocton Criminal Justice Collaborative focused on networking and communication*



**Leonard L. Hayhurst**

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COSHOCTON – A first meeting for the new Coshocton Criminal Justice Collaborative was held recently, with the goal of brokering communication between different agencies regarding mental health and the criminal justice system.

Speakers included Sheriff James Crawford with the law enforcement prospective and information on the new Coshocton Justice Center; Karl Hoop and Jamie McGraw on guardianship boards Scope Grant, youth crisis stabilization and an Ohio State Highway Patrol pilot program; Magistrate Christie Thornsley on the Coshocton Community Corrections Board; and Doug Schonauer, Leondra Davis and Heather Newell on the Coshocton Family Resource Center.

Hoop, criminal justice and crisis services coordinator for the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, said similar meetings have been held in Muskingum and Guernsey counties. The agency also covers Morgan, Noble and Perry counties.

The meeting was attended by more than 50 people with future meetings to be held twice a year, Hoop said.

"We're trying to bring our law enforcement and criminal justice partners together with our local partners like mental health, (developmental disabilities), any other provider in the community to talk about topics specific to Coshocton County," he said. "When we first started in Muskingum and Guernsey, it took a little bit to get traction. There was interest, but not at this level (in Coshocton)."

Schonauer, administrator for Coshocton County Juvenile and Probate Court, said he viewed the value of the meeting and forming the collaborative as fostering communication between a

variety of local entities so when they come upon someone with mental health issues they know what resources are available and where to go. He feels it will lead to better services for the community.

"Communication is the key. There's been so many changes in mental health and growth in the system the past few years, it's just ever changing. The more forums that can be held to just educate and bring everybody up to speed, it just improves the local process," Schonauer said.

He spoke on a Coshocton Family Resource Center, a new program designed to do early assessment and screening on youth and families to direct them to the appropriate service providers or give them options on where to turn. Schonauer said they are close to finalizing a location and then will hire employees.

Christie Thornsley, magistrate of the Coshocton County Common Pleas Court, also spoke on a new program. The Coshocton Community Corrections Board is in its infancy. The first step is to get the Coshocton County Commissioners to pass a resolution establishing the entity. From there a board and bylaws will be established. The board will be targeted to helping those released from jail or prison to find the services they need upon release to become productive members of society again.

"We want to coordinate service. The planning board is going to have individuals from a large swath of organizations, it's good to get all those different organizations in the same room so we're not duplicating services," Thornsley said of the meeting. "We want to setup these folks for the best success possible by implementing drug and alcohol, mental health and how to get the basics."

*Leonard Hayhurst is a community content coordinator and general news reporter for the Coshocton Tribune with more than 15 years of local journalism experience and multiple awards from the Ohio Associated Press. He can be reached at 740-295-3417 or llhayhur@coshoctontribune.com. Follow him on Twitter at @llhayhurst.*