

Meeting Minutes
Law and Justice Council
Wednesday, October 26, 2022 – 12:00 p.m.
Benton County Justice Center

Present

Chuck Torelli – City of Kennewick Council Member
Brigit Clary – City of Richland Police Chief
Dave Wheeler – Benton County Probation Manager
David Giles – City of Prosser Police Chief
Andy Miller – Benton County Prosecutor
Will McKay – Benton County Commissioner
Ryan Lukson – Benton County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
Thomas Grego – West Richland Police Chief
Thomas Croskrey – Benton County Sheriff
Tiffany Runge – Superior Court Administrator
Brian Ace – Citizen Member
Josie Delvin – Benton County Clerk
Chris Guerrero – Kennewick Police Chief
Joe Burrowes – Superior Court Judge
Cameron Fordmeir – Citizen Member
Brent Gerry – West Richland Mayor
Jon Law – Benton County Undersheriff
Jennifer Azure – Benton County District Court Judge
Diana Ruff – Superior Court Judge
Kevin Kennedy – Citizen Member
John Trumbo – City of Kennewick Council Member
Michael Vander Sys – Office of Public Defenders

Called to order by Chief Guerrero at 12:00

Approval of Minutes:

- September 28, 2022 – approved, no issues

New Business

1. **RFP** – Judge Joe Burrowes grateful to the Commissioners for reopening RFP, able to get drug court funding, one of many but appreciative
Sheriff Tom Croskrey – we appreciate the funding being reopened up, Crime Van and many others
2. **Yakima**
 - a. Chief Chris Guerrero – met with PD, relied heavily on community
 - b. Sheriff Tom Croskrey had a meeting with Sheriff Udell – he didn't know how they went about process, be cautious of how you do it, language about supplanting, so much supplanting it wiped out public safety

- c. Sheriff Tom Croskrey stated that it should be used to enhance public safety, but it used to be 12 new deputies, now there are 27, will community support that if they know that we haven't been using it to enhance public Safety?
 - i. Sheriff Tom Croskrey stated he won't support PST if Sheriff's Office current expense budget is wiped out
 - ii. Council member Chuck Torelli suggested we get statistics from Yakima about what is going in neighboring counties, S. Croskrey & C. Guerrero will work to get the stats from City and County

3. Courts Update

- a. Chief Chris Guerrero stated they would be happy to continue to post anything that is needed
- b. Judge Joe Burrowes stated they still many open positions
- c. Judge Joe Burrowes discussed they are working hard to get more cases out, seeing if Court Commissioners can help with that, January is the goal to free Judges up for additional trials
- d. Judge Joe Burrowes thanked Commissioners for providing \$20 million in funding for renovation and remodel of Juvenile
- e. Chief Chris Guerrero – glad we are getting in a room, not just to discuss PST funds, but to understand the needs of the entire jurisdiction
- f. Judge Joe Burrowes – indicated there has been improvement in the following areas:
 - i. 72-hour hold improvements & a dedicated phone
- g. Andy Miller – cases would expire in District Court and wait for arraignment in Superior Court, our office has been aggressive asking for bail, some were posting bail in District Court and then case filed in superior court
- h. District Court Update - Judge Jennifer Azure – we have had issues with Blake Decision, addiction issues in the area, a new recovery court started today, backlog, we are trying cases, trials are going out every week and push council, everyone has had turnover, there is a huge change that makes the cases go on longer. Justice delayed isn't helpful for prosecution
 - i. Quarterly bench bar meetings, defense and prosecution seeing how to streamline processes, working to avoid delays
 - ii. Chief Chris Guerrero – got great info from Judge Joe Burrowes, then posed the question of is District Court running
 - 1. Judge Jennifer Azure – 1 out per week, jurors are being given to Superior Court
 - iii. Chief Chris Guerrero asked if there is anything the jurisdictions can do to help
 - 1. Judge Jennifer Azure – identified there are still lots of openings

4. Current Department Openings

- a. Josie Delvin - Clerks – fully staffed for one day, down 1 currently, went paperless to help streamline, protection orders are a bit challenging, went from half day to full day, numbers have skyrocketed from 15 to 50. New forms may be the cause. Hoping to go to e-filing and got funds thru ARPA funds to help with that for 3 years. 18 applications for a new job, working with Shyanne to put on social media and the pay increase should help. Thanking Commissioners for the support on salaries.
- b. WRPD – down 1, 3 starting, many applications now
- c. KPD – 16 openings with 4 conditional job officers, certified 39, seeing some problems getting people into the county
- d. RPD – 3 openings, we have promotion coming up next month, 3 entry levels we hired, and March 2022 is academy date, approved for 5 additional officer positions, not getting huge pools of applicants, change testing process, smaller groups more often
 - i. Offering new incentives, vacation incentives for laterals

- e. BCSO – 5 openings, 3 waiting for academy, heard update that its going to be June for Pasco Academy
 - f. Josie Delvin inquired about who is in charge of the academy
 - i. Chief Chris Guerrero – CJTC thru WAC and RCW, Pasco was working with a company that certifies trainings and curriculum. The company analyzes the trainings and ensures they are defensible and certified. CJTC is now listening that they have to do better.
 - ii. Chief Brigit Clary stated that no regions have what Tri-Cities have as far as relationships among differing entities
 - g. Prosser PD – 2 openings, many graduating
 - h. Jail – 1 opening, filled it with BCSO opening
- 5. Community Fact Sheet** – Commissioner Will McKay discussed that the board approved 59,000 for a company out of Spokane, do some media, message platform, 30,000 for press and printing thru PST funds to educate community. No sunset clause after this. Ballot date is 2023. Dealing with the budget, it is stressful to not be able to give people what they need, he appreciates everyone comments about being thankful and a huge advocate for the PST funds.
- a. Chief Chris Guerrero – lower calls, but more tickets than in 2019, types of calls you get are different, pinpointing the cause for increase in crime. At meeting discussing dynamics, lots of different reasons
 - b. Judge Jennifer Azure – all same reasons that are causing backlog
 - c. Commissioner Will McKay inquired about where we are at with Lexus Nexus.
 - d. Sheriff Tom Croskrey mentioned that is what approved and were in the beginning stages to set up initial costs, alleviate pressure on dispatch
 - e. Chief Chris Guerrero stated how Lexus Nexus will help the section of society that doesn't want police to come, they can do it themselves and don't need the police to show up and can upload. Huge time savings. Officers may still show up and follow up for info.
 - f. Chief Brigit Clary identified that it's helped in being responsive to public and adjusting to how they want us to respond.
 - g. Chief Chris Guerrero – the more people that call in are the force multipliers
 - h. Mayor Brent Gerry – all collaborated biweekly and continuance of the counties and cities and we work better together
- 6. Previous PST strategy** – Sheriff Tom Croskrey – still working on it, those that were on the board previously aren't very supportive of the initiative going forward. Would like to bring someone in to discuss it.
- a. Chief Chris Guerrero discussed the need to be building that group in the community, community reps are beneficial
 - b. Brian Ace suggested doing a scope of work assessment
 - c. Commissioner Will McKay – company hired has done for many others
 - d. Council member Chuck Torelli – chamber of commerce, can they be open to starting this
 - i. Andy Miller – mixed feelings on that
 - ii. Chief Chris Guerrero – Al Weiner – brought in people
 - iii. Andy Miller – officials can do things as citizens just not using county resources
 - iv. Brian Ace – formal ballot group and advocacy group

Adjourn 12:52