

Meeting Minutes
Law and Justice Council
Wednesday, May 31, 2023 – 12:00 p.m.
Benton County Justice Center

This Council meets about, and takes action on, issues pertaining to local criminal justice matters. This includes but is not limited to: Issues regarding jail management and DOC coordination, local crime trends and availability of criminal justice resources, sharing of information, personnel and infrastructure to reduce duplication of efforts and facilitate policing and supervision efforts to reduce recidivism and enhance responses to offender violations.

Dave Wheeler – Benton County Probation Manager
Eric Eisinger – Benton County Prosecutor
Ryan Brown – Benton County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney
Jared Kelly – West Richland Police Commander
Brian Ace – Citizen Member
Josie Delvin – Benton County Clerk
Tom Croskrey – Benton County Sheriff
Rob Guerrero – Benton County Corrections Chief
Tiffany Runge – Superior Court Administrator
John Trumbo – City of Kennewick Council Member
Tom Glover – City of Prosser Administrator
Michael Clark – Benton County Sheriff’s Office Lieutenant
Jennifer Azure – Benton County District Court Judge
Diana Ruff – Superior Court Judge
Matt Rasmussen – Deputy County Administrator
Brigit Clary – City of Richland Police Chief
Chuck Torelli – City of Kennewick Council Member
Jay Attwood- BCES Director
Jerry Martin- Community Member
Fred Brink- West Richland

Called to order by Chris Guerrero at 12:01

Approval of Minutes (Action)

Chief Chris Guerrero asked to approve minutes of May17th, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes was made and motion carried unanimously

Introductions

- **Around the Room Introductions**

New Business

- **PSST Jurisdictional Spending Plans**

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen received all the spending plans and is compiling them into spread sheet similar to 2014. He stated they will be sent out once it is compiled and sent out by Chief Chris Guerrero

Prosecuting Attorney Eric Eisinger questions if this is to discuss additional spending

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen clarifies that it is for additional spending request.

Old Business

- Pro/Con Individuals –
no discussion needed

- Legislative Impacts on the Criminal Justice System-
Chief Chris Guerrero gives a quick overview of the Blake decision

Judge Azure poses a question about setting up a meeting with courts regarding the number of cases that may be coming through. She expects the workload to increase dramatically and wants to meet regarding diversion programs or other options.

Judge Ruff agrees a meeting would be good and they would like to be part of the discussion

Chief Chris Guerrero will set up a meeting with their clerks

Sheriff Croskrey poses a question about local ordinances and group confirmed the bill precludes local laws

- Continued Conversation – Update on the status of Public Safety Sales Tax-
No questions, Chief Chris Guerrero confirmed if every believes we are headed down the right path, group confirmed.

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen stated he is compiling information for the ballot measure and should be ready for commissioners ready at the end of the month.

Judge Ruff asked about deadlines for pro/con committees,

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen confirmed Aug.

Sheriff Croskrey asked about language to prevent supplanting.

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen stated it would be similar to last ballot and it has a 250-word limit which is a limiting factor.

Prosecuting Attorney Eric Eisinger confirmed they will review

Sheriff Croskrey questioned not spending on existing programs, Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen disagreed

- Completion of OPMA Training and notice to Katie Gillies-
No discussion occurred

Other Business

City Council Member Chuck Torelli asked about getting out info regarding Blake and when it will take place/ be implemented

Chief Chris Guerrero clarified it may be jurisdictional differences and is willing to send out what Kennewick views, but it will be up to the jurisdictions. It is based on intent vs actual law. It will be determined by the courts and most likely will be discussed among the different groups

City Council Member Chuck Torelli asked about to increase in gang violence and shootings. Wanted clarification on what we are seeing

Chief Chris Guerrero confirmed there is an uptick in gang violence and seems to revolve around those types of individuals. Increase in juveniles committing violent crimes. Confirmed everyone is having the same discussions

Chief Brigit Clary confirmed increase in gangs in their city and seeing influx of people coming in from the valley and then leaving after committing crimes

City Council Member Chuck Torelli asked about turf wars and narcotics

Chief Chris Guerrero stated it is more related to the different gangs and not specific to drugs as much as different gangs. Needs to be involved in the schools and dealing with kids

City Council member John Trumbo would like someone to speak about the community outreach programs and how KPD is taking that approach as it is having positive impact

Chief Chris Guerrero spoke about their community outreach program and how they have a group that goes out once a week to contact homeless community and is providing resources. Spoke to some of the success that they have seen, and 80-90 percent are recontacts but there is a success usually noting one a month

City Council member John Trumbo went over some of the statistical notes from the city's latest update

Chief Chris Guerrero confirmed he believes it is a good program and proactive. He also stated that lots of programs are out there and doing work but no known central conversations happening

City Council member John Trumbo recommends that it would be good to have those conversations

Chief Chris Guerrero spoke about 2 people that have been doing good now after years of refusing services but finally took it and are doing well

Citizen member Brian Ace stated Benton and Franklin Counties working on putting together a mobile outreach team and trying to get it put together.

Probation Manager Dave Wheeler stated he has seen a large increase in juveniles on violent felonies and have 17 on class A felonies. Shortage of attorneys to represent the juveniles is posing issues. The court ruling has limited the courts' ability to compel kids to come to court and also limited on its authority. July 1st youth at risk petition, now the law prevents placing warrants or compelling youth at risk to come to court. They receive calls from parents that want help but don't have any resources for those with kids in gangs and youth at risk.

Chief Chris Guerrero stated this puts parents in bad spots, but others are enabling as well and spoke to possibly charging those kids.

Probation Manager Dave Wheeler stated he is hoping courts will review and make some changes as it will become very limiting.

Chief Chris Guerrero asks about meeting next week

City Council Member Chuck Torrelli ask if updates will be ready by next week

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen says they will be there for early review- group confirms to have meeting

Public Comment

There was no public comment section as we did not have anyone from the public in attendance

Meeting adjourned at approximately 12:40