

AGENDA

Law and Justice Council

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 – 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.

Tom Croskrey – Benton County Sheriff

Mike Clark – Benton County Sheriff

Rob Guerrero - Benton County Corrections Chief

Cameron Fordmeier – Citizen Member

Kevin Kennedy – Citizen Member

Fred Brink – West Richland Mayor Pro-Tem

Chris Guerrero – City of Kennewick Police Chief

Josie Delvin – Benton County Clerk

Tim Markham – Juvenile Justice Manager

Martin Pilcher – City of Richland Police Chief

Laurencio Sanguino – City Attorney, Kennewick

Eric Eisinger – Benton County Prosecutor

Matt Rasmussen – Deputy County Administrator

Jessica Foltz – City Attorney, West Richland

Brian Ace – Citizen Member

Keith Johnson – Office of Public Defense Manager

Thomas Grego – West Richland Police Chief

Meeting called to order at 12:00

Introductions

Around the Room Introductions

Approval of Minutes (Action)

Meeting Minutes

- Chief Guerrero asked for a motion to approve minutes, Citizen Member Kevin Kennedy moved to approve, Sheriff Croskrey seconded, motion passed.

New Business

Regional Updates

Chief Chirs Guerrero said they have 10 openings, 3 training car, 7 in academy - 20 total. Spokane academy now has new curriculum and looking to send 3-4 to Spokane. Working on year-end report - violent crime and property crime was down, overall crime was up.

Sheriff Tom Croskrey spoke about looking at the Spokane academy, they have a couple openings, and 3 in training. Putting someone back in ICAC on 3/1/25. Going to be reaching out to other agencies to see if they will put people in. Did a community survey, they want people in ICAC.

West Richland Police Chief Thomas Grego said they have 1 opening, 4 in training. 2023-2024 crime stats, overall drop in crime.

Citizen Member Cameron Fordmeier spoke about some diversion and deflection services, some in the surrounding areas have none. GCBH decided to throw a deflection and diversion summit. Hosting this summit in May and is geared towards key stakeholders.

Chief Rob Guerrero said the jail has 4 openings, 4 in the academy, and detention has no vacancies. West Richland Mayor Pro-Tem Fred Brink said AWC is working on local behavioral health capacity increases, focused on public safety recruitment and retention. Working to get 1% property tax cap if local elected officials choose to.

City Attorney Laurencio Sanguino said they filled their last position.

Clerk Josie Delvin said they hopefully just filled their last opening. 7 employees in training. Have come across protection orders when judge orders us to send to different state, they won't serve. It is becoming a bigger issue because the temporary keeps getting reissued.

OPD Manager Keith Johnson spoke about being new to Benton County. They have been doing a lot of recruiting, now have 5 in-house attorneys and several contracted attorneys. Substantial concern from state regarding OPD caseload. State has not formally responded to what the standards will be.

Prosecuting Attorney Eric Eisinger said Ryan Brown retired; Jeff Aultman is new Civil Chief PA. Galt is new as well. Criminal division is down 5 PA's. Successfully recruited two additional attorneys, who will be going into the felony unit. 2 open positions. Rule 9 interns are coming in.

Chief Martin Pilcher said they are down 8 positions, 4 entered academy this week. Crime in 2024 was down, odd exception of graffiti.

Old Business

Status of Public Safety Sales Tax

Deputy County Administrator Matt Rasmussen spoke about wrapping up the budget year for 2024, significant progress in spending down reserves. Didn't get within the 2-3 month mark, but close. Will be spending it down in 25-26.

Chief Chris Guerrero spoke about a couple of DOC houses and in the last few weeks they've been getting quite a few notices about those. Doing follow up regarding these houses.

Other Business

Public Comment

Meeting adjourned 12:29