

AGENDA
Law and Justice Council
Wednesday, June 11, 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.

Rob Guerrero - Benton County Corrections Chief
Chuck Torelli – City of Kennewick Council Member
John Trumbo – City of Kennewick Council Member
Jessica Foltz – City Attorney, West Richland
Mike Clark – Benton County Sheriff Lieutenant
Josie Delvin – Benton County Clerk
Theresa Richardson – Richland Mayor
Keith Johnson – Office of Public Defense Manager
Eric Eisinger – Benton County Prosecutor
Andrew Clark – Benton County Prosecuting Attorney
Matt Rasmussen – Deputy County Administrator
Steve Crown – West Richland Interim Police Chief
Jared Kelly – West Richland Police Commander
Tiffany Runge – Superior Court Administrator
Jennifer Azure – Benton County District Court Judge

Meeting called to order by Lieutenant Clark at 12:03

Introductions

- Around the Room Introductions

Approval of Minutes (Action)

- Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Eric Eisinger, Keith Johnson seconded, motion unanimously passes.

New Business

- Justice System Flow Chart Discussion

Prosecutor Eric Eisinger presented about the criminal justice system flow chart. The goal is that in these meetings we would be able go around the room and identify red, yellow and green areas in which are broken, semi problematic and which are operating well. Left side of the document is District Court, right side of document you have felonies and what happens in Superior Court. Chuck Torelli is going to use this as an example for an upcoming meeting to highlight where the city budget is impacting the

criminal justice system. Great tool that can be used in a multitude of ways. Still working thru other items that need to be added that are being newly brought to his attention.

Clerk Josie Delvin states the clerk's office is not mentioned in the flow chart at all. Also, trials do not have Jurors mentioned.

Citizen Member Brain Ace said some of the pieces and cogs on district court side can't be reflected fully. Feels like a fairly good balance has been found.

Prosecutor Eric Eisinger asks how we proceed forward with something like this.

Council Member John Trumbo spoke about trying to identify where items go on the chart such as clerk's office items, and he recommends a flag to be input where there are cogs in the process. Who is the intended audience?

Prosecutor Eric Eisinger said that the purpose of this body is to advise the commissioners, this would facilitate a conversation with the commissioners.

Citizen Member Brian Ace said some of the pieces missing such as the clerk's office, we could do breakout boxes. May need to add a critical legend.

Prosecutor Eric Eisinger talked about the updated Supreme court ruling on case load numbers for OPD.

Council Member John Trumbo said the frustrating part of court case followings is the number of continuances.

Attorney Andrew Clark spoke about the assignment of public defenders, can affect other areas that may affect other yellow or red areas.

Attorney Jessica Foltz asked about the SC decision, did they recommend some sort of case weighting and interested in having further conversations regarding this

OPD Manager Keith Johnson said they are working on the SC order that came out and identifying what the process will look like.

- DUI Dismissals Pending Toxicology Reports

Judge Azure talked about bringing this to the group to discuss ideas. In custodies the past Monday, had 61 in custodies, a ton of DUI, second- and third-time offenses being dismissed due to toxicology results lagging. Courts cannot impose any regulations on the defendant as the judges believe safety risks are imposed.

Lieutenant Mike Clark said speaking towards LE, there was a swing prior from dragger vs. toxicology and them not being challenged. Guys have gotten very proficient doing blood warrants, we are currently getting new BAC's certifications back.

Judge Azure said we can proceed with a refusal, not sure why we aren't proceeding with that. Main concern is the safety issue, and we want things done properly.

Lieutenant Mike Clark said we feel the same way from Public Safety standpoint.

Interim Chief Steve Crown said very similar circumstances exist in our department, doing more blood draws. There isn't a ton of cases coming from West Richland, where there are blood draws, the delay is causing an issue.

Judge Azure said time delay is where it becomes an issue.

Attorney Andrew Clark said we have been working with BCSO and WSP, dragger was getting issue, also a lot of substance abuse happening. Telephonic search warrants came out and streamlined the ability to do the blood draw. Way easier to do a breath test now.

Lieutenant Mike Clark said he'll bring up again within our department meeting to ensure this is a topic they are aware of.

Old Business

- Status of Public Safety Sales Tax

Other Business

Public Comment

Meeting adjourned at 12:49pm