



## King County

### Public Defense Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, December 5, 2024  
9:30am – 12:00pm

Teams Meeting and Conference Room 245

#### AGENDA

1. **Welcome**

**Attending virtually:** John Strait, Kevin Hollinz, Chris Carney, Sara Rankin, Jackie Walsh, Chris Petroni, Shrounda Selivanoff, George Yeannakis, Oloth Insyxiengmay

**Attending in Person:** NONE

**Not present:** Nyema Clark

2. **Approval of Minutes from Meeting on June 6, August 1, and October 3, 2024**

Approved.

3. **Public Comment**

None.

4. **Remarks from SEIU Representatives**

**Molly Gilbert:**

- Molly provided an overview of the role of the union for new members' benefit.
- She then provided her perspective on a dispute over how to credit transferred cases that were originally assigned before July 1, 2024.
- Sara Rankin asked a clarifying question about the ask being made of the board, Molly requested a meeting.
- John Strait clarified that the primary task of the board at this time is meeting the Code requirements of screening applicants for the permanent Director position. He expressed a willingness to review materials and then notify the Executive's Office of the challenge facing DPD attorneys.
- Molly agreed to send more information to the Board members and meet on this topic separately.

5. **Remarks from Teamsters Representatives**

**Rachael Schultz:**

- Teamsters have been working in collaboration with SEIU on collaborating about the best way to transition to case weighting and implementing the WSBA standards.

## 6. Department of Public Defense Director's Report

### Special Counsel for Criminal Policy and Practice Katie Hurley:

Katie acknowledged the need for further discussion about the credit policy for transferred cases but deferred to the Interim Director and Deputy Director when they return from vacation. She then introduced Stev Weidlich, who reviewed the trends in filings from the PAO since the last meeting. Stev walked through the impact the surge in felony filings compared to the same months in 2023 that have led to the strain on felony units identified by Molly Gilbert in her remarks on behalf of SEIU. Despite the caseloads, Stev noted that 22 cases were closed due to not guilty verdicts at trial in the last three months – more than any other category of dispositions. Katie relayed the recent staffing shift Matt Sanders and Matt Pang are working on to move 8-12 misdemeanor attorneys to felony units but noted that they will only be qualified to handle felony-low charges.

- Katie then provided a recap of the outcomes of DPD's budget advocacy:
  - 10 additional FTEs above what the Executive proposed, for a total of 44 FTEs.
    - Aiming to fill those slots with lateral hires, in the process of interviewing candidates for our dedicated recruiter position on HR team
    - Advertising in WA and roughly a dozen other state bar association journals beginning in January
    - Appreciate anything board members can do to spread the word of open lateral positions would be helpful
- Other staffing updates:
  - Hiring for a full-time Training Director to help on-board laterals and 3L classes, as well as support our current staff with more in-house trainings for attorneys and non-attorney professionals
  - Hiring continues for 2025 3L class – 37 acceptances so far, aiming for a class of 45 3Ls to start next October.
  - 2024 3L class is transitioning well to taking cases, Matt Pang met with supervisors for misdemeanor units yesterday to check on their progress.
- Matt Sanders and union reps testified in November hearing before Supreme Court on caseload standards codification into court rules, but no specific date on their decision- we are hoping for it before the legislative session begins on 1/13/25.
- Supreme Court accepted review for our litigation over excessive case assignments in ITA court, but case is being handled by outside counsel so no more details to offer.
- Continuing our litigation on the personal restraint petitions for unconstitutional conditions of confinement in the Green Hill youth prison.
- Legislative overview:
  - FTR reform to enact proposals from the Sex Offender Policy Board
  - Proposing juvenile sentencing reform so fewer young people are committed to JR
  - Assault 3 exemption for clients whose charges stem from conduct committed during a mental health crisis
  - Comprehensive misdemeanor dismissal bill to provide a faster path to connecting with community-based services and exit the criminal legal system.
  - Work sessions: state legislature holding a session on 12/12 regarding juvenile legal system and held one on 11/18 regarding misdemeanors
- Katie introduced Will Casey as staff liaison for brief overview of board responsibilities for new members joining. He covered:
  - Selection process for permanent DPD Director

- Budget Report for next biennial budget
- Annual Report to Council next year
- Code of Conduct

## 7. **King County Boards & Commissions Code of Conduct form**

Orientation re PDAB Duties and Tasks by Will Casey:

- All existing and new PDAB members must sign, date, and return to Christina/Will the Code of Conduct form that was sent out with the 12/5/24 PDAB Meeting Materials.
- The PDAB has a significant role in choosing the permanent Director of DPD. The Executive's Office is currently working with a search firm to collect and screen nationwide applications. There is a preference for applications received by December 4, 2024, but applications will be accepted after December 4. The Executive's Office will then provide the PDAB with the screened applications. The PDAB then designs its own process to conduct applicant interviews and after the interviews, the PDAB will submit three nominees to the Executive's Office. The Executive will appoint one nominee who must then receive a majority vote of the County Council.
- The PDAB must provide an Annual Report every other year to the Executive's Office concerning the state of public defense. An Annual Report was not completed for 2023. The PDAB organizes that process with Christina and Will assisting to connect the PDAB with individuals within the criminal legal system, Union staff, etc.
- The PDAB must also provide a Budget Report every two years concerning the sufficiency of the Executive's proposed budget for public defense. DPD releases its proposed budget at the end of June, which the PDAB will have access to, and the Executive typically releases its proposed budget the third week of September on a Monday. The PDAB will then have less than one month to submit its Budget Report advocating for DPD's funding, so it will need to be turned around quickly.
- In addition to these tasks, there are also requests from the Director's Office, the Unions, or others at DPD for other public and inter-County advocacy from the PDAB as a whole or individual PDAB members. For instance, we may ask the PDAB to write an op-ed or sign a letter of concern. The Chair and Vice Chair are integral to designing and organizing these processes and tasks that PDAB members participate in.

## 8. **PDAB Chair and Vice Chair Election**

Results and vote tracking:

Chris Carney nominated John Strait as Chair, and Jackie Walsh seconded the nomination. John disclosed that he has an ongoing serious health condition that would inhibit his ability to serve as Chair, but offered to serve as Vice Chair.

Sara Rankin nominated Chris Carney to serve as Chair with John Strait as Vice Chair. Jackie Walsh seconded. No one was opposed, motion passes.

## 9. **PDAB Search for DPD Director**

Chris advised the Board that he, John, and Sara have a meeting with the search firm collecting applications on Monday. Jackie Walsh asked that the search firm proactively add all Board members to the Zoom call for the meeting at 1pm on Monday.

## 10. **Executive Session**

Moved to executive session at 10:08 a.m.

11. **Adjourn**

10:35 a.m.