



King County

Public Defense Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, June 5, 2025
9:30am – 12:00pm

Teams Meeting and Conference Room 245

AGENDA

1. **Welcome**

Attending virtually: Kevin Hollinz, Sara Rankin, Chris Carney, Adrien Leavitt, George Yeannakis, Chris Petroni

Attending in Person: NONE

Not present: Jackie Walsh, Shrounda Selivanoff, John Strait

2. **Approval of Minutes from Meeting on April 3, 2025**

Sara Rankin moved to approve the minutes, George Yeannakis seconded, no objections. Approved.

3. **Public Comment**

None.

4. **Remarks from SEIU Representatives**

Molly Gilbert:

- SEIU has many positives to express. First, there's been a massive improvement in communication and the tone of communications between SEIU and the DO. We're close to finalizing caseload policy for July 1 and have started discussing Phase 2 and 3. We're feeling hopeful about the future, regardless of WSSC's decision on the standards.
- The DO is showing flexibility with SEIU after receiving feedback.
- We're having bi-weekly meetings with DO to discuss issues outside the contract.
- The DO is supporting SEIU's project of paying to bring in a diversity and equity director from the State to meet with SEIU to build curriculum around equity issues in DPD. The DO is supporting SEIU by allowing some of its members to do some of this work during work hours, which allows higher SEIU participation.
- SEIU is going to conduct an ethics conference about attorney ethics and what we can do under labor law to boost the standards with Steven Hanlon, who headlined the Rand study.
- Molly added a link to a Seattle U. Law Review article by DPD attorney Austin Field published last month:

5. Remarks from Teamsters Representatives

Rachael Schultz:

- We haven't received as much communication with the DO as SEIU, but will be starting monthly meetings on non-caseload credit policy issues. Hopefully that will help communication.
- Teamsters are waiting for an update on Training, particularly for supervisors for whom this is a reporting year because we have not conducted any CLEs this year.

6. Department of Public Defense Director's Report

Interim Director Matt Sanders and Interim Deputy Director Matt Pang:

We've had high felony filings in April and May. We projected that we would see 402 filings, but in April we had 572. Kent has higher filings than Seattle, so we've been moving resources to Kent. Assignments are how we see filings represented. The prosecutor's office started Project 10-1, which we were not notified of in advance, where they are filing a backlog of cases 1 to 2-and-a-half years later.

Is there any explanation of backlog and while file now? The prosecutor's office minimized the impact of this Project on DPD, and they gave no justification for it. Matt Pang personally noted that an election is coming up this year, so that could be the reason for the filings.

Felony assignments have been consistently over our projections.

FTE Triggers (Rainbow Chart): We updated this slide since we sent out with the PDAB materials yesterday. Anita and Gordon created this chart to show hiring authority. We must have 2 consecutive months of higher than normal filings, then you get the lowest of those two months. Last month, we just hit the likely authority to ask for funding to hire 17 more attorneys.

Because we are in a one-year budget (biennial budgets begin 2026), we only have one omnibus budget request (supplemental) this budget cycle. As of yesterday, we need to increase our omnibus request from 12 to 17 Trigger FTEs.

Like the last four months, District Court was slightly high, and Kent is higher while Seattle and Redmond are not, but we don't know why.

In October 2025 when we have 48 new attorneys, we will add a third Division (SCRAP, ACA and TDA) to practice in Kent District Court, so we'll have 18-20 practicing attorneys.

Will the new 17 attorneys change the budget for 2026? This year's budget runs for only one year, January 1 to December 31, 2025. Next year's budget runs for two years (as do all future budgets), January 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027. The data we have now is included in how the model projects future filings and assignments. The Executive and PSB does pro forma budgeting (increasing the prior budget by inflation to calculate the current base budget). Our office is unique to other County Departments because our budget is driven by a demand model (modeling by projections). We look at averages and trends, which are elastic.

Laura Federighi: Just to clarify the omnibus, anything approved in the omnibus gets incorporated into our base budget if it's approved by Council. Any omnibus approval we receive will be in effect during 2026-27. The way the trigger is written it does not include

support staff. If we request additional support staff now, it will be based on the 2026-27 model.

Special Counsel for Criminal Policy and Practice Katie Hurley:

Juvenile filings are still very high and we're trying to expand restorative justice. We're seeing higher juvenile numbers around the State and since many of those kids in detention now will end up at Green Hill or Echo Glen, this is a cascading problem.

Green Hill: We filed 3 PRPs about a year ago due to the horrible conditions at Green Hill where the kids were confined to their cells, with no water or bathroom facilities, for far too long. Kate Benward conducted the recent Court of Appeals oral argument arguing that DCYF admitted violations of the law as to both kids still at Green Hill for the 2 remaining cases.

Interim Director Matt Sanders and Interim Deputy Director Matt Pang Cont.:

While ITA and SMC assignments look okay, we've been having staffing issues. Our supervisors, Jonathan Rudd, and Scott Ketterling have been regularly collaborating with us to troubleshoot solutions.

In Year over Year Staffing, we're looking at an 8-year period because of the Covid pandemic. In that 8-year period, on average, we hired about 10 lawyers, lost 11-1/8 lawyers and netted negative 1.125 lawyers. This year, we hired 18 lawyers, lost 12, and netted 6 lawyers.

Because we are outpacing attrition, transfers should be less impactful. This can also impact how we maintain staffing because the remaining lawyers know help is on the way.

We had double the number of lawyer applicants, and an over 500% increase in lawyer applications from other states. We interviewed 100% more lawyers with the same passage rate. Of those that passed, 200% more accepted offers.

We received communications from a PD in rural Indiana because of our ads asking for advice. And New Mexico, it helps us draw people.

Confirmation Process: Thank you for the support of the PDAB and to Chair Chris Carney for his presentation in support to the County Council at the Hearing on May 27. We are meeting with Directors at other County Departments to consult on possible adjustments at DPD.

Training: We've collaborated with SEIU and were talking about implementing 4 training supervisors with one in each Division. After feedback from the Managing Attorneys, supervisors, and both Unions, we're now considering hiring 4 Special Duty positions based on the type of training: Misdemeanor, Felony, Investigation, and Mitigation. Much of DPD's training had been attorney-focused and we want to expand. These Special Duty positions will research and develop trainings in the skills and practice areas for each classification. We're also in the process of hiring a Training Administrator III. Part of the delay was that we had 170 applications that met the minimum qualifications. We're almost done reviewing and crafting the interview questions. We're also submitting a decision package for the training supervisor in each division to see if we can advance that concept.

Rachael Schultz, Teamsters: I don't remember the Teamsters discussing this fully and we need to discuss it further as long as these are not supervisory positions.

The Administrator III will be able to address some things, but the idea is that the Special Duty positions will have 6 months of training development to create training modules, and then we will have those materials to keep and use in-house.

External Community Interactions: Matt Sanders attended the NAPD Changemakers conference where he interacted with many people from Public Defense offices that have no case management systems at all. We have our challenges, but we can take stock in our resources that many others don't have.

DPD will also be represented at the Seattle University conference organized by Bob Boruchowitz in late June. Katie Hurley and Matt Pang met with Dean Holland concerning the mandatory reporter law that was passed, so we will be starting the Juvenile Defense Clinic again. And Kate Benward will likely continue her role as board member with the Washington Defender Association (WDA).

Caseload Standards: We're meeting with both unions regarding our case weighting credit policy. DO staff have also reviewed and made suggestions to Appendix B of the case weighting standards, including Scott Ketterling, Krystyna Langsen, and Stev Weidlich. Scott is our representative at the CPD.

Next week we're welcoming the Rule 9 Summer Interns, who will be participating in training this week, including presenters from all 4 Divisions, a panel of professional staff, and staff supervisors. We pay our Summer Interns competitively so we can pull from a deeper and more diverse group of candidates.

We're also welcoming our 3rd Lateral Class for a Core Skills Training June 9-16, include 3 Laterals who started in March.

Questions from Board members:

Chris Petroni: It's very nice to hear such positive and encouraging developments.

George Yeannakis: The Seattle Times published a few articles where Matt Sanders was quoted about the inability of DPD to staff attorneys at the new behavioral health facilities. Does DPD no longer represent ITA clients past 14 days?

Matt Sanders: That's nuanced. There are two new hospitals run by the State. Our position is that those are not DPD's responsibility. We don't have an extra 4-5 attorneys to move into ITA to cover those hospitals. Olympia passed a bill to allow them to contract with OPD to do that work. It is our position that once an ITA case reaches 180 days, that case is no longer DPD's responsibility.

Matt Pang: Whenever we had extra ITA capacity, we took a few cases per month during, and we may continue to do that when we have extra capacity.

Christina Alburas will send to the PDAB information concerning the PDAB Annual and Budget reports and any critical dates.

Laura Federighi: During the budget process, Matt Sanders may ask for the PDAB's support for DPD's Budget. The PDAB will then meet with County Councilmembers to talk to them about our budget submission. The County Council phase of the budget process begins the last week of September and goes through mid-November. At the same time, your report is due around that time.

7. Executive Session

No executive session held.

8. **Adjourn**

Adjourned at 10:34 a.m.