



**King County**

## **Public Defense Advisory Board Meeting**

**Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022  
9:30am – 12:00pm**

### **VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON MEETING**

#### **1. Welcome**

**Attending virtually:** Shoshana Kehoe (vice chair), Lou Frantz, John Strait, Andres Muñoz, Oloth Insyxiengmay (not yet confirmed), Sara Rankin (not yet confirmed), Nyema Clark

**Not present:** Shrounda Selivanoff, Adam Chromy, Chris Carney (chair)

#### **2. Approval of Minutes from meeting on June 2, 2022, and June 24, 2022**

Not approved due to lack of a quorum at start of meeting.

#### **3. Remarks from SEIU Representatives (Molly Gilbert)**

The union is very happy that Anita was reappointed as director. Membership ratified the contract with 97% approval. Of concern are jail conditions issue; due to staff shortages, there are unsafe conditions for clients and access issues for attorneys. A big push is to figure out how to address these issues.

#### **4. Remarks from Teamsters Representatives (Rachael Schultz)**

None.

#### **5. Director's Report**

Anita introduces Nathan Bays, DPD's new special counsel for affirmative litigation and policy. Tara introduces Sithong Sosavanh, DPD's new training assistant. She also encourages board members to attend the upcoming DPD all-staff gathering.

##### **Staffing update – Gordon Hill and Stev Weidlich**

Felony assignments by location for last 30 days: Assignments increased a great deal due to cases filed long ago just getting assigned.

The split in assignments between Seattle and Kent: Historically, we've seen about 60/40 split between Sea/Kent and have assigned attorneys accordingly. Over this past winter/spring, we saw that shift tilt back the other way and we became quite stretched in Kent. Now tilting the other way, with many more cases in Seattle. Transferring staff from north to south (or vice versa) is expensive and challenging.

Felony Class A assignments: There's much talk about increased violent crime in Seattle. Our numbers tell a different story – they show a consistent level of Class A filings over the past 2 years.

Open cases by location: Can see that over the last six or seven months, we've seen an increase – day over day – in open cases accruing in Seattle, while Kent has closed more cases. Also seeing fewer numbers of theft/burglary charges compared to previous months for the month of July – the only month we have for Q3. This too counters the narrative about increased violent crime.

In response to question about how this information is being conveyed to the media, Gordon says we don't publish this data but respond when we receive media requests. We're responsive but not a clearinghouse for crime information.

Criminal Filings: July was a low month in terms of felony filings. Both Seattle and Kent are low. June was a high month, so July was a more normal range in Seattle, but we saw a sharp drop in Kent.

#### **Jail conditions – Katie Hurley**

We're extremely concerned about conditions of confinement at the KC Jail – people are in their cells for many hours each day, not getting change of clothes for days, not getting access to showers. Also, attorneys are facing significant delays when they go to the jail to try to see their clients. Visitation is closed at the MRJEC; as more clients are transferred to Seattle jail, delays are getting longer. This is both unacceptable and problematic, and we're looking at a number of ways to try to address the situation. We're also looking at this at the youth jail, where we've received disturbing reports about understaffing and where youth are being kept in their cells for many, many hours at a stretch each day.

In response to a question, Anita and Katie say the answer is not more correctional officers. The real issue is reducing the number of people in jail so that the current staffing can handle the population level.

#### **6. Chair's report (Shoshana)**

Shoshana notes that Chris's position is up and that PDAB needs a new chair. The board also needs to submit a budget report to the County Council this year before they begin work on a public defense budget. Board members will meet with Gordon and Anita to get this going. The annual report has not yet been completed.

#### **7. Executive session**

No executive session.

#### **8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourns at 11:15 a.m.