



King County

Public Defense Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, August 2, 2018

10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Dexter Horton Building, 2nd Floor

Conference Room 245 & Basement Training Center

MINUTES

1. Welcome

Attending in person – Chair Paul Holland, Vice Chair Kim Ambrose, John Strait, Adam Chromy, Marc Boman, Jeffery Robinson, Sophia Byrd McSherry, Matt Adams

Not Present – Sharon Armstrong; Safia Ahmed

Meeting called to order by Paul Holland at 9:34 a.m.

2. Approval of June 7, 2018 Meeting Minutes – deferred

3. Chair's Report

Paul provided a brief summary of efforts at national recruitment and noted that DPD employees in Kent had expressed concern at inability to participate in noon session today due to lack of skype functionality in downstairs training room.

4. NeoGov Instructions

Seth Watson (HRD) provided basic instruction on how to use the NeoGov job listing site. Board members were advised to contact Seth or Irma Van Buskirk if they need assistance setting up a password.

5. Department of Public Defense Director's Report

Interim Director Anita Khandelwal updated the Board on steps she's taken to improve communication within the department and improve the general work environment. These steps include weekly office hours (at all DPD locations), frequent emails to the department, and a suggestion box for employees to provide input. The most significant issue reported out by staff to this point is the weight of the workload.

Civil Practice and Policy Director Tara Urs reported that the department is conducting exit interviews with this year's summer interns, who have generally reported a positive experience. The department plans to involve a number of staff in recruiting and interviewing next year's summer interns. Regarding training, the Annual Conference has been scaled back to one day (09/07) and made voluntary. The department will enhance its series of lunchtime trainings. The department also plans to stage a training for all attorneys who will be joining as new attorneys over the coming months.

Interim Deputy Director Rick Lichtenstadter reported that there are 11 new attorneys slated to start this year. The terms of their offers guarantee them a position by April 2019. Right now, the department expects 5 to start in September. All will be invited to the training described earlier. The Department will soon post its announcement for new attorneys for next year. The goal is to hire between 8 and 10.

6. Discussion of DPD Public Policy Statements and Independence

Anita Khandelwal briefed the board on several recent policy statements made or positions taken by the department (interrogation practices raised during police search, warrants for foster youth, and the Children and Family Justice Center). She then described reactions of various officeholders that she had either witnessed or heard about and which she perceives as challenges to the department's independence. She raised the concern that Councilmember Upthegrove, who had refused to meet with her because of the position on the CFJC, was now responsible for approving the department's lease in Kent. Jennifer Giambattista offered an update on the scheduling of that matter.

The Board discussed the issue, receiving input along the way from several staff members who asked to be heard. No concrete plan of action was decided upon by 12:00, at which time it was necessary to move downstairs to receive input from staff regarding the Director search.

7. The Board received input from DPD staff on the qualities they are seeking in a new director. Among the attributes mentioned were:

Ability to stand up to pressure

Communication style

Better acquainted with WA (and King County) practice

Takes a whole-department perspective

Committed to building relationships

Knowledge of what litigation demands

8. Executive Session – entered at 12:35 p.m.

9. Adjourn – 1:15 p.m.