



**King County**

## **Public Defense Advisory Board Meeting**

**Thursday, Aug. 1, 2019  
9:30 a.m. – noon**

**Dexter Horton Building, Conference Room 245**

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. Welcome**

Attending in person – Chair Kim Ambrose, Vice Chair Lou Frantz, Marc Boman, Safia Ahmed

Attending remotely – Sophia Byrd McSherry

Not Present – Matt Adams, Sharon Armstrong, Adam Chromy, Jeffrey Robinson, and John Strait

Meeting called to order by Kim Ambrose at 9:38 a.m.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes from June 6, 2019 meeting**

Minutes approved.

#### **3. SEIU Report**

Molly Gilbert, vice-president of the local SEIU chapter, said the union is preparing for bargaining by undertaking an LAS classification study. The process is going well. The union is also talking to attorneys about merit-based pay; they'd like to remove the merit-based pay for existing seniors. She also discussed the report the county's budget office just completed on parity between DPD and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, which raised concerns about DPD's level of administrative staff. Last, she discussed an initiative underway to convert half of DPD's bathrooms to multi-gender restrooms. We're working on signage and communications.

#### **4. Department of Public Defense Director's Report (Anita)**

Director Anita Khandelwal said she and other members of her management team would discuss the following topics:

- LAS / paralegal compensation / classification study
- Hiring
- Pre-trial risk assessment tools
- Text-messaging system
- Recruiting

- Annual Conference
- Website / family defense video

**LAS compensation study.** Susan Eddy talked about some adjustments that needed to be made to the LAS compensation/classification study, including a decision to fold the paralegals into it. DPD plans to have a classification compensation expert work with us, beginning in September. This lengthens the timeframe but will result in a better product. She also discussed the “lunch and learn” sessions she has initiated for new supervisors, where they discuss real-life examples to build a community and strengthen skills.

**Hiring update.** Anita noted that she took three director-level positions and converted them into middle-management positions (operations manager, training coordinator, and assigned counsel coordinator). She also said that the department has hired La Rond Baker as our new special counsel for affirmative litigation and policy – a director-level position. La Rond is currently an attorney in the Civil Rights Unit of the Washington State Attorney General’s Office; before that, she worked at the ACLU for six years. The Director’s Office is currently interviewing for the criminal practice/policy director, with a goal of making a decision by the end of the month.

**Pre-trial risk assessment tools.** Gordon Hill talked about how we responded to SMC’s plan to use Arnold Ventures’ pretrial risk assessment tool, which relies on factors that are racially inflected (including prior convictions, prior FTAs, and prior sentence). By working with members of the community and letting Arnold Ventures know of our concern, they decided not to come to Seattle. We’re pleased with this outcome, not just because of the danger of this risk assessment, but also because it demonstrated the power we have when we collaborate with the community.

Kim asks about next steps on bail reform. Gordon tells her that we continue to work with Dom Davis at Community Passageways and Sean Goode with Choose 180 on bail reform. Anita noted that we’re trying to educate the court on the potential use of unsecured bonds, which they’re not aware of. We’re pushing for incremental reform.

**Text-messaging system.** Steve Weidlich discussed our new system, which is up and running at SMC. The provider is a small company called Uptrust. Studies show that text mess reminders reduce FTAs.

**Recruiting.** Anita said she went to three law schools in the Bay Area – Berkeley, Stanford, and Hastings – recently as part of our ongoing effort to recruit a diverse class of interns for our 2020 program. Meetings with clinic directors and career development directors went well. We hope to have our intern recruitment announcement posted today.

**Annual Conference.** Tara Urs talked about how the conference, scheduled for Sept. 27, is shaping up. The theory of the day is “connecting with our clients.” The majority of the speakers will be people of color. We’ll also have people speak who have been affected by the system. The training is not mandatory. And it’s not a nuts-and-bolts training (since we have so many of those kinds of trainings throughout the year); it’s meant to have a very different feel and to be relevant to everyone, not just lawyers.

**Website redesign.** Leslie Brown goes over DPD’s newly designed website. She also shows them the video on family defense produced as part of our ESJ work.

## **5. Update: Proposed changes to charter (Kim)**

Kim discussed a letter she sent to the King County Charter Review Commission about DPD's charter – language based on what the board came up with at its last meeting to better ensure DPD's independence. Specifically, the board is seeking language that ensures that any changes in the level of DPD's appropriations does not interfere with the Department's ability to fulfill its ability to comply with the ABA's 10 principles of quality public defense. As a result of Kim's letter, the CRC has asked Kim to attend its next meeting in September to discuss the proposed change. Kim plans to attend.

## **6. Update: Board membership (Kim)**

Kim discussed possible members to the board to fill the seat Paul Holland vacated. She also noted how cumbersome the process is and wondered if there were a way to streamline the process. There are also questions about whose job it is to recruit people and help them through the process. Is it up to the Exec's Office, or is it PDAB's job? Also, it's very hard to find groups that can nominate people, because the organizations don't know anything about PDAB. If the goal is to have seats that reflect certain elements of our broader community, perhaps the board should do some outreach.

## **7. Discussion of Proposed Changes to Ordinance (Lou)**

Lou presented some changes he's proposed to DPD's ordinance that, among other things, could improve board member recruitment by clarifying and modifying the process by which nonprofit organizations nominate prospective members. His amendments would require the Executive's Office to develop a list of nonprofits active in the six focus areas already required for board membership and then reach out to them about the board and what it does. The idea is to beat the bushes a little bit more so that the board has a good pool of potential members.

**8. Executive Session:** The board goes into executive session at 11:32 a.m.

**9. Adjourn:** 11:50 a.m.