

Charles County CJCC Meeting Date | Time: 9/4/2025 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM Location: Microsoft Teams Video Conference

Meeting Co-Chairs: Hon. H. James West and Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Meeting Attendees:

- Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq. (Board of County Commissioners)
- Judge H. James West (Circuit Court)
- Judge Patrick Devine (District Court)
- Anthony Covington (State's Attorney's Office)
- Deb Hall (Charles County Government)
- Jason DuBard (Parole and Probation)
- Abena McAllister (State's Attorney's Office)
- Julee Snyder (Circuit Court)
- Ryan Ross (Charles County Detention Center)
- Dr. Dianna Abney (Charles County Department of Health)
- Julie Walton (Charles County Community Mediation Center)
- Sara Carruth (Circuit Court)
- Jeannine James (Mayor, Town of La Plata)
- Mckayla Wilkes (Life After Release)
- Carmen Johnson (Life After Release)
- Trenita McGee Byrd (Parole and Probation)
- Charmaine Young-Waddy (Charles County Public Schools)
- Lisa Yates (Circuit Court Clerk)
- Katy Batey (SoMD Criminal Defense)
- Mike Moses (Veteran Service Officer)
- Tanisha Sanders (Charles County Department of Social Services)
- Gary Ruble (Department of Juvenile Services)

Meeting Objectives

1. Approve Meeting Minutes from July 2025
2. Presentation – Life After Release
3. Provide Updates
4. Open Discussion

Meeting convened at 8:00 a.m.

Commissioner President Collins opened the meeting. He welcomed attendees, and initiated approval of the July 10, 2025, minutes.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- The July 2025 meeting minutes were emailed to all CJCC members.
- Motion to approve July meeting minutes: Jason DuBard
- Seconded by: Mr. Covington and Judge Devine
- Outcome: Approved unanimously.

The Meeting Minutes from the July 10, 2025, CJCC Meeting were approved.

Presentation: Life After Release – Court Watch Initiative

Speaker: McKayla Wilkes, Community Outreach Organizer

- Overview: Life After Release (LAR), founded in 2017, is led by directly impacted Black women and advocates against systemic inequities in the justice system. Their focus for Charles County is to launch a Court Watch program to monitor bond review hearings, collect data, and advocate for equitable pretrial services.
- Key Points:
 - Black residents = 56% of county population but 64% of incarcerated population.
 - Pretrial services reduce reliance on cash bail and keep individuals connected to jobs, family, and community.
 - Data from court observations used to advocate policy reforms.
 - Collaboration with the Vera Institute to collect data and analyze trends.
 - “Ideal pretrial services” include referrals to housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, and mental health programs.
- Challenges: Access to courtroom audio/virtual links for volunteers.

- Discussion:

Judge West confirmed daily bond reviews at 11 AM and availability of audio links through court administration. Judge West noted he is unaware of any cash bonds in Circuit Court within the past 6 years or more.

State's Attorney Tony Covington and Judge Devine noted cash bail is rarely used in District Court due to statewide mandates.

Mike Moses requested contact info for ongoing collaboration.

Judge West offered to share an explanation of how dockets are set up to community court watchers.

Updates

Judge West shared the following:

1. Mobile Crisis Flyers: 1,500 copies obtained; distributed to SAO, public defender's office, courts, and detention center. Exploring broader electronic distribution. Julie Walton will pick up flyers from Judge West.
2. Behavioral Health Summit Follow-Up: Collaboration underway to strengthen detention center services under Director Ross's leadership.
3. Pretrial Services Budget Planning: Julee Snyder and Sara Carruth are working on a budget to share with county administration; further updates expected by next meeting.
4. Veteran Data Collection: Mr. Moses would like to improve services to Veterans. Concerns raised that veteran status is underreported at intake; need to explore solutions to improve accuracy.

Veterans Court Discussion

- Mr. Covington is meeting with tri-county State's Attorneys to explore a regional Veterans Court.
- Mike Moses updated the group on Delegate Crutchfield's interest in modeling veteran support programs from other states and ongoing coordination with state police and Fort Meade.

Behavioral Health Updates Report

by Jason Dubard:

- Jason Dubard reported his office partnered with the LBHA to expand peer support services. The LBHA will provide an overview of their services in two weeks, and individuals on probation will be referred to peer support services.
- The probation office had a meeting with Sante and obtained mobile crisis team literature to hand out.
- Implementing a specialized behavioral health caseload is a priority. Staff will be trained to have specific mental health caseloads. A work group was developed, and they are hopeful to implement specialized caseloads within the next few months.

CJCC Pretrial Services Committee Update

Report by Deborah Hall, County Administrator:

- Deb Hall, Wes Adams and Sara Carruth attended a site visit at St. Mary's County Pretrial Services
- St. Mary's operates a comprehensive pretrial services program used as a model across Maryland.
- Features:
 - Robust assessment tools for judges.
 - Facility adjacent to correctional center with enhanced staff access.
 - Seven-day operation after realizing five days was insufficient.
 - In-house monitoring system with electronic tracking and wraparound services.
- Concerns: High staffing requirements and budget implications; however, scalable over time.
- Judge West invited Deb Hall and others to meet sometime after next week to go over bond reviews and explain the process.

CJCC Juvenile Justice Committee Update

Report by Julie Walton:

- Relaunching September 9 after summer hiatus.

- Preparing a Critical Intervention Mapping Project with a two-day workshop planned for January.
- Recruiting additional members from NAACP and Public Defender's Office.

CJCC Operations Committee

Report by Sara Carruth:

- Committee forming to strengthen CJCC operations, use data for decisions, expand community involvement, and manage the CJCC website (now live with minutes, agendas, and strategic plan).
- Seeking members and recommendations.

CJCC Mental Health Committee

Report by Sara Carruth on behalf of Katy Batey: The next meeting is scheduled for September 10.

Open Discussion

- Mike Moses emphasized collaboration with state and local partners on veteran-specific justice initiatives.
- General agreement on the importance of transparency, pretrial reform, and data-driven decision-making.

Action Items

- Life After Release: Coordinate with Court Administration for courtroom access (audio/virtual).
- CJCC Staff: Explore electronic distribution of mobile crisis flyers.
- CJCC Pretrial Committee: Continue budget and program design; report back next meeting.
- CJCC Juvenile Justice Committee: Plan critical intervention mapping workshop.
- Veterans Court: Mr. Covington to provide update on tri-county discussions at next meeting.
- Next Meeting: November 13, 2025 (Hybrid).

Scheduling of Next Meeting

- Date: November 13, 2025 (Hybrid: in-person at county building + virtual option).
- Note: Dr. Dianna Abney flagged a conflict but may attend virtually; deputies may substitute if needed.

Adjournment

- Commissioner President Collins closed the meeting.
- With no further matters to discuss, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the CJCC meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 a.m.

The mission of the CJCC is to enhance the operation of the Charles County adult and juvenile justice systems through interagency collaboration and the coordination of cohesive policies and programs for the purposes of improving public health and safety and heightening public trust.