

**Benton County Law & Justice Council
Meeting Minutes – 3/9/16**

Present: Tyler Richardson, Tri-City Herald
Craig Littrell, City of Kennewick Police Department
Rusty Morris, Citizen Representative
Andy Miller, Benton County Prosecuting Attorney
Steve Keane, Benton County Sheriff
Ray Kofoed, Citizen Representative
Jefferson Coulter, Northwest Justice Project
Brian McElroy, City of West Richland Police Department
Dave Giles, City of Prosser Police Department
Tara Symons, Benton County District Court – Mental Health Court
Katy Butler, Benton County District Court Judge
Paul Parish, City of Kennewick Council Member
Frederick Brink, Citizen Representative
Alex Ekstrom, Benton & Franklin Counties Superior Court Judge
Pat Austin, Benton & Franklin Counties Superior Court Administrator
Don Engelman, City of West Richland Council Member
Tracci Dial, KNDU TV
Eric Hsu, Benton County Office of Public Defense
Denise Gerry, Benton County Office of Public Defense

February 2, 2016 Meeting Minutes – comments or changes. This will be posted to the website.

Mental Health Court Presentation – Tara Symons, Program Manager

- Taking referrals the last week of March.
- SOC and Probation
- This court is the thirteenth in Washington State, third in Eastern Washington and the third largest in the state.
- Katy Butler – Judge, Megan Kilgore – Prosecuting Attorney, Dawn Hickman – Public Defender
- 12-24 month time frame for SOC
- Law Enforcement from the surrounding area has been a great support with this program.
- Wes Gardner, Kennewick Police Department will be participating in this program.

Gang and Crime Prevention Initiative

- Framework on how the funds would be given, what would be funded and the accountability.
- Compliance and accountability of the programs and contracts are of concern.
- Resources suggestions for accountability:
 1. Paul Parish – suggestion for a county employee within Commissioners office to monitor contracts.
 2. Contract full or part time for monitoring.
 3. Experts from the community on a board that could oversee programs.

4. Public Health District could possibly help.
5. Non-Profit Agency
6. Subcommittee would be a good way to prepare recommendations for target areas.

Public Safety Sales Tax Updates

- The website is continuing to be worked on. There is a customized domain which is an easy way for the public to enter the page.
- E-mail will be monitored by the County.
- City of Kennewick – possibility of hiring people in the coming months. Postings for the positions are coming soon.
- Benton County Sheriff – hiring in phases, five deputies, holding off on detective positions until the next quarter.
- City of West Richland – hired three officers that had been projected and they are on the road.

Adjourn meeting at 12:35 pm.