

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS & REVENUE

Budget Review Subcommittee on Justice and Judiciary

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2021 Interim

July 7, 2021

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 2nd meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Justice and Judiciary of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations & Revenue was held on Wednesday, July 7, 2021, at 9:00 AM, in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Danny Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Danny Carroll, Co-Chair; Representative Joseph M. Fischer, Co-Chair; Senators John Schickel and Whitney Westerfield; Representatives McKenzie Cantrell, Jennifer Decker, Daniel Elliott, Angie Hatton, and Jason Nemes.

Guests: Representative Ken Fleming; Nicolai Jilek, Commissioner, Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT); Frank Kubala, Training Division Director, DOCJT; Kevin Rader, Administrative Division Assistant Director, DOCJT; Joe Wallace, Firearms Section Supervisor, DOCJT; Holly Johnson, Secretary, Finance and Administration Cabinet (FAC); Peggy Willhite, Executive Advisor, Office of Policy and Budget, FAC; Tina Howard, Executive Director, Office of Administrative Services, FAC; Judge Marcus Vanover, Circuit Judge, Family Court; Angel Darcy, Governmental Affairs Liaison, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); and Nathan Goins, Family Court Liaison, Family and Juvenile Services Department, AOC.

LRC Staff: Zachary Ireland and Benjamin Thompson

Chair Carroll requested a moment of silence in honor of the life of Senator Tom Buford.

Approval of Minutes

Representative Fischer made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 2, 2021, meeting of the subcommittee. Representative Hatton seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved without objection.

Department of Criminal Justice Training Firing Range

Commissioner Jilek, Mr. Kubala, Mr. Rader, and Mr. Wallace all presented information regarding the deteriorating condition of the Department of Criminal Justice Training's (DOCJT) current firing range, and the difficulties that would present by not having a replacement should the current range become unusable.

In response to questions from Chair Carroll, Mr. Rader stated that DOCJT was debt free. Mr. Wallace noted that DOCJT had utilized virtual firearms training for roughly eight years, but that a virtual experience only has value as a supplement to live firearms training rather than as a replacement. Mr. Rader stated that an architectural firm has provided DOCJT an estimate of roughly \$28 million for the construction of a new firing range with multipurpose training functionality. DOCJT has had to install a steel beam to stabilize a roof truss where an exterior wall bearing the weight of the roof is crumbling.

In response to a question from Representative Fischer, Mr. Rader confirmed that DOCJT is continually assessing the condition of all its facilities, but that the firing range is the department's area of greatest need.

In response to a question from Senator Carroll, Commissioner Jilek stated that after a new firearms training facility, the department's next priority would be an onsite cafeteria where recruits wouldn't have to travel off-campus for meals.

In response to questions from Representative Fleming, Commissioner Jilek said that the Post Critical Incident Seminar (PCIS) section was moved into another branch of the department. Commissioner Jilek noted that there had been no reduction in PCIS training.

Guardians Ad Litem

Secretary Johnson spoke on the Finance and Administration Cabinet's role in the Guardian ad litem program, specifically the issuance of payments to Guardians.

Judge Vanover, Ms. Darcy, and Mr. Goins provided information regarding the requirements for being a Guardian ad litem, their rates of pay, and the kinds of work that Guardians ad litem do.

In response to a question from Chair Carroll, Mr. Goins noted that many guardians are relatively new attorneys, as it provides an early opportunity to get into a courtroom and help clients.

In response to a question from Representative Hatton, Mr. Goins said that dependency, neglect, and abuse legal trainings that are provided free of charge by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) count for eight hours of continuing legal education for attorneys that take the course.

In response to a question from Chair Carroll, Secretary Johnson stated that funding levels for the guardian ad litem program are \$11.2 million in Fiscal Year 2021 and \$11.189 million in Fiscal Year 2022.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:49AM.