

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND JUDICIARY

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2026 Interim

September 2, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Justice and Judiciary of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on September 2, 2026, at 9:00 AM ET/8:00 AM CT in Room 171 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Stephanie Dietz, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Stephanie Dietz, Co-Chair; Senator Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Co-Chair; Senators Keturah J. Herron and Robin L. Webb; Representatives Jennifer Decker, Nima Kulkarni, and Scott Sharp.

Guests: Ann Blaylock, General Counsel, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet; Hilarye Dailey, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Support Services, Department of Corrections; Melanie Lowe, Deputy Public Advocate; and, Jennifer Wittmeyer, Trial Division Director.

LRC Staff: Zachary Ireland, Perry Papka, and Spring Emerson.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 3, July 1, and August 5, 2026 meetings were not approved due to the lack of a quorum and will be deferred to the next meeting.

Dept. of Corrections

Ann Blaylock, General Counsel, Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, and Hilarye Dailey, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Support Services, Dept. of Corrections, provided information regarding medical care for state inmates.

In response to Chair Dietz, Counselor Blaylock said Wellpath exited out of bankruptcy in May 2025 and Kentucky has no pending claims. The contract expires at the end of this year and is currently on a 6-month extension of the contract originally entered into on January 1, 2022, and was previously renewed for 2 additional years on July 1, 2024. The current contract is effective July 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026.

In response to Co-Chair Funke Frommeyer, Deputy Commissioner Dailey added that there are a few more steps that need to be completed before an award is made through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The goal of the Dept. of Corrections is to have a

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provider in place by January 1, 2027. Expenditures in 2025 were slightly more than \$67 million.

In response to Chair Dietz, Counselor Blaylock said the Dept. of Corrections and the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet provided the definitions being used. The jailers were also consulted.

In response to Representative Sharp, Counselor Blaylock said the state begins to cover the healthcare costs for inmates in county jails upon incarceration as state inmates, after their conviction. The Dept. of Corrections follows the law as it was written.

In response to Co-Chair Funke Frommeyer, Counselor Blaylock said the Dept. of Corrections requested in early September that the jailers provide a date and time to meet, and they have not yet responded. The request was through Counselor Jeff Mando, attorney for the jailers in that lawsuit.

Dept. of Public Advocacy

Melanie Lowe, Deputy Public Advocate; and Jennifer Wittmeyer, Trial Division Director, Dept. of Public Advocacy (DPA), presented information on attorney reclassification and compensation.

In response to Co-Chair Funke Frommeyer, Deputy Lowe said The DPA loses approximately 10 attorneys per month throughout the year. It offers the best training process in the nation, and pay is consistent with experience. Director Wittmeyer added that for the past 2 years, 60 attorneys have been hired, and hiring is undertaken throughout the year. There were 22 interns this summer and several of them expressed interest in full-time positions.

Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2026. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 AM ET/9:04 AM CT.