



# Multnomah County Charter Review

## Safety & Justice Subcommittee

May 23, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

### SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING 7

Purpose: Finalize subcommittee recommendations

#### Attendees

##### Committee Members Present

- Donovan Scribes (he/him)
- Salma Sheikh (she/her)
- J'reyesha (Jay) Brannon (she/her)
- Danica Leung (she/her)
- Ana del Rocío (she/her)

##### Absent:

- *Nina Khanjan (she/her)*

##### Staff:

- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator
- Dani Bernstein (they/them), Office of Community Involvement Director
- Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. There were no observers at this meeting.

#### Welcome

Kali went over Zoom logistics.

#### Community Involvement Committee & Jail Visits

Kali noted that no one had signed up for public comment. She did say the Office of Community Involvement (OCI) had submitted a written public comment about the idea that subcommittee had been considering, which would require the Community Involvement Committee (CIC) to be involved in its jail visits recommendation. She explained that Dani Bernstein, OCI's Director, was present to answer any questions the subcommittee had about that.

Dani summarized the comment, which was intended to give the subcommittee background on the CIC and some concerns OCI had about requiring its involvement in jail visits through the Charter. The CIC is an advisory body for the county on community involvement and engagement and reducing barriers to

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participation. The CIC is established in Charter, with more details about its work incorporated into County Code. Dani explained that each year the CIC develops a couple of focus areas, studies them in subcommittee, and makes recommendations. Dani said that they were concerned that jail visits were outside the scope of this work, and different from any of the committee's other duties. They said that committee members also do not bring any special knowledge of the criminal legal system, which might be something the subcommittee would want to prioritize. They also noted that currently the CIC only has commitments to evening meetings, they do not have to undergo a background check, and activities have been virtual since the pandemic. This is a different structure than what jail visits would require.

Donovan said the spirit of the recommendation the subcommittee was considering was more community voices to help bring accountability as the Board of Commissioners were doing these visits, but he understood the restraints Dani was communicating.

Jay said she was mindful that the subcommittee was there to make a difference. She thought they needed to give voters the opportunity to vote for something different. She said there was authenticity in people showing up to a jail without it being known there would be a visit. She said that they knew from media what life in prison looked like. She said she thought when public folk showed up to visit it was not an authentic representation of day-to-day life. She said maybe this recommendation would not pass with voters, but she thought they should try. She said they had gotten public comment and heard from people at the county that disagreed on how it worked, but she said they were not here to do more of the same things. She expressed frustration that she felt that everything they had suggested was vetoed and she would like to see the subcommittee hold fast to something.

Donovan agreed that everything they had considered so far had been curtailed. He noted that this was a last effort to get something in the Charter. He noted that the subcommittee wanted to have community members at the visits along with the commissioners not because they were experts on criminal justice, but because they were a community body.

Ana agreed with Jay and added that she thought hearing that this did not fall squarely within the CIC's wheelhouse almost made its involvement more attractive. She said that jail conditions were so integral to what the county does and having a community body be not exposed or familiar or used to understanding what was going on in that system was alarming. She said if the subcommittee wanted there to be more of an urgency in addressing inequities in the jail system, it had to adjust things so that eyes were constantly on the system, beyond those who were being cycled through in the jails. She said she understood that it might not be a perfect match and there might be a need to adjust, but that could ultimately end up being a good thing.

Jay noted that while they had learned about a small group of community members got to see the jails, but there was not much public awareness of this, with limited staff and funding devoted to community engagement. She said more people should know what was going on.

Kali clarified that OCI was not recommending against the involvement of community members in the visit, just specifically delegating to the CIC. She asked the subcommittee if it would want to establish a broader pool of community members, such as people serving on county advisory committees in general. She said they could also require "community members" and leave it up to the county to determine who those people would be. She noted a few logistical barriers of narrowing community members to the CIC, such as the committee not being very big – what happened if members were not available for the visits? Also, would requiring background checks for jail visits limit who could serve on the CIC? She suggested the subcommittee could consider

identifying the CIC as a possible source for community members without requiring it as the only source, allowing for a larger pool of community members to draw from.

Donovan said he thought the more the merrier, but pointed out that they had been considering the CIC because it was established in the Charter. He acknowledged potential scheduling issues and suggested they require a minimum number of CIC members participate, not the whole committee.

He noted Jay's comment in the chat about the limited power of advisory committees.

Salma asked if it was possible to frame this flexibility so that the CIC could be involved, but also other groups. She said maybe not limiting responsibility to this one group.

## **Recommendation: Increase the Number of Times Commissioners Visit County Jails**

Donovan noted that at the MCCRC's last meeting, Chair Kafoury said she did not think more jail visits were necessary since the Board already visited one time per year, and at max she could see two visits. Donovan said this made him believe they needed to encourage even more visits. He said that felt flippant, that it seemed she was saying if she had seen the jail once, she had seen it enough. He thought they should stick with a quarterly review of the jails. He noted this was their bare minimum recommendation, and asked if other subcommittee members had thoughts about requiring four visits a year?

Jay raised the idea they had previously discussed: producing a public report or recommendations after the visits.

Donovan said he thought that would be good. He mentioned a report he had read that Multnomah County jails were coming in under standards. He added that he knew the Board was not the main check all the details of this, but felt that they should still write something when they go and publicize it.

Jay asked Katherine whether she could take the recommendation from there?

Katherine said the subcommittee could decide what its recommendation would be, then it would go to the full committee to vote on, and if it was approved, Katherine's Office would draft text that would amend the Charter. She said having a list of their policy objectives would help her know what to draft.

Danica asked in the chat if the subcommittee had the power to provide more details about the visits, such as they had to be unannounced, comprehensive, etc.

Kali reminded the subcommittee that Katherine had previously raised some questions about the feasibility of unannounced visits. She could not remember if that had been a legal or logistical concern.

Katherine said she had recommended reaching out to the Sheriff to get more information about visits to the jails. She had provided some information based on her limited understanding of the process. She said she thought the recommendation was likely to face significant logistical challenges if the subcommittee went ahead with unannounced visits, which was just something for the subcommittee to consider.

Donovan clarified that for the rest of the meeting, the subcommittee was going to continue discussing this recommendation, vote on whether to recommend it, discuss including a public defender recommendation in the MCCRC's final report, address any other outstanding business, and then have a dance off.

Donovan said that it sounded like random visits were not manageable at this point. Donovan asked for a fist of five to temperature check the subcommittee's report for each visit to include a report afterward. (Five meant enthusiastic support, three meant neutral or still had questions, and one mean no support).

Donovan was at five; Salma, Jay and Danica were at four; Ana was at three, saying she thought it depended on what the report was attached to.

Donovan summarized that there was support for a report, but they still needed to figure out what a report would look like.

Donovan initiated a fist of five to gauge support for including the CIC, other county advisory boards, or other community members in jail visits.

Salma, Donovan, Ana, and Jay were at five; Danica was at four.

Donovan asked Katherine how solidified the subcommittee needed to be about which or how many community members were visiting the jails by the end of the meeting since it was the subcommittee's last.

Katherine said they needed to work out what the subcommittee had consensus on moving forward. She said that during full committee discussion they could share other ideas discussed by the subcommittee and work from there. She also mentioned that while the subcommittee seemed to be moving away from unannounced visits, another issue with them would be that if the whole Board were to visit the jails, it would need to be noticed as a public meeting, which would be a legal piece.

Kali said she would not recommend leaving a lot of questions open for the full committee. She noted that the full committee had limited meeting time and a lot of recommendations to consider, so if it had to figure out a lot of answers for this recommendation, it was possible the committee would either not have time to discuss all of the subcommittees' recommendations or have to cut off debate after a certain amount of time. She said it would make discussion easier if the committee was responding to a proposal with more details, and the subcommittee should try to fill in as much detail as it wanted in the recommendation that night. She added that if what the subcommittee wanted to say was that the Board of County Commissioners was required to visit the county jails at least four times a year, publish a report afterward, and be accompanied by community members, they could. But she said, for example, if the subcommittee wanted to be more specific about what was included in the report, those kinds of details should ideally be worked out that night.

Ana wrote in the chat:

"I've been on walkthroughs as staff to a commissioner. I wonder if one option can be to charge each commissioner with convening a group of constituents to attend and write a constituent report to that commissioner with recommendations"

Donovan said that sounded like an interesting idea and might be easier to coordinate in terms of scheduling.

Danica wrote in the chat that she liked that idea, but would like to figure out how the constituents were chosen, how many, and what the report would look like.

Donovan said that seemed like it would broaden up the number of people seeing the jails and that in theory people would represent different districts. He liked the proposal for those reasons.

Donovan asked the subcommittee members to raise their hands if they supported having individual commissioners visit with constituents over the prospect of the whole Board going with community members.

All of the subcommittee members supported the concept of individual commissioners visiting with constituents.

Ana said in the chat they could ask each district to invite someone from the CIC.

Donovan said that the next step seemed to be figuring out what a report would entail. Donovan said he would look at the Willamette Week article reporting on the ways the Multnomah County jail was not meeting standards to see about incorporating some of that.

Katherine noted that the Board was made up of four commissioners and the chair. She asked if they intended for each member of the Board to visit four times or if they intended the members to divide up the year's visits between them.

Donovan said he thought each one should go multiple times a year, since the more times they went, the more things they might notice. But he said maybe there could be a final, yearly report instead of one each time they went. He asked what other subcommittee members thought.

Ana wrote in the chat:

"I'd imagine a report from constituents would touch on conditions that are acceptable and not acceptable to that constituency, and establish goals for improvement with benchmarks"

Donovan quoted from the [Willamette Week article](#) about which standards the county jail was not meeting:

**Standard:** "Inmate workers, if used, are trained in appropriate methods for handling and disposing of biohazardous materials and spills."

**Reason for partial compliance:** "Inmate workers are trained by the officer in the area in which they work; however, there is no formal training program for the officer to follow nor is there documentation of the training of the inmate workers."

**Standard:** "The responsible health authority and facility administrator approve the facility's suicide prevention program."

**Reason for partial compliance:** "There was no evidence that the RHA and the facility administrator have approved the suicide prevention program."

**Standard:** "On each shift where health staff are present, inventories are maintained on items subject to abuse (e.g., needles, scissors, other sharp instruments) and discrepancies are immediately reported to custody staff."

**Reason for partial compliance:** "On each shift where health staff are present, inventories are maintained on items subject to abuse except in the dental clinic. The dental assistant performs a full count of all tools, sharps and needles three times a year. At the end of each dental clinic, the tools and sharps used are inventoried. We conducted a count during the survey and found discrepancies." (The report adds that, during the visit, the dentist established a new process for maintaining inventories.)

**Standard:** "All qualified health care professionals have credentials and provide services consistent with the licensure, certification, and registration requirements of the jurisdiction...the [health administrator] maintains verification of current credentials of all qualified health care professionals at a readily accessible location."

**Reason for partial compliance:** “While several licenses were presented for review during the survey, we could not verify that all qualified health care professionals had a current license.” (The report notes that the health administrator has designated an off-site credentialing department to manage and verify licenses, and that this credentialing department notifies the administrator when a license nears expiration.)”

Danica asked in the chat if the reports should be made based off of existing jail conditions report.

Ana wrote in the chat that she thought based on their research (existing reports) and direct observations from the visits.

Donovan said he knew that the county was talking to different bodies in terms of people who were talking and lobbying about jail conditions more regularly. He liked the idea of the constituent voice being raised a bit more, not as experts but just saying what they were seeing, adding an additional data point and providing more eyes on the county.

Donovan summarized the recommendation as it currently stood: each commissioner would make a quarterly visit to the jails, they would do this with constituents, and there would be a report. He said he was unclear if they wanted to require a report after every visit, once a year, or a combination of the two with shorter reports as they went culminating in a final report.

Jay send end of the year made sense to her. Ana supported that in the chat.

Donovan said that they would go with that unless there were any objections. He said for what was included in the final report he thought they could go with general language of “the condition of the jails.” He said he would do some more research before the next committee meeting to see if there were more specifics that should be included. He asked how many constituents subcommittee members thought the commissioners should bring.

Donovan suggested five.

Ana suggested three to four in the chat.

Jay suggested a minimum of three and a maximum of seven.

Ana said that if they had seven people from each district going at the same time, that would be difficult, based on her experience. She suggested three to five.

Jay asked how many people there were when Ana went.

Ana said it was years ago so she did not remember exactly, but it was her, the commissioner, some other staff, although she did not remember if other commissioners and their staff were there. She said it was a group, though. She said she knew for sure they could not fit 30 people, but maybe half of that.

Donovan said he did not think the commissioners needed to go together, as long as they each went quarterly.

Jay agreed with Ana that three to five made sense. She thought keeping it smaller might get more feedback.

Kali said that to keep things simple the subcommittee could just set the minimum number.

Donovan supported just having a minimum of three and allowing commissioners to decide how many if they wanted to bring more.

Ana said she thought it was important to include that constituents documented and published their observations after each visit, although that did not need to include recommendations.

Salma asked if they were going to keep the constituents at three to four, or she suggested 16 since they had established that the commissioners did not all have to go at the same time.

Donovan said he favored a minimum of three, which would still leave it open to the commissioners to bring more constituents, although he thought they would lean toward bringing a lower number.

Kali summarized the proposal as she understood it in the chat and asked subcommittee members for feedback.

Ana noted that they would be charging the commissioner's office rather than the commissioner with convening the constituents. She also said she was not sure if they wanted the report to be shared with the entire Board or if it was a constituent report to their commissioner. She said she was undecided either way.

Ana clarified that her initial suggestion had been the production of constituent reports, since her experience was that constituents would have a closer relationship with their commissioner and could report on what they were seeing and what they wanted their commissioner to work on in terms of outcome. She said it was an extra layer for constituents to present to the whole Board and set benchmarks for the whole Board to be working toward. She said she thought that was up for discussion.

Donovan pointed out that the constituents could have completely different views on what was going on in the jails and what was going wrong.

Ana said from a democracy standpoint it was harder to hold the whole Board accountable than your commissioner accountable.

Donovan thought that was a good point and deepened commissioners' investment in who they picked from their district, knowing they would be held accountable for what they did or did not do in response to their jail visits. He liked the idea of reports to the commissioners.

Donovan asked Katherine what would happen if the recommendation was ultimately approved by voters, but the commissioners did not comply by going only three times a year or not at all.

Katherine said there were different ways commissioners could be held accountable. One was through the political system and whether voters chose to reelect them. She said there could be legal options for enforcement if the commissioners were not following what was mandated in the Charter.

Danica asked in the chat what happened if a commissioner could not make a visit and whether the constituents should go without them.

Jay said it should be doable.

Salma asked if they were going to include anything about how the constituents were chosen, or if that was too specific.

Kali said they could include that in the Charter, but to be aware that the more specific they were about criteria the harder it might be to implement, so she recommended keeping requirements more high level of general. It was up to the subcommittee to decide how specific it wanted to be, though.

Donovan asked if they thought it was important since they could cherry-pick people who would not push back.

Jay asked how the members of the MCCRC were chosen since it did not seem the legislators were super involved.

Kali said the MCCRC had an open application process and the Office of Community Involvement was required to try to recruit a diverse pool of applicants. She said the subcommittee could leave it open like this, which would add an element so the commissioners could not just pick whoever, or it could be more specific about who should be involved in the process.

Danica asked in the chat if they could do a process similar to jury duty where random people were selected.

Donovan noted people would try to get out of that.

Kali noted that there might be similar issues as those faced by the CIC, such as whether the people randomly selected were available at that time. She pointed out that people might not be invested in the process or report the way the subcommittee was hoping. She also asked what would happen if the community member did not show up and if there would be an enforcement mechanism. She said that jury duty also has a process for excusing community members, say if their livelihood would be significantly harmed by participation. She said there were a lot of logistical hurdles to a random selection process.

Jay pointed out paying people for the time off from work, too, since it would take a while.

Donovan said he thought maybe an open application process would be the best way to prevent commissioners from simply selecting people who would not push back on them in any way.

Ana said her opinion was that an application process already privileged people who were already involved and paying attention to what was going on versus if commissioners picked people they were opening up the possibility that they would choose people who were not very representative. She said that also opened up the possibility they would select people they really trusted, who might not be super involved but who the commissioner trusted to authentically report on the jail conditions.

Danica wrote in the chat:

“that makes sense, but I liked what I think was Ana's point from earlier that it would be a benefit to have people not overly familiar with criminal justice to be a part of this process, which I don't know how to incentivize via an application process”

Donovan agreed that the bulk of applications submitted were typically from people who were already civically involved. He asked if there was a way to talk about financial compensation for the constituents.

Kali said that they could consider whether they wanted to include details about applications and compensation in their report to the Board versus in the Charter. For example, she would not recommend including a specific dollar amount in the Charter for compensating constituents because what was reasonable compensation in 2022 might not be the same in 15 or 100 years. She said including recommendations in the MCCRC's report to the Board would recognize that there might be things that were hard to enforce in Charter language, but still communicate the committee's intention and ask them to consider that when choosing constituents or determining compensation.

Katherine said she would also recommend against a specific dollar amount, but that they could recommend including language for reasonable compensation or a stipend. She noted that OCI was working on developing a stipend policy for the county.

Ana said in the chat that since the selection process would be relatively public, that would incentivize the commissioners to choose a representative group of constituents, or at least a group did not draw a ton of public criticism.

Donovan asked the subcommittee if they were moving toward allowing Board members to hand-select constituents and add language about reasonable compensation.

Dani confirmed in the chat that OCI was working with county leadership to develop a countywide stipend policy.

Donovan asked in that policy would automatically apply to this group of constituents or if they should include specific language about stipends in the subcommittee's recommendation.

Dani said the policy was for county volunteers and they thought it would likely be applied to this group if the subcommittee did not include anything about a stipend or compensation in its recommendation, but it was up to the subcommittee to decide whether or not they wanted to include it.

Kali summarized what the subcommittee would be voting on: Each member of the Board of Commissioners would be required to visit the county jail at least four times a year. Each commissioner's office would be charged with convening a group of at least 3 constituents to attend with them. Constituents would report observations on the conditions of the jail after each visit and issue a year-end report on conditions to be shared with their commissioner and published. Constituents would be reasonably compensated for their time.

Danica asked in the chat if they should say quarterly so that the visits would be evenly spaced.

Donovan said he thought that was implied.

Ana said that she could see situations where the commissioners would want to coordinate and stagger their visits so they were not always evenly spaced out. She said that with all of the offices visiting four times, the jails would be observed adequately.

The subcommittee left the language as it was for the vote.

Jay, Salma, Donovan, Danica, and Ana all voted yes.

Kali said she would work with the subcommittee co-chairs to make sure the subcommittee recommendation form was completed and delivered to the full committee.

## **Recommendation for Future Charter Review Committees: Elected County Public Defender**

Salma said a lot of the points about an elected county public defender had been covered at the subcommittee's last meeting. She said she wanted to emphasize that there was an extreme issue that needed to be addressed.

Katherine copied an email from Nina about the public defender issue into the chat and Donovan read it to the subcommittee.

Donovan said that in the interest of time, since the meeting was already running over, he thought the MCCRC's final report should include key findings from Nina and Salma's research on this issue and urge the

next Charter Review Committee to take this up. He said they could urge the next committee to take up some of the other things the subcommittee had left of the table, as well.

## **Wrap-up**

Donovan thanked the subcommittee for their work.

## APPENDIX A: ZOOM CHAT

- 00:25:28 Danica Leung: I read it but I would appreciate a summary!
- 00:35:15 J'reyesha Brannon: Or even more public that a small group of community members who do get to see the jails
- 00:37:17 J'reyesha Brannon: It doesn't seem advisory committees are empowered very much either, so I'm hesitant there.
- 00:46:03 Danica Leung: Is it within the scope of our power to give details about the visits i.e. they have to be unannounced, comprehensive, etc.?
- 00:49:30 Kali Odell (she/her): Nina shared an email with me about her research on the elected public defender, so I will share that when we get to that portion of the agenda
- 00:50:05 Danica Leung: 4 - I still have questions about what the report might look like
- 00:50:19 Ana del Rocío (she/her): 3 - I think it depends on what the report is attached to?
- 00:50:24 J'reyesha Brannon: 4
- 00:52:15 Danica Leung: 4
- 00:52:23 Ana del Rocío (she/her): Community at all - 5
- 00:52:30 J'reyesha Brannon: 5
- 00:57:41 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I've been on walkthroughs as staff to a commissioner. I wonder if one option can be to charge each commissioner with convening a group of constituents to attend and write a constituent report to that commissioner with recommendations
- 00:58:41 Danica Leung: I like that idea, I would just want to figure out how the constituents are chosen, what the report would look like and how many constituents we want
- 01:00:52 Danica Leung: 5
- 01:01:05 Ana del Rocío (she/her): Yes, we can even ask each district to invite someone from CIC
- 01:03:32 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I'd imagine a report from constituents would touch on conditions that are acceptable and not acceptable to that constituency, and establish goals for improvement with benchmarks
- 01:04:02 Danica Leung: should they base their report off of existing jail condition reports?
- 01:05:07 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I think based on their research (existing reports) + direct observations made during their visit
- 01:10:35 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I like that second idea Donovan. End of year report
- 01:12:07 Ana del Rocío (she/her): 3-4 per district? Just throwing it out
- 01:12:15 Kali Odell (she/her): You might phrase it as a minimum number
- 01:19:14 Kali Odell (she/her): Each member of the Board of Commissioners visits county jail four times a year. Each commissioner is charger with convening a group of at least 3 constituents to attend.

Constituents will report observations after each visit and issue a year end report to be shared with the Board of Commissioners and the public.

- 01:22:21 Ana del Rocío (she/her): Exactly
- 01:22:55 Kali Odell (she/her): Each member of the Board of Commissioners visits county jail four times a year. Each commissioner's office is charged with convening a group of at least 3 constituents to attend. Constituents will report observations on the conditions of the jail after each visit and issue a year-end report on conditions to be shared with their commissioners.
- 01:23:42 Ana del Rocío (she/her): + publication
- 01:23:46 Danica Leung: wording of first sentence makes it seem like a commissioner will attend the visit but the rest is more like constituents are going?
- 01:25:28 Danica Leung: what if a commissioner can't make it to a visit? should the constituents just go without them?
- 01:26:58 J'reyesha Brannon: They got to parades, plantings, etc.
- 01:27:14 J'reyesha Brannon: should be doable
- 01:32:38 Danica Leung: can we do a similar mechanism to how jury duty is called? just random people?
- 01:34:27 Danica Leung: that makes sense, but I liked what I think was Ana's point from earlier that it would be a benefit to have people not overly familiar with criminal justice to be a part of this process, which I don't know how to incentivize via an application process
- 01:38:56 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I think bc it's a relatively public process, that naturally incentivizes commissioners to pick a representative group of constituents or at least a group that doesn't draw a ton of public criticism
- 01:39:39 Dani Bernstein: Katherine is correct, OCl is currently working with County leadership to develop a countywide policy or guidance on stipends
- 01:43:07 Kali Odell (she/her): Each member of the Board of Commissioners visits county jail four times a year. Each commissioner's office is charged with convening a group of at least 3 constituents to attend with them. Constituents will report observations on the conditions of the jail after each visit and issue a year-end report on conditions to be shared with their commissioners. Constituents will be reasonably compensated for their time.
- 01:43:49 Ana del Rocío (she/her): + publication
- 01:43:59 Danica Leung: should we specify "quarterly" so the four visits are semi-evenly spaced from each other?
- 01:48:42 Dani Bernstein: I have to hop off - congrats on approving your recommendation, and thank you all so much for your work!
- 01:49:39 Kali Odell (she/her): Nina did share some stuff with me, and I'm happy to read her statement that she shared if you want to hear.

- 01:52:24 Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney: I found quite a few documents this time around but unfortunately I am not getting access to the original columbia document. Here's my statement about the research I've done:
- 01:52:36 Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney: Initially, the idea of having an elected public defender position was brought forth by a community member as a suggestion on how to deal with the plethora of cases that are not being addressed in a timely manner. Some research was done that reviewed the states that have elected public defender positions(Florida, Tennessee and San Francisco County-California law allows for any county to decide to have an elected public defender position) and the longer term benefits of having an elected public defender was discussed as having more public defenders obtaining positions such as District Attorney and elected judge positions which, in theory, would allow for more judicial members to have a better understanding of our indigent or poorer population and would then be more fair for those that cannot afford to defend themselves and lead to less wrongful arrests and persecution overall.
- 01:52:51 Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney: Upon further research(See the Oregon Project and the newer case study just released and attached to this email), it was made clear that our indigent population is being underserved and many cases that include homicide and domestic violence are simply being dismissed without proper review because public defender are not able to review and hold trials in a timely manner(see the article discussing how contracted public defenders recently stopped taking any cases in Washington County because they did not have the man power).
- 01:52:54 Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney: The conclusion of the Oregon Project was that having a more centralized system where auditing would be easier and cases much easier to track, would be the best solution. In the last few weeks, this crisis has been publicized and the State of Oregon has decided to make more long term solutions to this problem(most likely the result of civil rights lawyers suing the state for unfair due process for these indigent groups) and is taking the next year to research how a the public defender positions could be hired and employed by the state to create a more centralized system that can be supervised much more efficiently. This is a great first step. Once the state makes the public defenders state employees, it would be more likely that public defender positions could be elected and much easier to implement. I urge those in power to move forward(once public defenders are state employees) with creating an elected public defender for each county.
- 01:53:01 Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney: Ok, that's it! I attached a bunch of documents and new articles but we should definitely be watching much more closely how the state is dealing with these issues over the next year.
- 01:54:37 J'reyesha Brannon: Sorry - my internet went out
- 01:56:28 Ana del Rocío (she/her): I'll take this back to Tri-chairs for final report!
- 01:58:02 Ana del Rocío (she/her): Thank you all! Thank you Donovan & Nina!
- 01:58:10 Danica Leung: TYSM!