

Okaloosa County Public Safety Coordinating Council
Regular Meeting
Thursday November 13, 2025

Present:

Commissioner Paul Mixon
John Moring, Director of Corrections
Larry McFarland, Bridgeway Center, Inc.
Mellony Kuester
Kelli Huckabee
Bonnie Barlow
Maria Everton, Clerk to Board of County Commissioners
Samantha Cutsinger, Legislative Aide

Location:

Okaloosa County Courthouse, Board Chambers, Crestview, Florida

Minutes prepared by Maria Everton

Commissioner Mixon called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

The August 14, 2025 minutes were approved as presented by the majority.

2. Old Business

None.

3. Jail Population/Statistical Report: Q & A

Chief Moring reported a high population number of 789 and is increasing as the weather changes. Commissioner Mixon said staff is working to put a dollar amount on cold night shelters. The County has stopped the non-profit funds allocation and has restructured the disbursement process for equipment the County no longer needs. Commissioner Mixon stated he would like the Commission to determine what is an essential function of government. He said a cold night shelter is defensible as an essential function of government because several (individuals) are going to find themselves willingly incarcerated, rather than stay out in the cold. Commissioner Mixon gathered data from One Hopeful Place about the foot traffic in Fort Walton Beach and Crestview. Data will be presented to the Board of County Commissioners soon.

4. Inmate Programs Update

Ms. Kuester said the numbers are lower because special housing inmates are not allowed to attend regular classes with general population. She sent out an email to volunteers to see if they can provide services. Stephanie from Celebrate Recovery said they are willing to bring in an extra person to provide classes for the special housing inmates. No other programs have responded.

The jail has lost its female anger management class because they do not have a female to teach the class. There are 28 males attending the male anger management class and several are interested in attending. Mr. McFarland asked could male facilitators teach the female classes if they were accompanied by a female intern. Ms. Kuester noted that is an option and would be great. Mr. McFarland continued by offering an extra anger management classes for those in special housing. Ms. Kuester made note that a new rehabilitation house will be available in Crestview and hopes to receive applications.

5. Pre-Trial Information

Ms. Huckabee said the electronic monitoring program has been over 100 for the past several months. The Mental Health Diversion program is doing well and has a waitlist for services. Referrals are submitted by State Attorneys, public defenders, and private attorneys.

Pre-Trial recently transitioned to a new software through Tyler.

Commissioner Mixon suggested exploring future funding for the Mental Health Diversion program and ways to demonstrate the program's viability.

6. New Business (informational only)

a. Medical Updates

The Medical and Mental Health Accreditation is currently in progress. New dental equipment has been purchased – this will help in eliminating outsourced treatments as some procedures can be performed in house. Discussion ensued about outpatient services.

b. MAT Update

Ms. Priddy was not in attendance but provided some updates. Donny Hulsey has started as the new MAT Coordinator for the medication-assisted treatment program. Elizabeth Bowdren, the new Behavioral Health RN, will start on November 17, 2025. On December 8, 2025, Ingrid Webb will be starting as the new LCSW.

c. Immigration Update

Chief Moring said the 287G Warrant Service Officer Program is continuing with several statewide initiatives. In October 2025, the jail received 48 detainees, six of which were cancelled by ICE. 18 inmates were civil immigration arrests only. Zero inmates were released due to an expiring detainer. Jail staff has initiated the process of obtaining reimbursement from the State for housing. To date, zero reimbursement funds have been received.

Ms. Huckabee sought clarity on an asylum case involving travelling to meet a minor. Discussion ensued regarding trafficking victims. Ms. Huckabee will follow up with Chief Moring on the subject.

d. New Jail Update

Commissioner Mixon said the County has purchased and closed on property for the new jail. The property will house Growth Management, Public Works, the Sheriff Office's training facility, a driving pad, and the new jail. The design seems to be well underway for the jail.

e. Calendar 2026 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Cutsinger will present a tentative schedule for consensus.

7. Public Comments

Bonnie Barlow - MAT Services/DCF Grants for Pre-Trial Diversion
Larry McFarland – Apartment Groundbreaking

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.