

# Thurston County Law & Justice Council Charter

## **Purpose:**

Provide an inter-jurisdictional forum for consideration of initiatives and resources to improve criminal justice services, enhance public safety and fairness and reduce crime throughout Thurston County.

## **Authority:**

In 1987, the Washington State Legislature enacted legislation to establish local law and justice councils. The role of the Law & Justice Council is defined in RCW 72.09.300.

## **Background:**

In 1993, Thurston County created its Law & Justice Council (Resolution 10412) and a Law & Justice Plan were formally adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in June 1996 (Resolution 11208).

In 1998, the Thurston County Law & Justice Council was disbanded and replaced by an inter-governmental group convened to plan a new county jail and by an internal County work group, the Jail Population Management Group.

In Spring 2007, the State Legislature enacted Senate Bill 6157, known as the "Offender Re-entry Bill," focused on reducing criminal offender recidivism by increasing access to and coordination of offender services in communities. Section 108 of SB 6157 revitalized county law and justice councils with a focus on maximizing local resources including personnel and facilities, reducing duplication of services, and sharing resources between local and state government in order to accomplish local efficiencies without diminishing effectiveness.

In late 2008, the impacts of the U.S. national recession began to seriously impact the Washington State economy and revenues of local governments, including Thurston County. The 2009 legislative session brought many reductions in state funded services for adult offenders and changed supervision and service delivery requirements for the State Department of Corrections. At the same time, Thurston County was faced with reducing over \$7 million in County General Fund expenditures, which reduced staffing levels in the Sheriff's Office (including the county jail), the Clerk's Office, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Office of Assigned Counsel, and both District and Superior Courts. The Thurston County Commissioners and the Sheriff had been working on a strategic plan to open the new Accountability and Restitution Center in 2012. The Law & Justice Council served as an advisory body to this effort. On December 12, 2012, the Board of County Commissioners amended the Council's membership to reflect Senate Bill 6157 updates to RCW 72.09.300 (Resolution 14821).

### **Council Responsibilities:**

The Thurston County Law & Justice Council is responsible for:

1. Seeking resources and "best practice" approaches to addressing emerging public safety and Law & Justice issues.
2. Monitoring impacts of changes in law enforcement staffing levels, countywide, on public safety.
3. Monitoring impacts of changes in State Department of Corrections services to/supervision of parolees and making recommendations to local jurisdictions regarding appropriate responses.
4. Monitoring the availability and effectiveness of community services and supports for Thurston County as those services impact crime and crime prevention.
5. Reviewing crime trends and certain measurables provided by each supporting jurisdiction and suggesting interagency approaches as needed.
6. Serving as the oversight committee for multi- jurisdictional law and justice projects with an intent to reduce duplication of services and recommend cost containment and service efficiencies (consider consolidation of interjurisdictional law and justice work group/task forces).
7. Serving as the Thurston Thrives action body.
8. Advising the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and City Councils on county-wide public safety issues.
9. Fulfilling the requirements of RCW 72.09.300.

### **Voting Membership:**

Below is the list of members not requiring appointment by the BOCC. Members of the Law and Justice Council serve on a voluntary basis, no stipend is provided.

<b>Position</b>
911 TCOMM Services Director
Chief – Thurston County Corrections
Director – Thurston County Pretrial Services
Director – Thurston County Public Defense
Director – Thurston County Public Health & Social Services
Lacey Police Chief
Municipal Court Judge – Olympia
Municipal Prosecutor – Designated
Municipal Public Defense
Olympia Police Chief
Representative – Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis
Representative – JBLM/Military

Representative – Lacey City Council
Representative – Nisqually Tribe
Representative – Rainier City Council
Representative – Squaxin Island Tribe
Representative – Tenino City Council
Representative – Thurston County Racial Equity Council
Representative – Tumwater City Council
Representative – Washington Dept. of Children, Youth, & Families
Representative – Washington Dept. of Corrections
Representative – Yelm City Council
Tenino Police Chief
Thurston County Clerk
Thurston County Commissioner
Thurston County Coroner
Thurston County Criminal Justice Regional Program Manager
Thurston County District Court
Thurston County Juvenile Court Administrator
Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney
Thurston County Risk Manager
Thurston County Sheriff
Thurston County Superior Court
Tumwater Police Chief
Yelm Police Chief

Below is the list of members requiring appointment by the BOCC.

Position	Appointed	Term
Representative – Community-Based Organization	By application	3 yrs
Representative – Community-Based Organization	By application	3 yrs

### **Appointments:**

For those requiring appointment by the BOCC, they must either apply through the county’s Boards and Commissions application process.

For those who must apply, to be considered for appointment a vacancy must occur and a completed application must be submitted to the board or commission, or Clerk of the BOCC. Boards or commissions may review applications and provide a recommendation if asked to do so by the BOCC. The BOCC has the authority to make appointments and remove members without cause with a majority vote. Midterm vacancies may be filled in the same manner and the appointed member shall first finish the remainder of the term. Members appointed or removed by the BOCC shall be so notified by the BOCC office. Members who wish to be considered for reappointment must reapply prior to the end of their term.

For those who may be appointed through a recommendation from their organization, a letter must be sent to the staff contact or chair of the Council recommending their appointment. These positions do not need to fill out an application.

Should a member need to resign from their position before their term expires, written notification must be sent to the staff liaison and the Clerk of the Board. Appointments to multiple committee assignments is not preferred but may be approved by the BOCC.

To apply for an open position, please visit: <https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/thurstoncountywa.gov.if-us-west-2/s3fs-public/2023-03/BoCC%20Citizen%20Advisory%20Board%20Application%20Fillable.pdf>

To view the Boards, Commissions, and Committees Handbook, please visit: <https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/departments/board-county-commissioners/boards-commissions-and-committees>

### **Subcommittees:**

The Law & Justice Council may establish regular and ad-hoc sub-committees as needed.

- Each sub-committee shall appoint their own chair.
- Sub-committee chairs will attend regular Law & Justice Council meetings.
- If a sub-committee chair is not an appointed member to the Council, the chair will be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Council.

### **Meetings:**

- The Law & Justice Council will meet on a bi-monthly basis, on the third Thursday of the month from 4:00-5:30pm.
- All meetings are open to the public, but only voting members may vote on Council decisions.
- At the end of each agenda there will be a section titled “For the Good of the Order and Public Comment”. At this time, the public may provide comments to the Council. If time is limited or there is a large number of people wanting to provide comment, a time limit may be added.

### **Open Public Meetings Act:**

The BOCC expects each resident advisory board or commission to comply with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), RCW 42.30. While some boards or commissions act on behalf of the BOCC and others only advise the BOCC, all boards or commissions exists as a sub-agency of the Board and, therefore, each should deliberate and act in an open public setting. If a board or commission offers a hybrid or virtual-only option when holding meetings, members are encouraged to participate with their camera on whenever possible.

The general guidance on orderly meetings, compliance with the OPMA/Public Records Act, and maintaining meeting documentation is critically important to help ensure good governance. Members are required to complete an Open Public Meetings Act training. A link to the training is

below and is included in appointment letters as well. You must watch the online video and sign the attached acknowledgement form. Return the form to the staff liaison of the board or commission you are appointed to for record-keeping. The second link below the Public Meeting Act link, provides a basic overview of the Open Public Records Act. It is strongly encouraged for all advisory board and committee members to review.

OPMA Training: <https://wacities.org/data-resources/open-public-meetings-act-elearning>

Open Public Records Act Training: <https://www.atg.wa.gov/lesson-2-open-public-records-actbasics-rcw-4256>

### **Robert's Rules of Order:**

The Law & Justice Council is encouraged to follow Robert's Rules of Order (RRO), or a friendly version of RRO. This parliamentary procedure provides the process for proposing, approving, defeating, and amending legislative motions. It ensures meetings are conducted in a fair, efficient, and orderly manner. The BOCC may take future legislative action to require each Board or Commission to conduct meetings in this manner.

### **Governance:**

The Law & Justice Council shall elect a Chair from among its members at the first meeting of the year. The term for the Chair shall be one year, renewable for a maximum of three one-year terms.

Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- Preside at all official meetings.
- Consult with staff liaison in creating each meeting agenda.
- Keep discussions orderly, focused, efficient, impersonal, and fair.
- Find common ground among members and achieve a compromise, if needed.

### **Staffing:**

The Chair may utilize their aide or assistant, if they have one, to provide staff support to the council.

### **Reporting:**

The Thurston County Law & Justice Council may produce an annual report. In addition, the Council may produce reports as needed for ongoing projects.