Burke Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Meeting

MARCH 11, 2026 MINUTES

Burke County Commissioner's Meeting Room Section E,
110 North Green Street, Morganton, NC, 8:10 A.M.

ATTENDANCE:

Council members attending: Ronn Abernathy, Andrew Byerly, Judge Scott Conrad, Camey Ervin, Rev. Jasper Hemphill, Rev. Wesley Hendrix, Sheriff Banks Hinceman, Dr. Paul Holden, Joseph Martinez, Chris Norman, Dr. Dillon Sain, Phil Smith, and Deisy Zavala-Vasquez.

Council members excused: Nicki Carpenter, Dr. Steve Moody, Camey Ervin, Korey Fisher-Wellman.

Programs attending: Drew Amburn, Brenda Throneburg– Burke Recovery; Cathy Starnes– Conflict Resolution Center; and Kim Castano and Nicole Jenkins – Kids at Work; Renee Lewis – Repay Inc.

Partners attending: Darryl Church, Derek Hare, David Hughey, Jackson Koonts and Kristi Marshall.

Guests attending: Vitrona Peeler with NCWorks

Staff attending: JCPC Admin, A.J. Coutu and State Consultant Megan Webster

1.0 Call to Order: Rev. Jasper Hemphill called the meeting to order at approximately 8:12 A.M. A quorum, 13 of 22 was present.

1.0. Approval of the Agenda: A motion by Ronn Abernathy to approve the agenda was seconded by Wesley Hendrix and passed unanimously without discussion.

2.0 Approval of the December 2025 Minutes: A motion by Wesley Hendrix was seconded by Judge Conrad and passed unanimously without discussion.

COUNCIL REPORTS / BUSINESS

3.0 Governance: Dr. Steve Moody, Chair / Jasper Hemphill, Vice Chair

3.1 Rev. Hemphill opened the floor for Nominations for the Slate of Officers for **April** Meeting Election. Hearing none Rev. Hemphill moved to the next agenda item.

3.2 Draft Executive Summary for Annual Plan: Vice-Chair Jasper Hemphill noted that the Summary sent to the Council previously needs review. Any revisions need to be prior to March 31st, 2026.

3.3 JCPC Administrator's contract had been reviewed by the Leadership Committee and was on the agenda for approval. Joseph Martinez made the motion to approve the contract. Wesley Hendrix seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

4.0 **Outreach Committee, Chair, Jennifer Forney/ Vice Chair Nicki Carpenter:** No business was reported for this committee.

5.0 Finance: Joseph Martinez, Chair / Nicki Carpenter, Vice Chair

5.1 Burke JCPC Administrative Budget Revision Request: Mr. Martinez gave A.J. Coutu the floor. She noted that the spreadsheet and the NCALLIES document had been sent to the Council previously. Ms. Coutu explained that no change was made to the overall budget, the items indicated were moved to true up amounts to represent current expenditures and allow the purchase from the County of Adobe software.

5.2.1 **Finance Committee Report:** Mr. Martinez referred the Council to the Finance Committee Minutes which had been sent out previously. Mr. Martinez mentioned that there were two new program requests from Repay: Temporary Shelter which was tabled for next year; and Successful Parenting which was also tabled for next year. He summarized for the Council that all currently funded programs are recommended for next year's funding in the same amounts.

5.2.2 Finance Committee Funding Recommendation and Decision Summary Motion: This item came as a motion from the Finance Committee for Fiscal Year 2026/27 for approval of the funding recommendations and approval of the Funding Decision Summary as presented. Dr. Sain seconded the motion. Mr. Martinez noted that this had been sent to the Council previously and asked if anyone wanted to review the amounts. No requests were heard. The motion passed unanimously with the Abstention by Wesley Hendrix due to conflict of interest.

LOCAL & STATE REPORTS / UPDATES / BUSINESS

6.0 General Program Presentation - Repay, Renee Lewis: Ms. Lewis referred the group to the cherry data sheet Ms. Webster provided for the group outlining referrals and admissions data. She gave the group a brief description of each of the programs for those not familiar with the agencies work, and updated their progress as follows:

6.1 Just Girls: Ms. Lewis noted that the program is surpassing their expected referral numbers. Referrals come from juvenile court DSS and parents. The interesting development is referrals from mothers who, themselves went through this program and feel their daughters could benefit. The program is 10 years old.

6.2 Psychological Services: Program is only referrals from juvenile court. Comprehensive Clinical Assessments and full Psychological Assessments. There are a number of full psychologicals still available to use nut a lot of CCAs are being processed. They try to have these done in under 7 days, depending on records needed. The therapists are working as a team to give the referrals to the most available appointment.

6.3 Restorative Services: Over 1100 hours community service provided since July 1st. Close to $900 has been paid out from the restitution bank from the $2200 available. Only Juvenile Court and Teen Court refer.

6.4 R.I.S.E. She explained it stands for Readiness, Improvement, Successful Empowerment. Ms. Lewis noted that the group is having success breaking down resistance to communication with such items as sand tables. The youth frequently have bullying issues and trauma. She noted that the female youth are let out of class after all the males have left the parking lot.

6.5 SAIS The referrals for evaluations are a little lower than expected but picking up. Ms. Lewis is concerned that the number of 10- and 11-year-olds involved with porn is increasing as well as young women involved. They are being referred from DSS and parents. The boys involved are less in numbers as many are going right to placement. Juvenile Court Counselor Kristi Marshall noted that complaints come in waves, and it is a good day when the wave is not of sex offenders.

6.6 Parenting for Success [Not Funded]: Ms. Lewis updated the Council on this new initiative. They have had a remarkable 26 referrals since July 1st from DSS, DJJ and other sources. After a parent thanked their DSS worker for the class there were 10 referrals the next day. About 50% of DSS referrals show up. They are looking for additional funding. Ms. Lewis mentioned that one therapist is being certified in "Brain Spotting" a trauma therapy system. They also will have therapist who will do EMDR and DBT to have multiple systems of intervention. They are also seeing youth with grief issues.

6.0 Juvenile Justice Report: Ronn Abernathy reported for the DJJ counselors. He first thanked the programs and their staff for their hard work. Burke Juvenile Justice has two vacancies, and staff is stable outside of that. Their numbers are low right now however, are based on high numbers they will never have again with the interventions that have been put in place with the assistance of the courts and the counselors. He noted that the lowest age of DJJ involvement moved from 6 to 10 years old as well as the 16- to 18-year-olds served by them. Answering the commitment question, Mr. Abernathy noted that those numbers have been exponentially reduced.

Mr. Abernathy responded to numbers in detention. Those numbers are way up and those facilities stay full with youth on cots and counselors assisting part time. There was discussion of opening the Charlotte detention or using the empty minimum security facility in McDowell County and rumors of building detention centers.

7.0 Report from the State: Megan Webster noted that Mr. Lassiter had discussed on the news with the McDowell sheriff about using the empty facility. The cherry data sheet doted that the programs are by in large on track to meet their projections not a large number of carry over. Many are DJJ referred which is positive. 102 completions with 82 successful completions with one needing a higher level of care. She addressed the lack of a budget for the State of North Carolina. She discussed NCSAFE project's 4th year and that a committee to help with this effort in the western part of the state is being developed to increase gun lock distribution. Asheville has had a number of shootings. A couple of gun safes are available. Cable locks not trigger locks are available, this was discussed. A number of end-of-year events would be appropriate for distribution. Third Quarter Accounting is in process and that will advise any money that may be available for re-distributing in the county or to the state. Ms. Webster asked that these should be in this week or early next week to meet the Signed document deadline. Discretionary fund available is also a possibility at end of year, she encouraged the programs to be aware of what they might need. A demonstration toy gun is available if anyone wants to use it at an event.

OPEN FLOOR REPORTS / UPCOMING EVENTS

8.0 Open Discussion – Announcements, Questions and Comments
Nicole Jenkins spoke for Kids at Work to update the program's activity. They have met their numbers. On Tuesday evening there will be parent's night and invited anyone to join.

9.0 ADJOURN at 8:58 A.M. a motion by Ronn Abernathy, and the vote to adjourn was unanimous by acclamation.

Respectfully Submitted by:
A.J. Coutu 3/11/2026