Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC)

Buncombe County Courthouse Room 104
Friday, August 7, 2026 – 12:30pm

MEETING SUMMARY

I. Chair Martin Moore called the meeting to order welcoming all in attendance to the CJCC's August 2026 meeting.

II. Chair Moore requested Director Herring call roll. He also suggested an option of creating a sign-in sheet; however, given a quorum is required the roll call is needed to ensure compliance. Director Herring completed the roll call and determined a quorum was present.

Members' Present

1. Martin Moore, Commissioner, Buncombe County Board of Commissioner
2. Hon. Alan Thornburg Superior Court Judge NC 40th Judicial District Superior Court
3. Sylvia Clement Chief Court Counselor, NC 40th Judicial District Juvenile Justice
4. Sam Snead, Chief Public Defender, NC 40th Judicial District
5. Sean Aardema Deputy Chief Asheville Police Department
6. Maggie Ullman Asheville City Council Member City of Asheville
7. Nick Fowler Probation Probation/Parole
8. Jean Marie Christy, Buncombe County Clerk of Superior Court
9. Hon. Julie Kepple, District Court Judge, NC 40th Judicial District Court
10. David Sweat HHS Director Buncombe County HHS
11. Angie Garner Community Provider Vaya Health
12. Donnie Parks Deputy Chief Buncombe County Sheriff's Office
13. Ella Santos, Executive Director, Asheville Housing Authority
14. Kimberly Plemmons, School Board Member (attended virtually)
15. Rita Nugent, Coordinated Community Response DV/SA (attended virtually) -*not counted toward quorum due to appointment later in agenda*

Members Absent

1. Todd Williams, District Attorney, NC 40th Prosecutorial District
2. Dustin Dow, Attorney, Defense Bar Association

Seats Vacant and Awaiting Appointment

Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care
Healthcare Organization
Reentry Organization
Faith Organization
Workforce Development
Asheville Chamber of Commerce
Community Representative (BoC appointment -2 seats)
Permanent/Stable Housing (BoC appointment)
Transitional Housing (BoC appointment)

III. Chair Moore requested a motion to approve and/or correct the CJCC's August 7, 2026, Agenda. A motion was made by Commissioner Ullman and seconded by Chair Moore and unanimously approved.

IV. Chair Moore requested a motion to approve and/or correct the CJCC's February 2026 Minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Ullman and seconded by Chair Moore and unanimously approved.

V. Chair Moore introduced the new members Ella Santos, Executive Director representing the Asheville Housing Authority and Kim Plemmons, School Board Member serving in the Secondary/Alternative Education seat. Ms. Santos expressed her gratitude for being given the opportunity to work on this board and to work collaboratively to improve justice outcomes and bring added-value to this work.

School Board Member Plemmons also share the same sentiments and willingness to work together to strengthen collaborations between the schools and the justice system partners.

Both participated in a new member orientation that preceded the CJCC meeting.

VI. Director Herring provided an update on the Community Safety and Violence Prevention Plan.

Angie Garner made remarks regarding the plan's execution and the number of Community Health Workers trained. She indicated the need for more input on who's leading this work and what are the next steps. She commented on the recent violence and the My Daddy Taught Me That and other resilient groups wanting to help and move the needle, but unsure of how to do this to execute the plan.

Commissioner Moore stated he felt a more tangible plan and alignment is needed to ensure helpful impacts. He wants to see a more tangible plan developed.

VII. Dr. Lee Crayton with Buncombe County's Strategy & Innovations Department provided an update on the Jail Population which highlighted the current jail population is operating beyond its operational capacity of 470 and the design capacity of 524 with the current numbers as of this presentation is 554. It is expected, based on historical data, that this number will continue to rise beyond the fall season. In summary

- Current Drivers to Increase:
  - Increased bookings
  - Increased length of stay, including impacts from Iryna's law (enacted Dec 1, 2025)
- Total Jail Population – July 2026 13% higher than July 2025
- Population Awaiting Trial by Top Charge – July 2026 is 18% higher than July 2025
- Length of Stay: Average Days in Custody
  - Individuals with felonies on average are staying more than a week longer than pandemic rates.
  - Individuals with misdemeanor charges are staying approximately 3 days longer than pandemic rates.
  - Iryna's Law – due to law changed unsecured/secured release conditions based on charges and criminal history.
  - DAC Backlog – currently 40-45 individual awaiting transportation a state facility.

- In summary, given these challenges, there is an opportunity for the CJCC through its strategic plans, identifying goals such as diversion options to provide alternative solutions.
- Dr. Crieghton also highlighted the NC FIT (Formerly Incarcerated Transition) as an example of a program with promising results. This program connects formerly incarcerated individuals with chronic disease, mental illness and/or substance use disorder with essential health services and reentry resources via community health workers.
    - Statewide outcomes are;
        - 75% of FIT patients have no emergency department visits after release
        - 81% of FIT patients have no hospitalizations after release
        - 75% of FIT patients regularly access primary case services (versus 25% of comparable populations nationally.
    - Sites report lower recidivism than national average – Mecklenburg reports a 2-year recidivism of 16%
    - Buncombe County focus as been on individuals returning from prison and Wake County is embedded in its jail.

Director Herring spoke on the need to gain a better understanding of our current resources and programs and how they align to ensure effective and efficient delivery. Commissioner Moore concurred and supported this being a viable action step.

VIII. Each of the Strategic Plan Workgroups gave an update on their progress.

A. Court's Workgroup - Chair Jean Marie Christy provided a summary report on the four goals:

Goal	Status
1. Review and recommend programs to facilitate implementation of mental health/wellness alternatives to incarceration	Lead: Judge Kepple. Research is focusing on a wellness court versus mental health court that is post-arrest, pre-adjudication program, similar to a diversionary program and not a postconviction program.
2. Create guidelines for case processing.	Lead: Todd Williams. Discussions were held around revamping how first appearances are handled in district court; making them more meaningful with Public Defender while with the defendant could triage and report to the court at first appearance where progress on the case could occur timely.
3. Review arrest and court data by region, demographic, socio-economic factors and develop recommendations to reduce disparities.	Lead: Sam Snead. Discussed where the disparities are and what the drivers are. Unfortunately, progress on this goal is delayed as a result of lengthy first appearance discussion.
4. Review juvenile detention data and recommend engagement strategies to	Lead hasn't been confirmed. However, discussion was held on homing in on the data of kids solely there for juvenile

reduce juvenile detention length of stay.	detention, but some are there who are under 18 but charged as adults.

Discussion ensued around the difference between a wellness court from other treatment court models and why moving toward a post adjudication versus a pre-adjudication and how will this particular model work. Judge Kepple indicated that the wellness court model centers on individuals that continue to come back to court for misdemeanor offenses because their basic needs aren't being met. The goal is to establish a harm reduction model that offers best route for support and oversight. There has been discussion as to whether it should be pre-adjudication, diversion, unsupervised probation or some other option. The intended population requires consistent monitoring and care management to stabilize. This will be designed as a very community resource—driven court. New crime that doesn't kick them out of court and would be judicially led with possible cap of up to 90 individuals. Having open discussion with partners (DA, PD, Sheriff, businesses, etc.) to get their feedback of what is wanted. Various options for development and service supports are being considered. This will be a voluntary program. Courts are also looking into developing a capacity docket to support these high-needs individuals.

B. Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Workgroup – Rita Nugent was introduced by Chair Moore and prior to report, Chair Moore shared that he is appointing Ms. Nugent to Chair this Committee and requested the board's approval. The Board unanimously approved.
Rita gave an update on the workgroup.

- CCR met to discuss the 3 goals assigned to this workgroup
- She reviewed the goals with CJCC
- The group is working to bring more offender services and experts to the table to help with keeping the community safe as well as assisting in helping to break some of the cycles of domestic violence.

C. Law Enforcement Workgroup- Sean Aardema gave an update on the workgroup.

- Discussed the visit to Watauga County for LEAD presentation
- Discussed APD co-responder program that is currently in place as well as Asheville Fire Department REST program.
- APD will have a 60-and 90 day review of their programs for effectiveness
- APD restarted their housing team this month
- APD is expanding diversion opportunities within their agency programs and community.

D. Behavioral Health Collaborative Workgroup – Maggie Ullman gave an update on the workgroup.

- Reviewed goals assigned to the workgroup by CJCC
- Discussed the data and focal points of the workgroup
- Identifying gaps in the data
- Continuing the education of Law Enforcement and discussing the barriers of services.
- Discussed data from BHUC on number of people being served at their facility and reviewing drop off rates.

IX. **Vice Chair Nominations** - Chair Moore sought nominations for the Vice Chair. He nominated Judge Kepple; however, due to many competing responsibilities she respectfully declined. A second nomination was made recognizing Maggie Ullman. This nomination was approved unanimously.

X. **Public Comments**

XI. **Adjournment**