



MINUTES

DECEMBER 5, 2025

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board was held on Friday, December 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in suite 332 of the Brazos County Administration Building, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, Texas. The following members of the Board were present:

Acting County Judge, Kyle Kacal, Absent;
Judge Travis Bryan, III (retired);
Judge Willie Blackmon (retired), Absent;
Commissioner Wanda J. Watson;
Michele Esparza;
Fran Duane;
Jamie Martin, Absent.

The attached sheet contains the names of officials and citizens that were in attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes from the September 5, 2025 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting held on September 5, 2025.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Fran Duane, Seconded by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparza, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Kacal, Martin.

3. Approval of appointment of Jim James to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Jim James to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board for a term to begin upon Commissioner's Court approval and ending on August 15, 2027.

Judge Bryan welcomed Mr. James to the Board and asked that he say a few words. Mr. James thanked the Board for the appointment and noted his heart for indigent defense.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson, Seconded by Fran Duane. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Kacal, Martin.

4. Introduction of new employees with the Brazos County Public Defenders Office.

Chief Public Defender Nathan Wood stated that there are no new employees to introduce at this time however, they have filled several positions and the new-hires will start in the upcoming weeks.

5. Review and discuss the 2025 Third Quarter Progress Report.

Ms. Duane thanked Mr. Wood for sending the progress report to the Board prior to the meeting. Mr. Wood shared that the Public Defender's Office remained fully staffed through the 4th Quarter and asked the Board if they had any questions related to the report. The Board did not have any questions.

Misdemeanor Associate Court Judge Dana Zachary commended the Public Defender's Office for their quick response times and willingness to accommodate tight schedules. A copy of the Third Quarter Progress Report is attached.

6. Convene into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code §551.074(a)(1) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of the Chief Public Defender.

At 2:16 p.m. Judge Bryan announced the meeting closed, so that the Board members could convene into Executive Session as stated above. He asked the following individuals to attend the closed session:

Aubrey Leggett, Executive Assistant
Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

7. Consider and possible action on Executive Session.

Judge Bryan opened the meeting back up at 2:41 p.m. and announced there would be no action on the closed session.

8. Announcement of interest items and possible future agenda topics.

Mr. Wood stated that in the next meeting, he would like to add an item to evaluate the Board by-laws and procedures. The Board agreed and specifically discussed including procedures to remove inactive Board members.

The Board also requested updates on Odyssey access being granted to the Public Defender's Office.

Announcements

9. Upcoming Public Defender's Office Oversight Board Meeting Dates for 2026:

- a. March 6, 2026 at 2:00pm
- b. June 5, 2026 at 2:00pm

- c. September 4, 2026 at 2:00pm
- d. December 4, 2026 at 2:00pm

10. Adjourn

DATE 12/1/2025
AT 3:58 O'CLOCK P. M
KAREN MCQUEEN
BRAZOS COUNTY CLERK
By [Signature]



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

NOTICE OF MEETING AND AGENDA

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING

THIS NOTICE IS POSTED PURSUANT TO THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS
ACT (TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 551)

MEETING DATE: December 5, 2025
MEETING TIME: 2:00 PM
MEETING PLACE: Brazos County Administration Building, 200 S. Texas
Avenue, Suite 332, Bryan, TX 77803

-
1. Call to Order
 2. Approval of Minutes from the September 5, 2025 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.
 3. Approval of appointment of Jim James to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office.
 4. Introduction of new employees with the Brazos County Public Defenders Office.
 5. Review and discuss the 2025 Third Quarter Progress Report.
 6. Convene into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code §551.074(a)(1) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of the Chief Public Defender.
 7. Consider and possible action on Executive Session.
 8. Annoucement of interest items and possible future agenda topics.

Announcements

9. Upcoming Public Defender's Office Oversight Board Meeting Dates for 2026:
 - a. March 6, 2026 at 2:00pm
 - b. June 5, 2026 at 2:00pm
 - c. September 4, 2026 at 2:00pm

- d. December 4, 2026 at 2:00pm

10. Adjourn

The Brazos County Administration Building, 200 S. Texas Avenue, Suite 332, Bryan, TX 77803 is wheelchair accessible. Handicap parking spaces are available. Any request for sign interpretive services must be made two working days before the meeting. To make arrangements, please call (979) 361-4102.



PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING

Dec 5th @ 2pm

Name

Organization

Aubrey Leggett

Comm Court

Sharyl Lowe

Comm Court

NATHAN WOOD

PDD

NATULIE DANIEL

PDO

Patrick Gendron

Citizen

Frank Duane

Board Member

Paris Bryant

Board Member

Michael E.

Wanda K. Watson

Comm Court / Board Member

Dana Pachary

Judge



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:	NUMBER:
DATE OF COURT MEETING:	12/5/2025
ITEM:	Approval of Minutes from the September 5, 2025 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.
TO:	Commissioners Court
DATE:	11/26/2025
FISCAL IMPACT:	False
BUDGETED:	False
DOLLAR AMOUNT:	\$0.00

ATTACHMENTS:

<u>File Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Type</u>
September 5 2025 PDO Oversight Board Meeting Minutes.pdf	September 5, 2025 PDO Oversight Board Meeting Minutes	Backup Material



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Approval Item #2

Date: December 5, 2025

RE: September 5, 2025, Oversight Board Meeting Minutes

Approval Item:

Minutes from the September 5, 2025, Oversight Board Meeting for the Brazos County Public Defender's Office.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that Minutes from this meeting are approved.

Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

12/5/25

Date

Board Approval:

Oversight Board Member

12/5/25

Date

Oversight Board Member

12-5-25

Date

Oversight Board Member

12-5-25

Date

Oversight Board Member

12-5-25

Date



MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order

A meeting of the Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board was held on Friday, September 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in suite 332 of the Brazos County Administration Building, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, Texas. The following members of the Board were present:

Acting County Judge, Kyle Kacal
Judge Travis Bryan, III (retired);
Judge Willie Blackmon (retired), Absent;
Commissioner Wanda J. Watson;
Michele Esparza;
Fran Duane;
Jamie Martin, Absent.

The attached sheet contains the names of officials and citizens that were in attendance.

2. Approval of Minutes from the June 6, 2025 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting held on June 6, 2025.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson, Seconded by Michele Esparaza. Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Kacal, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

3. Recognition of the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board Member Appointments that were approved by Commissioners Court on August 5, 2025.

The Board recognized newly appointed Board Member Fran Duane and welcomed her to the Board. Chief Public Defender Nathan Wood noted that the other newly appointed Board Member Jamie Martin was not in attendance.

4. Recognition of Acting County Judge Kyle Kacal as interim for Judge Duane Peters' position on the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board.

Judge Bryan welcomed Judge Kacal to the Board.

5. Approval of appointment of a chairperson to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board.

The Board discussed the nomination of the Chairperson to the Public Defender's Office Board. Judge Bryan stated that he would be happy to either let another member serve as Chairman or continue serving in his current capacity.

Michele Esparza nominated Judge Bryan to continue serving as Chairman of the PDO Board for another year. On motion by Ms. Esparza and second by Fran Duane, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Judge Bryan as Chairman to serve a one year term.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Michele Esparaza, Seconded by Fran Duane. Passed. 5-0.
Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Kacal, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

6. Review and discuss the 2025 Second Quarter Progress Report.

Mr. Wood presented the Second Quarter Progress Report to the Board. He stated that the Judges appear to be pleased with the work that is being done within the PDO. The Board discussed case loads versus work loads and disposition of cases. Judge Bryan questioned the philosophy of the office and Mr. Wood shared their philosophy in providing the best representation to their clients.

A copy of the Second Quarter Progress Report is attached.

7. Review FY 2026 Grant Awards.

Mr. Wood discussed the FY 2026 Grant Awards noting, they will have the funding to hire ten full-time staff members to establish a robust Juvenile Division.

Ms. Duane questioned whether they were confident that they would be able to hire that many qualified attorneys. Mr. Wood explained the PDO hiring practices.

The Board then entered into discussion on the Juvenile Division and needs for a Mental Health Division.

8. Discussion and Approval of the FY 2026 Budget.

The Board entered into discussion on the FY 2026 PDO Budget. Budget Officer Nina Payne and First Assistant Auditor Marci Turner made the Board aware of potential conflicts between the proposed PDO budget and the proposed Brazos County Budget. The Board discussed the issues and the need to urge the Court to consider the presented PDO Budget.

On motion by Michele Esparza and second by Fran Duane, the Board voted to approve the FY 2026 PDO Budget as presented, with 4 in favor and Judge Kacal voting against the motion.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Michele Esparaza, Seconded by Fran Duane. Passed. 4-1.
Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Watson. Nays: Kacal. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

9. Discussion of revised policy concerning appointment to cases eligible for the death penalty.

Mr. Wood explained that the policy is being revised to state that the Public Defender's Office is ineligible to be appointed as counsel for capital felony cases or cases that are eligible for the death penalty under Texas Law.

The Board entered into discussion and voted unanimously to approve the revised policy. A copy of the policy is attached.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Michele Esparaza, Seconded by Fran Duane. Passed. 5-0.
Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Kacal, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

10. Approval of amending the by-laws regarding the number of Board Members to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board.

Ms. Esparza proposed adding defense attorney Jim James to the PDO Board and amending the bylaws to increase the Board to eight voting members. The Board discussed concerns regarding establishing a quorum with eight members and the possibility of tied votes.

Ultimately, the Board voted unanimously to approve the amended bylaws to reflect eight voting members.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Michele Esparaza, Seconded by Acting County Judge Kyle Kacal. Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Bryan, III, Duane, Esparaza, Kacal, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

11. Announcement of interest items and possible future agenda topics.

Ms. Esparza requested that an agenda item be added to the Fourth Quarterly Meeting to appoint Jim James to the Board and an item to evaluate the Chief Public Defender.

Announcements

12. Fourth Quarterly Meeting for the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board will be on December 5, 2025 at 2:00 PM.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:	NUMBER:
DATE OF COURT MEETING:	12/5/2025
ITEM:	Approval of appointment of Jim James to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office.
TO:	Commissioners Court
DATE:	11/26/2025
FISCAL IMPACT:	False
BUDGETED:	False
DOLLAR AMOUNT:	\$0.00



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Agenda Item #3

Date: December 5, 2025

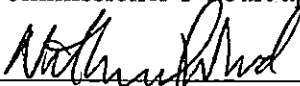
RE: Nomination and Approval of Board Member Appointment

Approval Item:

A new position was added to Oversight Board at the September 5, 2025, meeting. Jim James is nominated for this position.

Recommendation:

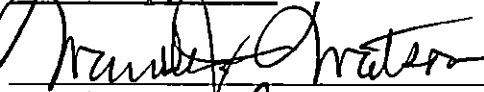
It is my recommendation that this is a 2-year term position. Jim James' term will begin upon Commissioner's Court approval and end August 15, 2027.



Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

12/5/25
Date

Board Approval:



Oversight Board Member

12/5/25
Date



Oversight Board Member

12-5-25
Date



Oversight Board Member

12-5-25
Date



Oversight Board Member

12-5-25
Date



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:	NUMBER:
DATE OF COURT MEETING:	12/5/2025
ITEM:	Review and discuss the 2025 Third Quarter Progress Report.
TO:	Commissioners Court
DATE:	11/26/2025
FISCAL IMPACT:	False
BUDGETED:	False
DOLLAR AMOUNT:	\$0.00

<u>ATTACHMENTS:</u>		
<u>File Name</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Type</u>
2025 Q3 Progress Report.pdf	2025 Q3 Progress Report	Backup Material

Progress Report for Grant 212-25-C03: Brazos County Public Defender
Brazos County
Final Report
Submitted by Nathaniel T. Wood at 10/31/2025 4:36:33 PM
Read-Only Access

Change Reporting Period July 1 - September 30, 2025 (Final Report) ▼

Question	July 2025	August 2025	September 2025
Public Defender Office			
Caseflow Measures			
Report the average number of business days between appointment of Public Defender and the initial attorney interview.	10	9	6
Report the average number of days clients are in jail prior to resolution of the case for Felonies for the cases disposed each month. (Exclude any clients with MH competency proceedings initiated.)	66	122	93
Report the average number of days clients are in jail prior to resolution of the case for Misdemeanors for the cases disposed each month. (Exclude any clients with MH competency proceedings initiated.)	38	31	36
Use			
Report the number of new Juvenile appointments.	0	0	0
Workload/Caseload Measures			
Report the number of new Misdemeanor appointments.	52	64	75
Report the number of new Felony appointments.	30	25	33
Report the number of new Appeals filed.	4	0	0
Report the number of Felony cases disposed.	11	27	20
Report the number of Misdemeanor cases disposed.	28	42	36
Report the number of Juvenile cases disposed.	0	0	0
Report the average number of active Felony cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.			113
Report the average number of active Misdemeanor cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.			80
Report the average number of active Juvenile cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.			0
Program Activities			
Report the date the Oversight Board is setup		08/02/2022	
Report the date the Chief Defender is hired.		12/28/2022	
Report the date the office begins accepting appointments.		03/17/2023	
Report the date the case management system goes live.		03/17/2023	
Report the date the County indigent Defense Plans have been updated to reflect the use of the Public Defender		12/02/2022	
Report the number of Felony cases where charges were reduced or dismissed.	3	7	5

Report the number Misdemeanor cases where charges were reduced or dismissed.	8	11	20
Report the number of Juvenile cases where charges were reduced or dismissed.	0	0	0
Report the number of bench or jury trials (jury empaneled) for Felonies .	0	0	0
Report the number of bench or jury trials (jury empaneled) for Misdemeanors .	0	0	1
Report the number of bench or jury trials (jury empaneled) for Juveniles .	0	0	0
Report the number of Misdemeanor trials that resulted in a not guilty verdict	0	0	0
Report the number of Felony trials that resulted in a not guilty verdict.	0	0	0
Report the number of Juvenile trials that resulted in a not guilty verdict.	0	0	0
Report the number of Misdemeanor cases where an investigator assisted the attorney with investigation of the case for the cases disposed each month.	25	37	16
Report the number of Felony cases where an investigator assisted the attorney with investigation of the case for the cases disposed each month.	11	26	11
Report the number of Juvenile cases where an investigator assisted the attorney with investigation of the case for the cases disposed each month.	0	0	0
Report the number of dispositive motions filed for Misdemeanor cases.	0	0	0
Report the number of dispositive motions filed for Felony cases.	0	0	0
Report the number of bond reduction motions/hearings for Misdemeanor defendants.	2	0	1
Report the number of bond reduction motions/hearing for Felony defendants.	0	2	4
Report the number of detention and review hearings.	0	0	0
Report the number of Juveniles released at detention hearings.	0	0	0
Report the number of writs of habeas corpus filed for Misdemeanors .	2	0	1
Report the number of writs of habeas corpus filed for Felonies .	0	2	4
Report the number of post-conviction writs filed.	0	0	0
Describe any additional services provided to defendants (mental health attorneys, immigration consultations, social services, etc.)	12 referrals related to drivers license; 2 JP cases dismissed; 13 referrals to treatment ; 10 mental health caseworker referrals; 13 other referrals made		
Provide any additional details you feel are important about the trials this quarter.			
Report the date of the last Board meeting.	06/06/2025		
Report the number of cases disposed each month by the public defender in which program social workers and/or caseworkers consulted with attorneys.	9	30	15
Summary			
Explain any official allegations of misconduct.	None.		
Provide any program highlights for the quarter.	We were fully staffed for the full quarter.		

Describe any challenges and the corrective actions taken or being taken.

Describe the activities planned for next quarter.

Start hiring for juvenile and mental health.

Describe any staffing changes which occurred during the quarter or that are anticipated in the next quarter.

We will begin filling new positions and transition from 11 FTE's to 21 FTE's.

If you wish to submit supporting documentation other than text notes entered above, click [here](#). If you have internet mail configured on your computer, a new message window should open up with the To: field filled in. Attach any desired documents and then send the message.

Submitted by Nathaniel T. Wood at 10/31/2025 4:36:33 PM

Home