



MINUTES

JUNE 18, 2026

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 Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in Suite 310 of the Brazos County Administration Building, 200 South Texas Avenue, Bryan, Texas. The following members of the Board were present:

County Judge Duane Peters;
Judge Willie Blackmon (retired), Absent;
Commissioner Wanda J. Watson;
Michele Esparza;
Fran Duane;
Jim James, Absent;
Jamie Martin, Absent.

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

2. Approval of Minutes from the March 6, 2026 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 6, 2026.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Fran Duane, Seconded by Judge Duane Peters. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, James, Martin.

3. Approval to nominate and approve of appointments to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office (4 positions):

- Michele Esparza
- Fran Duane
- Judge Willie Blackmon
- Jamie Martin

Michele Esparza nominated Jim Locke to replace her when her term expires. The Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Jim Locke to the PDO Board effective August 15, 2026.

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

The Board voted unanimously to approve the reappointment of Fran Duane for a term of two years, effective August 15, 2026.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson, Seconded by Judge Duane Peters. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, James, Martin.

The Board thanked Judge Willie Blackmon for his years of service to the Public Defender's Oversight Board. Ms. Esparza then nominated Robert Orozco to serve in Judge Blackmon's position once his term expires.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Robert Orozco to the Oversight Board, effective August 15, 2026.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson, Seconded by Judge Duane Peters. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, James, Martin.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Ann Boney to the Public Defender's Oversight Board to replace Jamie Martin when her term expires. Ms. Boney will serve a term of three years, effective August 15, 2026.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Commissioner Wanda J. Watson, Seconded by Judge Duane Peters. Passed. 4-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, James, Martin.

4. Review and discuss the Quarterly Progress Report for January, February, and March 2026.

Mr. Wood presented the adult misdemeanor and felony case statistics and the office's progress in moving cases through the system efficiently. He reported that the average time between appointment of counsel and the initial client interview is being maintained at fewer than ten business days.

Mr. Wood also reviewed data regarding the average number of days clients spend in jail prior to case resolution. He informed the Board that he has been looking into opportunities to further analyze and quantify the office's performance data. The Board entered into discussion regarding the implications of monetizing the report data and how such efforts align with the mission and objectives of the Public Defender's Office.

Mr. Wood presented the Juvenile Division Report and commended Juvenile Defender Amanda Buenger for her outstanding work. He explained that the report represents the division's first formal reporting period and includes juvenile cases assigned between January and March. Mr. Wood stated that the Public Defender's Office has made a

concerted effort to handle as much of the juvenile caseload as possible and reported that the division has received significant positive feedback.

Ms. Duane questioned whether another attorney would be capable of managing a caseload comparable to that of Ms. Buenger. Mr. Wood responded that recruiting another highly qualified candidate to work with Ms. Buenger is a top priority. He expressed confidence that the juvenile caseload can be effectively managed through the efforts of two attorneys supported by a paralegal, investigator, and caseworker.

Mr. Wood presented the Mental Health Division Report, noting that the division is staffed by one full-time attorney and one full-time caseworker. He explained that the division primarily serves indigent clients who have been deemed incompetent to stand trial. Mr. Wood also discussed matters related to the RESTART Specialty Court Program and reviewed challenges associated with the program's operation. Following discussion, Board members recommended improving communication and public understanding regarding the RESTART Program.

A copy of the reports are attached.

5. Review and discuss the status/update of FY 2027 grants.

Mr. Wood reported that the FY 2027 grant requests were approved by the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) Board. He provided an overview of the Public Defender's Office budget needs and discussed future planning initiatives.

Mr. Wood stated that he continues to envision the Public Defender's Office evolving into a regional office and indicated that he anticipates exploring regionalization opportunities as part of the FY 2028 planning process.

The Board entered into discussion regarding how grant funds could support efforts to regionalize the Public Defender's Office and expand services to surrounding jurisdictions.

6. Review and discuss changes to the Advisory Board Bylaws.

The Board discussed the need for several additional modifications to the bylaws. The recommendations included noting the ex-officio Board Members and naming a Secretary. Ms. Esparza stated that she would assemble a committee to review the bylaws and will have the final draft ready for approval at the September Board Meeting.

7. Review and discuss an update on staffing for open positions with the Public Defender's Office.

Mr. Wood stated that he currently has four vacant positions in his office that he is looking to fill. The Board asked that Mr. Wood prioritize the hiring process, while they assist in other areas such as finalizing the PDO Board Bylaws.

8. Report from the Chief Public Defender concerning PDO access to Odyssey.

Mr. Wood stated that the Public Defender's Office has been granted access to Odyssey. The Board expressed excitement over this development.

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

Ms. Esparza stated that the Board would make recommendations for modifying the bylaws by August 15, 2026. She also announced that the new Board Chair selection will

occur at the September meeting.

Acknowledgement(s)

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

- September 3, 2026 at 2:00pm
- December 3, 2026 at 2:00pm

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

FILED FOR RECORD

DATE 6-11-2026
AT 4:21 O'CLOCK P. M
KAREN MCQUEEN
BRAZOS COUNTY CLERK
By Karen McQueen

No.

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: June 18, 2026
MEETING TIME: 10:00 AM
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 March 6, 2026 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.
 3. Approval to nominate and approve of appointments to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office (4 positions):
 - Michele Esparza
 - Fran Duane
 - Judge Willie Blackmon
 - Jamie Martin
 4. Review and discuss the Quarterly Progress Report for January, February, and March 2026.
 5. Review and discuss the status/update of FY 2027 grants.
 6. Review and discuss changes to the Advisory Board Bylaws.
 7. Review and discuss an update on staffing for open positions with the Public Defender's Office.
 8. Report from the Chief Public Defender concerning PDO access to Odyssey.
 9. Announcement of interest items and possible future agenda topics.

Acknowledgement(s)

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

- September 3, 2026 at 2:00pm
- December 3, 2026 at 2:00pm

11. 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

June 18, 2026 @ 10am

Name

Organization

Abraham Leggett
Sheryl Law
Fran Ruane
Marilyn Espinoza
Natulu Danul
Nina Payne
Katie Connor
Jim Foke
Nathan Wood

Comm Court
Comm Court

PDO
Budget
Co. Judge transition
PDU



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:

NUMBER:

DATE OF COURT MEETING: 6/18/2026

ITEM: Approval of Minutes from the March 6, 2026 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting.

TO: Commissioners Court

DATE: 06/09/2026

FISCAL IMPACT: False

BUDGETED: False

DOLLAR AMOUNT: \$0.00

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

Description

Type

[PDO Board Meeting Minutes 3.6.2026.pdf](#)

PDO Board Meeting Minutes 3.6.2026

Backup Material



MINUTES

MARCH 6, 2026

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, March 6, 2026 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:

County Judge Duane Peters;
Judge Willie Blackmon (retired);
Commissioner Wanda J. Watson;
Michele Esparza;
Fran Duane;
Jim James;
Jamie Martin, Absent.

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

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

The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes for the meeting held on December 5, 2025 with a correction to Board Member Michele Esparza's name. A copy of the corrected minutes is attached.

Motion: Approve w/ Conditions, Moved by Michele Esparza, Seconded by Fran Duane. Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, James, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

3. Introduction of new employees with the Brazos County Public Defender's Office.

Chief Public Defender Nathan Wood introduced the newest staff members, Amanda Buenger, Marsha Tunsel, Missy Kershaw and Callie Roe, to the Board. The Board welcomed the new staff members and discussed the status of the Juvenile Division.

4. Approval to accept the resignation of Judge Travis Bryan, III, Board Chair.

Mr. Wood informed the Board that Judge Bryan submitted a letter of resignation from the Public Defender's Oversight Board on December 6, 2025. The Board entered into discussion and voted unanimously to accept Judge Bryan's resignation.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Fran Duane, Seconded by Michele Esparza. Passed. 5-0. Ayes: Duane, Esparza, James, Peters, Watson. Absent: Blackmon, Martin.

5. Approval to nominate and approve of new Board Chair.

Judge Willie Blackmon entered the meeting at this time.

Fran Duane nominated Board Member Michele Esparza as the Chairman of the Public Defender's Oversight Board. The nomination was seconded by Jim James and the Board voted unanimously to appoint Michele Esparza as the Chairman for a term that expires on August 15, 2026. A new Chairman will be selected at the September meeting.

Ms. Esparza served as Presiding Officer for the remainder of the meeting.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Fran Duane, Seconded by Jim James. Passed. 6-0. Ayes: Blackmon, Duane, Esparza, James, Peters, Watson. Absent: Martin.

6. Approval to withdraw board action taken on September 5, 2025 Public Defender's Oversight Board Meeting to amend the Oversight Board Membership and Policies to reflect eight voting members.

Ms. Esparza explained that on September 5, 2025 the Board took action to approve an eighth Board Member position in an effort to mitigate the ongoing issues of absentee Board Members. At this time, maintaining a Board of seven members is more appropriate and it is her recommendation to withdraw the action taken to increase the number of members. The Board entered into discussion on the matter and ultimately agreed that it was reasonable to maintain a Board of seven members. The Board voted unanimously to withdraw the action taken to increase the Board to eight members.

Motion: Approve, Moved by Jim James, Seconded by Judge Duane Peters. Passed. 6-0. Ayes: Blackmon, Duane, Esparza, James, Peters, Watson. Absent: Martin.

7. Report from Chief Public Defender concerning the hiring of personnel to fill new grant positions.

Mr. Wood stated that they have filled the 10 new positions in the Mental Health Division and they are now taking Juvenile cases. They currently have two vacant attorney positions. Ms. Duane suggested that the PDO host an open house to help in the hiring process. She noted that positive press is always helpful. Mr. Wood stated that he would meet with the County's Public Communications Officer to discuss this option.

8. Review and discuss the 2025 Fourth Quarter Progress Report.

Mr. Wood presented the Fourth Quarter Progress Report for FY25. They received 122 misdemeanor appointments and 51 felony appointments from October through December of 2025. Mr. James questioned how Mr. Wood's Office handles Writs of

Habeus Corpus and stated that he would visit with Mr. Wood further on this matter. A copy of the Fourth Quarter Report is attached.

9. Report from the Chief Public Defender concerning PDO access to Odyssey.

Mr. Wood shared that he spoke again with Information Technology regarding the PDO's access to Odyssey software. He was instructed to get written approval from Judge Kyle Hawthorne for their office to receive the access. Judge Hawthorne did provide written approval and that has been submitted to IT. Juvenile Division Attorney Amanda Buenger reiterated the importance of the PDO having Odyssey access to do their job effectively.

10. Discuss changes to Advisory Board bylaws.

The Board reiterated their decision to have a total of seven Board Members, and discussed renaming the document from "Membership and Policies" to "Public Defender's Oversight Board Bylaws". They then discussed the attendance of Board Members. The current policy does not include a process to replace absentee members of the Board. Ms. Esparza proposed that Board Members must attend at least fifty percent of the meetings each year. Ms. Duane suggested the language be something to the effect of, "To sustain membership on the Board, one must complete 50 percent of all scheduled meetings per calendar year. Failure to do so may allow the Board to replace you." Mr. Wood stated that he would make the modifications to the bylaws and have them ready for the next Oversight Board meeting. The Board then addressed which Board Member's terms are expiring this year.

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

Mr. Wood stated that at the next Board meeting, he will present the PDO Operating Plan and Budget requests.

Announcements

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

- a. June 5, 2026 at 2:00pm
- b. September 4, 2026 at 2:00pm
- c. December 4, 2026 at 2:00pm

Ms. Esparza proposed setting future meetings on Thursdays at a different time. The Board entered discussion and directed Mr. Wood to set the next meeting on a Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Action Item # 2

Date: June 18, 2026

RE: Approval of March 6, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Approval Item:

On March 6, 2026, the Public Defenders Oversight Board met for its quarterly meeting.

Recommendation:

Move to approve the Minutes for March 6, 2026, Oversight Board Meeting.



Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

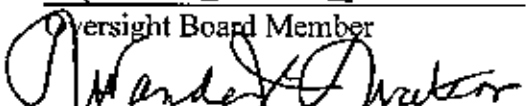
6-18-26
Date

Board Approval:



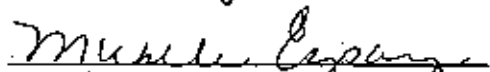
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date



Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date



Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date



Oversight Board Member

6/18/26
Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT: NUMBER:

DATE OF COURT MEETING: 6/18/2026

ITEM: Approval to nominate and approve of appointments to the Public Defender's Office Oversight Board, including the determination of their terms of office (4 positions):

- Michele Esparza
- Fran Duane
- Judge Willie Blackmon
- Jamie Martin

TO: Commissioners Court

DATE: 06/09/2026

FISCAL IMPACT: False

BUDGETED: False

DOLLAR AMOUNT: \$0.00



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Action Item #3

Date: June 18, 2026

RE: Nomination and approval of Oversight Board Membership

Approval Item:

The position which Michele Esparza serves as a Member of the Public Defender Oversight Board is scheduled to expire August 15, 2026. This position is currently scheduled for nomination.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that Jim Locke be appointed to the position of Oversight Board Member to serve a term of 3 years, from August 15, 2026 - August 15, 2029

Nathan Wood
Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

6-18-26
Date

Board Approval:

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

Wanda J. [Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

Michele Esparza
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

Fran B. [Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6/18/26
Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Action Item #3

Date: June 18, 2026

RE: Nomination and approval of Oversight Board Membership

Approval Item:

The position Fran Duane serves as a Member of the Public Defender Oversight Board as the mental health representative is scheduled to expire August 15, 2026. This position is currently scheduled for nomination.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that Fran Duane be appointed to the position of Oversight Board Member as the mental health representative to serve a term of 2 years, from August 15, 2024 - August 15, 2028

Nathan Wood
Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

6-18-26
Date

Board Approval:

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

Wanda Watson
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

Michele Espinoza
Oversight Board Member

6-18-2026
Date

Fran B Duane
Oversight Board Member

6/18/26
Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Action Item #3

Date: June 18, 2026

RE: Nomination and approval of Oversight Board Membership

Approval Item:

The position Judge Willie Blackmon serves as a Member of the Public Defender Oversight Board is scheduled to expire August 15, 2026. This position is currently scheduled for nomination.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that Robert Orozco be appointed to the position of Oversight Board Member to serve a term of 3 years, from August 15, 2026 - August 15, 2029

Nathan Wood
Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

6-18-26
Date

Board Approval:

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-2026
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6/18/2026
Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date



BRAZOS PUBLIC DEFENDER

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Action Item #3

Date: June 18, 2026

RE: Nomination and approval of Oversight Board Membership

Approval Item:

The position Jamie Martin serves as a Member of the Public Defender Oversight Board as the citizen representative is scheduled to expire August 15, 2026. This position is currently scheduled for nomination.

Recommendation:

It is my recommendation that Ann Boney be appointed to the position of Oversight Board Member to serve a term of 3 years, from August 15, 2024 - August 15, 2027

Nathan Wood
Nathan Wood, Chief Public Defender

6-18-26
Date

Board Approval:

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-26
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6-18-2026
Date

[Signature]
Oversight Board Member

6/18/2026
Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date

Oversight Board Member

Date



**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:

NUMBER:

DATE OF COURT MEETING: 6/18/2026

ITEM: Review and discuss the Quarterly Progress Report for January, February, and March 2026.

TO: Commissioners Court

DATE: 06/09/2026

FISCAL IMPACT: False

BUDGETED: False

DOLLAR AMOUNT: \$0.00

ATTACHMENTS:

File Name

Description

Type

[2026 Q1 Progress Report.pdf](#)

2026 Q1 Progress Report

Backup Material

[2026 Q1 Progress Report - JuveApp.pdf](#)

2026 Q1 Progress Report - JuveApp

Backup Material

[2026 Q1 Progress Report - MH.pdf](#)

2026 Q1 Progress Report - MH

Backup Material

Progress Report for Grant 212-26-C03: Brazos County Public Defender
Brazos County
January 1 - March 31, 2026
Submitted by Nathaniel T. Wood at 4/13/2026 1:11:18 PM
Read-Only Access

Change Reporting Period ▼

Question	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026
Public Defender Office			
Caseflow Measures			
Report the average number of business days between appointment of Public Defender and the initial attorney interview.	10	7	4
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.)	72	59	87
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.)	51	24	33
Use			
Report the number of new Juvenile appointments.	0	0	0
Workload/Caseload Measures			
Report the number of new Misdemeanor appointments.	55	47	17
Report the number of new Felony appointments.	23	33	17
Report the number of new Appeals filed.	0	0	0
Report the number of Felony cases disposed.	21	24	26
Report the number of Misdemeanor cases disposed.	50	47	47
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.		89	
Report the average number of active Misdemeanor cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.		73	
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.	2	3	4
Report the number Misdemeanor cases where charges were reduced or dismissed.	21	14	22
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	1	0
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.	11	7	4
Report the number of Felony cases where an investigator assisted the attorney with investigation of the case for the cases disposed each month.	6	10	4
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.	1	1	0
Report the number of bond reduction motions/hearing for Felony defendants.	2	5	1

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 .	1	1	0
Report the number of writs of habeas corpus filed for Felonies .	2	5	1
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.)

Provide any additional details you feel are important about the trials this quarter.

Our trial this quarter involved our board cert attorney training a new lawyer up on trying misdemeanor DWI's. the facts and the law were against us on this one, but we didn't do any worse than the plea offer.

Report the date of the last Board meeting.

03/06/2026

Report the number of cases disposed each month by the public defender in which program social workers and/or caseworkers consulted with attorneys.

5

6

5

Summary

Explain any official allegations of misconduct.

None.

Provide any program highlights for the quarter.

The office began accepting juvenile cases this quarter. We have also carved out mental health cases for representation under the new grant. Our office is participating in the county's new MH court.

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

Nothing to report.

Describe the activities planned for next quarter.

Push for increased publicity. WTAW interview. Citizen's Police Academy Presentation.

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

One of our misdemeanor defenders left the office for private practice with a local attorney. Two vacant juvenile attorney positions at this time.

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 4/13/2026 1:11:18 PM

Home

Progress Report for Grant 212-26-C14: Public Defender Juvenile/Appellate Division Expansion
Brazos County
January 1 - March 31, 2026
Submitted by Nathaniel T. Wood at 4/15/2026 9:52:38 AM
Read-Only Access

Change Reporting Period 

Question	January 2026 Juvenile	February 2026	March 2026
Caseflow Measures			
Average number of days between date/time of case filing and disposition by month for all juvenile cases.		11.5	
Average number of days between date/time of appointment and disposition by month for all juvenile cases		10	
Workload/Caseload Measures			
Department Cases Active. Each month count the total number of cases that are still active on the department's assignment log as of the last day of each month. Juvenile	0	6	17
Department Cases Closed. Each month count the total number of cases that were closed from the department's assignment log during the month. Juvenile.	0	5	0
Report the number of juvenile respondents screened, assessed or interviewed by a case worker, social worker or an investigator.	0	11	11
Report the number of new juvenile appointments received each month.	0	11	11
Report the number of cases where an investigator is used. Juvenile	0	5	0
Report the number of Juvenile cases disposed.	0	5	0
Number of status hearings attended by month involving cases previously disposed	0	0	0
Program Activities			
Report the number of Juvenile cases where charges were reduced or dismissed.	0	1	0
Report the number of Juvenile cases where an investigator assisted the attorney with investigation of the case for the	0	5	0

cases disposed each month.

Report the number of Juveniles released at detention hearings.	0	5	15
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Appellate

Caseflow Measures

Total number of felony appeals disposed in each month.	0	1	0
---	---	---	---

Total number of misdemeanor appeals disposed in each month.	0	0	0
--	---	---	---

Total number of juvenile appeals disposed in each month.	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Workload/Caseload Measures

Report the number of new felony appointments received each month.	1	1	0
--	---	---	---

Report the number of new misdemeanor appointments received each month.	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Report the number of new juvenile appointments received each month.	0	0	0
--	---	---	---

Report the number of felony appeals in which representation is continued from trial.	0	0	0
--	---	---	---

Report the number of misdemeanor appeals in which representation is continued from trial.	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Report the number of juvenile appeals in which representation is continued from trial.	0	0	0
--	---	---	---

Report the number of motions for new trial requested each month.	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Report the number of motion for new trial granted each month.	0	0	0
--	---	---	---

Report the number of <i>Anders</i> briefs filed each month.	0	0	0
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Report the number of non- <i>Anders</i> briefs filed each month.	1	1	1
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Report the number of non- <i>Anders</i> briefs filed timely each month.	1	1	1
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Report the number of non- <i>Anders</i> briefs filed with request for oral argument each month.	1	1	1
--	---	---	---

Report the number of motions for extension filed each month.	5	1	0
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Report the number of appellate court decisions favorable to the client each month.	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Report the number of appellate court decisions unfavorable to the client each month.	0	1	0
---	---	---	---

Report the number of PDRs filed each month.	0	0	1
--	---	---	---

Department appeals Active: Each month count the total number of appeals that are still active on the department's assignment log as of the last day of each month. **Felony** 23 23 23

Department appeals Active: Each month count the total number of appeals that are still active on the department's assignment log as of the last day of each month. **Misdemeanor** 1 1 1

Department appeals Active: Each month count the total number of appeals that are still active on the department's assignment log as of the last day of each month. **Juvenile** 2 2 2

Report the total number of briefs filed each month. 1 1 1

Summary

Provide any program highlights for the quarter.

This was our first quarter accepting juvenile cases. Our goal was to start taking cases in March, and we surpassed that by starting to take cases at the beginning of February. the entire juvenile team attended the Juvenile Law Conference as well.

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

2 juvenile defender positions are open, and there is very little interest in them.

Describe the activities planned for next quarter.

We will kick up recruitment efforts and seek out qualified candidates for our open defender positions.

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

We hired and brought on board our juvenile investigator, caseworker, and paralegal and we also brought on our appellate paralegal.

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 4/15/2026 9:52:38 AM

Home

Progress Report for Grant MH-26-002: Brazos County Public Defender's Office Mental Health Division

Brazos County

January 1 - March 31, 2026

Submitted by Nathaniel T. Wood at 4/17/2026 1:11:03 PM

Read-Only Access

Change Reporting Period 

Question	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026
Mental Health			
Caseflow Measures			
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.)	0	203	53
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.)	60	46	55
Report the average number of days between entry into the program and initial screening by a social worker/case manager.	18	1	39
Workload/Caseload Measures			
Report the number of new Misdemeanor appointments.	12	2	4
Report the number of new Felony appointments.	9	0	2
Report the number of Felony cases disposed.	0	2	1
Report the number of Misdemeanor cases disposed.	1	2	1
Report the average number of active Felony cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.		8	

Report the average number of active Misdemeanor cases per attorney on the last day of the quarter.		14	
Report the average number of cases per social worker/case worker on the last day of the quarter.		22	
Number of new misdemeanor cases accepted into the Mental Health Unit.	12	2	4
Number of new felony cases accepted into the Mental Health Unit.	9	0	2
Program Activities			
Report the number of MH PR bond or reduced bond requests filed.	0	0	0
Report the number of MH PR bond or reduced bond requests granted.	0	0	0
Report the number of medical (not mental health) referrals.	0	0	0
Report the number of referrals for financial services.	0	0	0
Report the number of mental health referrals.	3	5	1
Report the number of referrals for basic needs - housing, employment, transportation, identification, etc.	0	2	0
Report the number of referrals for counseling services.	0	0	0
Report the number of referrals to treatment services for substance abuse.	0	0	0
Report the number of times the social worker/case worker assisted with competency restoration commitments.	3	2	2
Report the number of successful contacts with program clients by the social worker/case worker.	15	33	24
Report the number of client medical and/or mental health files reviewed by the social worker/case worker.	3	5	4
Report the number of Misdemeanor cases where a social worker/case worker assisted the attorney and the charges were reduced or dismissed for the cases disposed each month.	1	2	1

Report the number of **Felony** cases where a social worker/case worker assisted the attorney and the charges were reduced or dismissed for the cases disposed each month.

0

1

0

Report the number of cases where a social worker/case worker assisted the attorney with mitigation and the sentence was reduced from original offer for the cases disposed each month.

0

0

0

Report the number of consultations between social workers/case workers and attorneys.

Report the number of cases disposed each month by the public defender in which program social workers and/or caseworkers consulted with attorneys.

1

4

2

Report the number of Bond Advocacy and Mitigation Reports prepared by the social workers and/or caseworkers each month.

0

0

0

Report the number of cases disposed each month in which a program social worker reviewed defendant medical and/or mental health files.

1

4

2

Summary

Provide any program highlights for the quarter.

MH attorney and caseworker hired and onboarded. We identified approximately 20 cases currently held by the public defender's office to transfer to the new MH division. Criteria for accepting cases into MH division established. MH attorney participated heavily in establishing MH court in Brazos County. This program is new to the county and began accepting applications in March. So far, 31 applications have been reviewed. One person pled into the court during the first quarter, and 8 applications were still under review at the end of the quarter.

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

Consultations between attorney and caseworker above is left blank. Our MH attorney and caseworker work together constantly and consulting continually.

Describe the activities planned for next quarter.

Develop pathway for existing indigent cases held by attorneys outside the PDO to be transferred to MH division.

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

Both positions filled. No changes anticipated.

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.

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**BRAZOS COUNTY
BRYAN, TEXAS**

DEPARTMENT:

NUMBER:

DATE OF COURT MEETING:

6/18/2026

ITEM:

Review and discuss changes to the Advisory Board Bylaws.

TO:

Commissioners Court

DATE:

06/09/2026

FISCAL IMPACT:

False

BUDGETED:

False

DOLLAR AMOUNT:

\$0.00

~~BRAZOS COUNTRY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE~~

~~Oversight Board Membership and Policies~~

Bylaws of the Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board

The Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board (hereinafter "Board") plan is to clearly define pertinent aspects of the Board and its operations. The plan is to maintain independence from undue interference, to prevent outside power and influence over the Brazos County Public Defender's Office (hereinafter "PDO") from being concentrated in any single individual or member, and to ensure that diverse perspectives from the County from those that are interested and knowledgeable in Criminal Indigent Defense. This will allow for creating a Board that is capable of providing highly relevant guidance and direction in establishing, operating, and growing a successful Public Defender's Office that provides high quality legal representation in the form of a vigorous defense for indigent clients in Brazos County. The Board is created under the authority granted in Article 26.045, Code of Criminal Procedure.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board will have the following responsibilities and duties:

- Develop and maintain a current job description for the Chief Public Defender. Screening, interviewing, and recommending a Chief Public Defender for hire by the Commissioners Court. Providing input to the Commissioners Court as necessary if change in salary is recommended to the position of Chief Public Defender. Recommending the removal of the Chief Public Defender if necessary.
- Review, provide strategic input, and approve the policies and procedures and organizational structure recommended by the Chief Public Defender, including a plan of operation required by Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, article 26.045 (b-1), (c-1).
- Review and approve the program budget requests developed by the Chief Public Defender for submission to Commissioners Court and regularly monitor the budget vs. actual expenditures throughout the course of each year. Provide guidance to the Chief Public Defender on how to best communicate the program needs when presenting budget information formally or informally to Commissioners Court and provide strategic guidance that the PDO may face to promote growth and long-term sustainability regarding the PDO's policies, procedures and organizational structure.
- The Chief Public Defender will be responsible for the day to day activities of the PDO and will generally operate in accordance with County Policies as adopted by the Brazos County Commissioner's Court including employee issues. The Board will provide guidance on policies, procedures and organizational structure specific to the PDO. The Board will not intervene, specifically direct or micromanage the operation of the Office.
- The Board will annually confer with the Chief Public Defender to set attainable organizational and personal goals for the Chief Public Defender to pursue in the coming year. The goals will be

documented in writing. At the end of the year, the Board will review the goals with the Chief Public Defender to determine how successful the Chief Public Defender was in meeting each goal. This evaluation will be documented and will be the basis for any new annual goal setting.

- The Board will also undertake any other lawful activities in support of the PDO consistent with this policy with a majority vote of the Board.

Membership

~~The Brazos County Public Defender Oversight Board shall be comprised initially of five (5) permanent members and may be increased to a maximum of seven (7) members once approved by the Brazos County Commissioners Court:~~

- ~~1. Membership requirements shall follow the guidelines as set by the Texas Indigent Defense Commission. Those subject to consideration include but are not limited to members of Commissioners Court, judges, community groups, law school faculty, those in academia and engaged in research and policy, members of the defense bar that do not accept appointed cases, and formerly incarcerated persons and/or potentially a family member of an incarcerated person that can provide insight and perspective from a client's point of view and public defenders from other jurisdictions.~~
- ~~2. Membership shall also include the Brazos County Judge or his designee as well as a County Commissioner as designated by the Brazos County Commissioners Court.~~
- ~~3. Members should be free from interest that would pose a conflict with the Public Defender's Office.~~
- ~~4. Each member shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members.~~

~~No member of the Brazos County Public Defender's Oversight Board shall be employed as a prosecutor, law enforcement officer, probation officer, or any active sitting Judge who hears criminal matters.~~

~~* The Chief Public Defender shall be a non-voting member of the board~~

Membership

The Brazos County Public Defender's Office Oversight Board ("Board") shall consist of seven (7) voting members appointed by the Brazos County Commissioners Court.

In making appointments, the Commissioners Court should seek to ensure that the Board reflects diverse perspectives and includes individuals who are interested in and knowledgeable about criminal indigent defense and public defense systems. Persons subject to consideration may include members of Commissioners Court, community leaders, law school faculty, individuals engaged in criminal justice research and policy, members of the defense bar who do not accept appointed cases in Brazos County, formerly incarcerated persons, family members of incarcerated persons who can provide insight from a client's perspective, and public defenders from other jurisdictions.

The Board shall include the Brazos County Judge, or the County Judge's designee, and one (1) County Commissioner designated by the Brazos County Commissioners Court.

Members shall be free from any actual or potential conflict of interest that would materially interfere with the discharge of their duties to the Board and shall disclose any such conflict to the Board promptly upon becoming aware of it.

Each voting member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter submitted to the Board.

No voting member of the Board shall be employed as a prosecutor, law enforcement officer, probation officer, or as an active sitting judge who presides over criminal matters.

The Chief Public Defender shall serve as an ex officio, non-voting member of the Board.

Term of Office

The Oversight Board members shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years. Terms shall be structured so that no more than three (3) members' terms expire in any calendar year, and ordinarily only two (2) members' terms shall expire in a given year. Initial appointments may be for terms of less than three (3) years as necessary to establish and maintain this staggered rotation.

All terms shall commence upon appointment by the Brazos County Commissioners Court and shall continue until a successor has been appointed and qualified. Members may be reappointed for successive terms at the discretion of the appointing authority.

Removal of Members. A member may be removed by the appointing authority upon recommendation of a majority vote of the Board for nonattendance, conflict of interest, misconduct, inability to discharge the duties of office, or other good cause.

Removal for Nonattendance. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Board, or who fails to attend at least fifty percent (50%) of all regular meetings during any twelve-month period, may be removed by the appointing authority upon recommendation of a majority vote of the Board. Prior to any recommendation for removal, the Chairperson or, in the Chairperson's absence, the Vice-Chairperson, shall notify the member of the attendance deficiency and provide the member with an opportunity to provide an explanation or demonstrate good cause for the absences. Attendance by teleconference or videoconference, when authorized by law and these Bylaws, shall constitute attendance for purposes of this section.

Vacancies

A vacancy on the Board because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or other reason shall be filled by the appointing authority of the vacated position as soon as is practicable but not later than 3 months from the date the vacancy occurs.

Officers

The officers of the Board shall be the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by the members. The Chair shall be one of the five permanent members of the Board.

Powers and Duties

It shall be the Chair's responsibility to:

- Preside at each of the Board meetings.
- Keep Board Members informed of matters pertinent to their responsibility.
- Set the agenda for all Board meetings.
- Appoint Committees.
- To vote with the Board as a Member and break any ties.

It shall be the Vice-Chair's responsibility to:

- Perform the responsibilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence.
- Assist the Chair in carrying out the functions of that office and perform specific duties as delegated to him or her by the Chair.
- Work in conjunction with committee chairs to evaluate the performance of the committees and their members and make appropriate recommendations related thereto.

It shall be the Secretary's responsibility to:

- Prepare and publish meeting agendas and maintain the records of the Board. These records may be maintained exclusively in digital form.
- The Secretary may be assisted by staff from the Public Defender's Office or Commissioners Court Staff.

Term of Office

Members shall serve staggered terms of no less than one (1) year and no more than three (3) as appointed by Commissioners Court. All terms commence starting with the first schedule meeting following Commissioners Court Appointment whether the appointee is present or no.

Meetings

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting shall occur in September of each calendar year, at locations and times scheduled at least one month in advance.

Regular Meetings

Regular Meetings shall occur at least quarterly in March, June, September, and December each year. The Annual meeting in September will also serve as a "Regular" meeting for scheduling purposes. These meetings will occur at locations and times scheduled at least one month in advance. Meetings may occur and members may attend via teleconference or videoconference.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chair or by request of a majority of the Board Members. Meetings may occur and members may attend via teleconference or videoconference.

Meeting Agendas

- Items may be submitted by any Board Member, or the Chief Public Defender, for inclusion on an agenda.
- Items to be included on a Board Meeting Agenda are to be submitted to the Chair at least 14 days prior to meetings.
- **Agendas will be distributed to Board Members at least seven days prior to a scheduled regular meeting or special meeting.**

Quorum

A quorum to conduct meetings will be constituted by at least a simple majority of the Board Members appointed at the time of the meeting. The act of a majority of the members present at a meeting, at which there is a quorum will be the act of the Board unless a greater number is required for specific actions listed in this plan.

Oversight Board Decisions

Decisions shall be made by majority vote of Board members in attendance at a scheduled Board Meeting. No proxy votes are permitted. Although any decisions recommending the hiring or firing the Chief Public Defender must be at meetings that contain at least five (5) Board Members present.

Meeting Attendees

Board Meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Board Members may invite staff as needed. Stakeholders may be invited based on agenda items.

Chief Public Defender

- The Chief Public Defender is a Brazos County department head selected by the Board and approved by the Brazos County Commissioner's Court.
- The Chief Public Defender's duties to the Board include but are not limited to:
 - Work with the Chair to set agendas for Board meetings.
 - Attend all meetings of the Board. Attend Committee and workgroup meetings as required and to each respective Commissioner's Court as needed.
 - Report to the Board about the operations and status of the PDO and its budget.
 - Coordinate with the Board and committees for preparation of reports.
 - Maintain files of any documents deemed important to the Board.
 - Conduct research and prepare reports or other information in response to the requests, interests, and established plan of the Board including best practices, legislative matters and emerging issues.
 - Develop training and educational materials related to the interests of the Board for governmental agencies and the public.

- Complete all tasks necessary for the maintenance of the enabling grants.
- Conduct annual employee evaluations and performance improvement plans, if necessary, to be included in Brazos County Human Resource files.

Modification of These Procedural Guidelines

These procedural guidelines may be modified at any regular or annual meeting of the Board with at least five (5) Board Members present, provided that the modification was previously submitted in writing to all Board members. The Board Chair will periodically review these guidelines to ensure accuracy and relevance.

These procedural guidelines were adopted by the BCPDO Oversight Board on _____ 2022.