

Public Safety Coordinating Council
Pinellas County
January 29, 2026 Meeting Minutes

The Pinellas County Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) met in special session at 2:07 PM on this date in the Annex Build Room at the Pinellas County Justice Center, 14250 49th Street North, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Chris Scherer, Chair, County Commissioner
Bruce Bartlett, State Attorney
Steve Blank, representing WestCare Chief Privacy Officer Bob Neri
Nick Bridenback, representing Trial Court Administrator Jennifer Parker
Deanna Carey, representing Sheriff Bob Gualtieri
John Cornett, Department of Children and Families
Shawn Crane, Chief Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit
Nick Cusumano, representing Largo Police Department Chief Michael Loux
Christopher Dudley, Department of Corrections
Michael Jalazo, Pinellas Ex-Offender Re-Entry Coalition (PERC)
Jim Miller, Operation PAR, Inc.
Melissa Reid, Department of Juvenile Justice
Ashley Roura, representing Public Defender Sara Mollo
Justin Shea, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Dorothy Vaccaro, County Judge, Sixth Judicial Circuit

Not Present

Maxine Booker, Eleos Wellness
Bob Gualtieri, Pinellas County Sheriff
Dawn Handley, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Jessica Kushner, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Michael Loux, Largo Police Department
Keisha Maxwell, Department of Juvenile Justice
Sara Mollo, Public Defender
Bob Neri, WestCare GulfCoast-Florida, Inc.
Jennifer Parker, Sixth Judicial Circuit

Others Present

Tim Burns, Pinellas County Human Services
Yashira Gonzalez, Pinellas County Justice Administration
Cody Ward, Assistant County Attorney
Tristan Byrne, Pinellas County Justice Coordination
Kenneth Lyons, Department of Corrections

Pilar Poligo, Department of Corrections
Tammy Burgess, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been filed and made a part of the record.

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Chair Scherer called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM; whereupon, Mr. Burns conducted a roll call of the members and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE (CJMHS) REINVESTMENT GRANT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Burns provided background information regarding the CJMHS Reinvestment Grant, including that it was established by statute in 2007; that the local Board of County Commissioners (BCC) is required to designate a planning council for grant purposes; and that the BCC designated the PSCC as the statutorily required planning council in October 2007; whereupon, he provided an overview of the grant process and explained that once a program has been selected by the PSCC, that recommendation is presented to the BCC for approval.

Mr. Burns provided information regarding the solicitation, including grant objectives, target populations, strategic initiatives, and the solicitation timeline. He also explained that, rather than utilizing a competitive solicitation process, the members were asked to submit programs for consideration; and that three programs were submitted.

In response to a query by Chair Scherer, Mr. Burns provided clarifying information regarding the grant's matching requirements, indicating that the required organizational match may be satisfied through either cash or in-kind services; whereupon, he noted that each organization which submitted a proposal confirmed its ability to meet the match requirements.

Thereupon, Mr. Burns related that the three proposed programs appear to align with several strategies identified in the Council's strategic plan and the Department of Children and Families' solicitation criteria.

REVIEW OF PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Substance Abuse/Mental Health Treatment, Housing, Access to Reentry and Employment (Pinellas SHARE) – PERC

Mr. Burns provided a brief overview of the Pinellas SHARE proposal submitted by PERC, indicating that the program is intended to serve adults returning from the Pinellas County Jail or the Department of Corrections and who have substance abuse, mental health, or co-occurring disorders; that the program is anticipated to serve approximately 120 individuals through partnerships with various housing, educational, employment, and behavioral health organizations; and that the proposal aligns with the Council's strategy related to intercept priorities.

Mr. Jalazo then discussed efforts to develop a comprehensive reentry program focused on housing stabilization, wraparound services, treatment, workforce training, and employment support for prerelease and sentenced populations; whereupon, he also described coordination with partner organizations related to housing, treatment, peer support, and employment services.

Responding to a query by Chair Scherer, Mr. Burns clarified that the grant funding could not be utilized to offset recent reductions in funding provided to Boley Centers, Inc. by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and that the proposal would instead add capacity for sheltering, housing, and other services in the community; whereupon, in response to comments and queries by the members, Mr. Jalazo, with input from Mr. Bridenback, provided information regarding various topics, including referral processes, transitional housing needs, and efforts to ensure individuals have stable, independent housing following participation in treatment or reentry programs.

In response to a query by Ms. Reid, Mr. Jalazo confirmed his willingness to include individuals who are 18 years of age and older and are under supervision of the Department of Juvenile Justice as part of the population served by the program.

Vincent House Psychosocial Rehabilitation Program

Mr. Burns provided a brief overview of the program proposal, indicating that it is intended to serve adults living with serious and persistent mental illness, including individuals at risk of justice system involvement, hospitalization, and housing instability; and that the program is anticipated to serve approximately 160 individuals through partnerships with various behavioral health, law enforcement, and community organizations; whereupon, Vincent House Program Director Charlotte Sonetrot provided background information regarding the organization and its community reintegration services for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness.

Ms. Sonetirot then provided information regarding the program and discussed various topics, including mental health hospitalization, suicide, and readmission statistics for Pinellas County, associated hospitalization costs, and program outcomes related to employment, sobriety, and law enforcement interaction; whereupon, Mr. Shea provided brief comments regarding his lived experience with Vincent House.

Responding to queries by Messrs. Bridenback and Burns and Chief Judge Crane, Ms. Sonetirot, with input from Mr. Shea, discussed various topics, including expansion capacity, coordination with law enforcement agencies, and the amount of funding requested for the program; whereupon, she indicated that the requested funding of \$56,000.00 a year for three years would provide compensation for an additional intake staff position.

Thereupon, Mr. Burns noted that the proposal aligns with key strategies related to improving access to housing, establishing high-fidelity wraparound services, reentry processes, and behavioral health solutions.

City of Largo – Stabilization Shelter Beds with Wrap-Around Re-Housing Services

Mr. Burns provided an overview of the proposal, indicating that the program is intended to provide stabilization shelter beds and wraparound rehousing services for adults experiencing street homelessness; and that the proposal aligns with strategies related to housing, wraparound services, reentry processes, and behavioral health solutions; whereupon, City of Largo Assistant City Manager Meridy Semones provided background information regarding the City's homeless outreach program and discussed various services and statistics related to the population served. She also indicated that the program differs from other contracts with the Homeless Empowerment Program (HEP) in that clients may remain in the program for up to 90 days to allow additional time for workforce integration and a transition into permanent supportive housing.

In response to a comment by Mr. Burns, Ms. Semones indicated that the City of Largo is renegotiating its contract with HEP; and that it is anticipated that the requested funding of up to \$300,000.00 per year would support approximately 20 beds.

Responding to a query by Mr. Shea, Largo Police Department Lieutenant Ryan Dulski provided information regarding referral and intake procedures associated with the program; whereupon, Ms. Semones noted that the City's homeless outreach specialist receives approximately 70 calls each day from individuals experiencing homelessness who are seeking assistance.

In response to queries by Messrs. Bridenback and Jalazo, Ms. Semones provided information regarding current bed availability and indicated that while clients are permitted

to remain in the program for up to 90 days, the beds are technically considered transitional; whereupon, Mr. Dulski noted that, last December, the program received an award from the Department of Justice through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Thereupon, discussion ensued regarding the possibility of combining multiple proposals into a unified program in an effort to maximize the grant funding received. Responding to comments and queries by the members, Mr. Burns provided information regarding the competitive application process and clarified that only one cohesive proposal may be submitted for consideration.

Responding to a query by Mr. Shea, Mr. Burns provided information regarding applicant eligibility requirements, including that the lead applicant must be either a police department, a 501(c)3 organization, or the County; whereupon, discussion ensued related to potential consolidation of programs, including the following related topics:

- Lead applicant responsibilities and eligibility requirements
- Matching fund requirements
- Coordination between partner organizations
- Geographic scope of services
- Time constraints related to preparing a unified proposal
- Feasibility of combining programs into a cohesive application

During discussion, Mr. Burns emphasized that the Council must recommend either a standalone or unified program for consideration by the BCC; that the Council must also determine which programs would be combined and who would submit the application; and that a recommendation is needed from the Council today so that it may be presented to the BCC for approval at its February meeting. He also clarified that a funding application for the Council's recommendation must be submitted by March 19, 2026.

Thereupon, Chief Judge Crane suggested that the Council recess briefly to allow representatives from the organizations an opportunity to discuss the feasibility of combining programs.

The meeting was recessed at 3:30 PM and reconvened at 3:44 PM.

SELECTION OF GRANT PROPOSAL TO PROCEED

Ms. Semones indicated that she and Ms. Sonetiro determined that the City of Largo and Vincent House programs cannot be cohesively combined within the available timeframe; whereupon, she expressed support for the Council to select one proposal for recommendation.

In response to Chair Scherer's call for a motion, Mr. Dudley made a motion to select one program; whereupon, discussion ensued wherein Mr. Burns and Attorney Ward provided clarifying information regarding the voting process and abstention requirements.

Ms. Roura then made a motion to vote on one program, which was seconded by Mr. Miller. Following brief additional discussion regarding the voting process, and at Chair Scherer's request, the members agreed to vote on one program at a time.

Following clarifying comments by Mr. Burns regarding the voting process, Chief Judge Crane made a motion to call for the vote, entertain discussion, and then proceed with a roll call vote to determine which program should be recommended to the BCC. The motion was seconded by State Attorney Bartlett and carried unanimously.

Further discussion ensued regarding which of the three programs to recommend for funding; whereupon, following a roll call vote, the Council unanimously selected the Pinellas SHARE program, submitted by PERC, for recommendation to the BCC for approval, with Messrs. Cusumano, Jalazo, and Shea abstaining. Ms. Gonzalez also noted that Mr. Blank and Ms. Reid left the meeting and were absent for the vote.

In accordance with the provisions of the Standards of Conduct Law, completed Memorandum of Voting Conflict forms have been received and made a part of the record.

Following brief comments by Mr. Burns, Ms. Roura made a motion to designate the City of Largo's program as the recommended backup in the event that PERC cannot submit an application for the Pinellas SHARE program. Upon Chair Scherer's call for the vote, the motion carried unanimously.

ROUNDTABLE/UPDATES

PSCC 1st Quarter Meeting – Monday, March 9th

This item was not addressed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.