

CCJJ COMMISSION MINUTES – APPROVED	
Committee	Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice
Date	Thursday, October 9th, 2025
Time	12 PM – 2 PM
Location	Hybrid Zoom Virtual meeting – Capitol Board Room 240
Members Present	<p><u>In-Person Attendance</u>: Mike Schoenfeld (for Jared Garcia), Eric Tadehara (for Tracey Gruber), Stewart Young, Chief Craig Black, Blake Hills, Pam Vickrey, Richard Mauro, Mark Moffat, Tom Ross, April Graham</p> <p><u>Virtual Attendance</u>: Ron Gordon, Sheriff Chad Jensen, Martin Munoz (JJOC), Alissa Black, Jeff Gray (for Ryan Robinson), Judge Ryan Peters</p>
Staff & Visitors	<p><u>Staff</u>: Danica Bodley, Dr. Michele Leslie, Elizabeth Klc, Kara Hetrick, Angelo Perillo (virtual), Chyleen Richey, Morgan Williams (virtual), Matthew Barraza (virtual), Richard Ziebarth, Van Nguyen (virtual), John Draney (virtual), Adrienne Buhler, Adam Trupp (virtual), Ben Peterson (virtual), Erica Wood (virtual), Sofia Nystroem (virtual), Ken Matthews (virtual), Rachelle Hill (virtual), Katie Fox (virtual), Mei Xue (virtual)</p> <p><u>Visitors</u>: Brett Robinson, Stacie Russell (virtual), Kim Gibb (virtual), William W. Clayton (virtual), Kimmi Wolf (virtual), Lowry Snow, Savannah Pike (virtual), Jennifer Campbell (virtual), Alex Allen (virtual), Michael Dreschel, Raechel Lizon (virtual)</p>
Agenda Item	Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes – Tom Ross, Executive Director
Notes	<p>Tom Ross brings the commission meeting into session.</p> <p>The commission reviewed the previous meeting minutes from Thursday, August 14th, 2025.</p> <p>Motion: Stewart Young motions for the commission to approve the minutes as presented. Sheriff Chad Jensen seconds the motion. The motion passes unanimously.</p> <p>Tom Ross formally announced that Blake Hills was appointed as the new Chair of the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOPP), effective the following Tuesday.</p>
Agenda Item	CCJJ Chair Nominations and Vote – Tom Ross, Executive Director
Notes	<p>The commission addressed the first order of business by electing a new chair. Tom Ross, serving as acting chair, opened the floor for nominations.</p> <p>Motion: Pam Vickrey nominated Sheriff Chad Jensen, who was the only commission member to have formally submitted his interest in the position. The motion was seconded by Stewart Young. The motion passes unanimously.</p>
Agenda Item	Sentencing Guidelines Presentation and Approval – Dan Strong, Utah Sentencing Commission, Director
Notes	<p>Dan Strong presented the proposed 2026 Sentencing Guidelines, the result of months of work by the Utah Sentencing Commission and its subcommittees. A 2024 legislative change now requires the CCJJ to formally submit the guidelines to the Law Enforcement and Judiciary Interim Committees for legislative approval on or before October 31.</p> <p>The guidelines were developed through a rigorous, multi-stage review process:</p> <p><u>Adult Guidelines Subcommittee</u></p> <p>Met five times to review proposals, including 11 change requests from the Statewide Association of Prosecutors (SWAP), and to categorize new offenses created during the 2025 legislative session.</p>

Juvenile Guidelines Subcommittee

Met once to review and support recommendations from juvenile court staff aimed at aligning guidelines with current law and improving clarity.

Sentencing Commission

The full commission reviewed all subcommittee recommendations, debated contentious issues, and held individual votes on them before a final unanimous vote to approve the complete draft.

The commission approved a series of significant and formal changes to the adult sentencing guidelines.

Criminal History Scoring

Certain Class B Misdemeanors will now be applied to criminal history scores. The change specifically includes Class B person's offenses and DUI offenses. A compromise was reached to exclude non-person's offenses (e.g., retail theft, trespassing) from this scoring for the time being, citing capacity considerations.

Crime-Free Gap

The calculation for the crime-free gap now begins after any imposed jail term is completed. Previously, this period—which can reduce a criminal history score—began at sentencing or release from prison, but did not clearly account for time served in jail.

Financial Crimes

Clarified instructions for the financial offense form (Form 4). The change ensures the form can be applied in cases resolved by plea agreement where the aggregate restitution amount exceeds \$50,000, even if no single count meets that threshold.

Credit for Time Served

Codified existing law and administrative rules regarding credit for pre-sentencing custody. The guidelines now explicitly state that courts and the Board of Pardons and Parole should award credit for time served on the same offense or incident. For non-custodial monitoring (e.g., home confinement), the guidelines state that courts retain discretion to award full, partial, or no credit.

Sentencing Disparities

Adopted language from the federal system to guide courts in "avoiding unwarranted disparities." This new text emphasizes that defendants with similar offenses and criminal histories should generally receive similar sentences, allowing for warranted disparities in cases with unusually aggravating circumstances.

Felony/Misdemeanor Discrepancy

Corrected a scoring anomaly between third-degree felony and Class A person's offenses. The change adjusts the felony matrix to ensure a conviction for a third-degree felony person's offense results in a higher presumptive sentence (75 days jail) than a Class A misdemeanor person's offense (60 days jail) for an offender in the same criminal history category.

Formal & Structural Changes

Categorized all new offenses created in the 2025 legislative session.
• Created a new, specific scoring column for attempted murder to reflect its presumptive prison status.
• Removed lengthy and dated "academic material" explaining evidence-based principles from the main document. This information will be available on the CCJJ website.

The updates to the juvenile guidelines were primarily for modernization and clarity:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed two outdated tools for probation officers, as the content is now in their internal documents. • Updated language and instructions related to non-judicial adjustments to align with recent changes in law. • Corrected internal code citations and made other non-substantive changes for readability. <p>Following the presentation, Tom Ross emphasized the need to "trust the process of the sentencing commission's work" while acknowledging that the legislature will ultimately decide the final form of the guidelines.</p> <p>Motion: Sheriff Chad Jensen motioned to approve the submission of the 2026 Sentencing Guidelines to the legislature. Stewart Young seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
Agenda Item	SAFG Grant Review – <i>Richard Ziebarth, Program Manager</i>
Notes	<p>Richard Ziebarth presented the proposed allocations for the SAFG competitive grant program, which distributes funds to law enforcement agencies.</p> <p><u>Program Overview and Allocations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Funding Available: \$585,000. • Applications: 43 law enforcement agencies submitted applications requesting approximately double the available funds. • Review Process: A review committee scored the applications and recommended funding for 27 projects. Some project budgets were scaled down ("scaled quantities") to allow for more awards. • Unfunded Agencies: Richard noted that agencies not funded through this grant are receiving federal JAG formula funding and will be directed to other resources, such as available beer tax funds. <p>Several agencies requested funds for drones. Richard stated that any purchases must comply with state code prohibiting drones manufactured in China, Russia, or North Korea. The commission will provide agencies with a list of approved, US-made drones. A discussion followed regarding the significant price gap between compliant and non-compliant drones and the operational limitations this places on smaller agencies.</p> <p>Commission member Mark Moffat raised concerns about understanding the function of requested surveillance equipment. Specific items discussed included a "Raman spectrometer" (a device to determine a substance's chemical structure) and a "Casper system" (an undercover operations platform providing audio, video, and GPS data from a smartphone).</p> <p>Motion: Mark Moffat moved to approve the SAFG grant package as presented. Chief Craig Black seconded the motion. The motion passed.</p> <p>Abstentions: One (1) Abstention; Alissa Black</p>
Agenda Item	Other Business
Notes	No other business was addressed.
Agenda Item	Public Comment
Notes	Public comment time was given but none was addressed.
Agenda Item	Adjourn

Notes	<p>Motion: Mark Moffat motions for the commission to adjourn. Chief Craig Black seconds the motion. The motion was unanimously agreed upon.</p> <p>The commission adjourns.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11th, 2025 from Noon-2 PM. Location: <u>Anchor Location:</u> Capitol Board Room 240 Zoom link: https://utah-gov.zoom.us/j/88695952596?pwd=hMk2M7VttbOnUbWlnqufrZuniKeh7H.1</p>
DISCLAIMER	<p>Please note that these meeting minutes have been primarily generated or assisted by an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. These notes have been edited by staff to ensure accuracy and completeness.</p>