

To: Whom it May Concern

From: Rachel Jolly, Burlington CJC Director

Re: Memo Regarding the upcoming Community Justice Center Transition

Date: June 2, 2026

The four Chittenden County municipalities of Burlington, South Burlington, Essex and Williston have hosted Community Justice Centers (CJCs) for decades, primarily funded through VT Department of Corrections (DOC) contracts. Those CJCs have had strong support from their town/city leadership, local police departments, and community volunteers and have demonstrated positive outcomes for those impacted most directly by crime/harm, as well as realizing tremendous financial savings for both local communities and the State as a whole in diverting thousands of individuals from the criminal legal system, to partake in a non-punitive and highly accountable process of repair, future prevention and healing.

In 2024, the DOC, the primary funder of the South Burlington, Essex and Williston CJCs, changed their funding allocations to community justice centers to one agency per Probation and Parole district. In 2025, Act 180 codified changes to the structure and administration of Pre-charge Diversion services in the State of Vermont, and shifted management and funding of those resources to the VT Attorney General's Office (AGO), who historically and currently only provides grants with one agency per county. These changes precipitated a consolidation of individual centers across the county to one central Community Justice Center intended to serve the County as a whole. Since 2019, the Burlington CJC (BCJC) had provided Diversion/Pretrial Services county-wide with State funds awarded by the AGO, and with the addition of Pre-Charge Diversion as part of this grant, is now responsible for administering those services county-wide starting July 2026.

With an aspiration of making this as collaborative and mutually agreeable transition process as possible, the town/city managers of the three CJC host municipalities, as well as the BCJC Director and the Community Justice Unit Director at the AGO, collectively called the Steering Committee, have been meeting monthly for a year to discuss the various facets of the transition. In addition, the above members, as well as the CJC host municipality police departments, and staff of the three CJCs, collectively called the Transition Team, have been meeting regularly since August.

The summary below is what has happened to date:

- A Regional Agreement MOU has been drafted and reviewed by the legal representatives of Burlington, South Burlington, Williston, Essex and Essex Jct. (see attached)
- The Burlington CJC has received approval to change their name to the Chittenden County Community Justice Center as of July 1, 2026
- A subsection of Community Advisory Board (CAB) members of the four existing CJCs have met three times thus far and have drafted a proposed set of by-laws (see attached), as well as an application and selection process for the future Chittenden County CJC CAB
- Leadership from the BCJC has met with leadership from the following law enforcement agencies to discuss the transition:
 - South Burlington Police
 - Essex Police

- Williston Police
- Colchester Police
- Milton Police
- Winooski Police
- Shelburne Police
- Richmond Police
- Chittenden County Sheriff's Office
- Two initial Volunteer Community Forums were held in early February to discuss the upcoming transition, and to answer questions
- Four orientation sessions were held during the last week of May for current volunteers from the three CJs that are closing to provide more information about the Chittenden County CJC and opportunities for continuing engagement
- Two Restorative Process Coordinator positions were posted (that would be based in the South Burlington and Williston CJC locations) with partner involvement in the interview panels from the three host CJC municipalities. One offer has been made (and is working to be finalized) and one position will be reopened.

In the coming months, we anticipate:

- Identifying one primary coordinator and one primary manager as the staff points of contact for each law enforcement agency in the county
- Recruiting a new CAB, comprised of 9-13 representatives of the communities of Chittenden County, representing diversity (town of residence, age, socio-economic, racial, cultural, gender, those with lived experience of being impacted by crime) and commitment to restorative justice.
- Drafting a job description, and conducting a search process in partnership with the Town/City Managers and Police Chiefs of South Burlington, Williston, Essex and Essex Jct. for a Victim Services Coordinator who will provide Parallel Justice services with those respective police depts as well as receive community referrals.
- Continuing to meet monthly with the Steering Committee (which will also include the Co-Chairs of the CAB, but no longer the AGO representative) to share data, discuss how the transition is going, and begin to look ahead for next fiscal year's budget and MOU
- Convene a series of visioning groups to develop a new mission/vision/values statement, logo and strategic planning goals for the Chittenden County CJC

Regarding the logistics of referrals:

- Law enforcement will send all referrals to the alias cjc@burlingtonvt.gov which is an inbox checked daily by two of our program managers.
- Managers will check the database system used by the courts to see if that individual is anywhere else in the system, and/or has active cases at any other CJC in the state, to make the determination of whether to accept the referral.
- Once the case is accepted, the manager will assign the case to the coordinator matched with the locality of the incident.
- Upon closure of the case, the coordinator will send a Closure Form to the referring officer letting them know the outcome of the process, or reason for an unsuccessful closure.