

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
 Justice Systems Ad Hoc Committee
 Meeting Summary, April 11, 2016
 Bellingham Municipal Court, Fireplace Room, 2014 C Street,
 Bellingham WA
 9:15 – 11:15am

Attendance

Present	Representing
Anderson, Angela	Whatcom County Public Defender's Office
Bernstein, Jill	Citizen Representative
Gockley, Stephen	WAHA
Hammill, Daniel	City of Bellingham City Council
Heydrich, Fred - Chair	Whatcom County Superior Court
Huffman, Matt	Ferndale PD
McEachran, Dave	Whatcom County Prosecutor
Moonwater	Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center
Peterson, Darlene	City of Bellingham, Municipal Court
Ruffatto, Peter (proxy for Kelli Linville)	City of Bellingham, Mayor's office
Walker, Kathy (proxy for Dave McEachran)	Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office
Absent	
Elfo, Bill	Whatcom County Sheriff
Garrett, Deborra	Whatcom County Superior Court
Morgan, Irene	Restorative Community Coalition
Guests	
Jones, Wendy	WCSO, Corrections Chief
Van Glubt, Bruce	Whatcom County District Court & Probation
Staff	
Smith, Veronica	WAHA

Meeting Summary

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jill opened the meeting and reviewed the meeting format from the Monday, April 4th Task Force meeting. She would like this committee to present a series of specific recommendations to the Task Force for Phase II. She also welcomes any suggestions the Committee may have to improve time management in meetings.

The Committee did not review the March 28, 2016 Meeting Summary

2. Presentation by Bruce Van Glubt

Bruce provided a handout on recidivism as it relates to DUI conviction and deferred prosecution, and domestic violence. The handout also included data from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy re. recidivism. Bruce reviewed the content of the handout with the Committee (pages 31 – 34 of Meeting Handouts) in an effort to answer these questions:

1. Does probation reduce the use of jail and recidivism?
2. What is the actual cost of probation, per client/per month?

Bruce also fielded questions from the Committee related to probation services.

Q – Is there more that can be done?

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A – Yes, probation needs a new database, should consider the expansion of their Intake Unit and possibly restructure caseloads to increase processing speed.

Q – Are treatment options “evidence-based”?

A – RCW’s require that treatment be given by “state certified agencies”, unless otherwise ordered. Whatcom county does not have the resources or expertise to evaluation treatment agencies.

Q – Are there charges that could be addressed with probation?

A – A conversation about what is not being referred to probation may be worthwhile.

Q – Who should get the most attention?

A – High risk, 1st time offenders, domestic violence

Darlene and Angela noted that the cost of DV treatment is a barrier for offenders, and shared ideas about realigning incentives for DV treatment programs.

Stephen requested that the Committee try to develop a better understanding of current programs and services and best practices.

The Swift & Certain (immediate consequences) program at Lummi was briefly discussed. This type of program is a possible recommendation for the Probation department.

Dave reminded the Committee that the jail problem cannot be solved at the detriment of the community, and that the main concern in DV cases is the victim.

Pending Questions

1. How many jail days are being used for probation
2. What are best practices for probation services
3. What is evidence-based treatment for DV
4. What are the numbers of people placed on probation with treatment ordered
5. What happens in other courts in Whatcom County
6. What is the probation department staff’s vision for their department
7. What is the cost/benefit of treatment options
8. How can probation services be expanded appropriately while ensuring public safety
9. What percentage of criminal offenses that go through district court go on probation

Possible Recommendations:

1. Implementation of Swift & Certain
2. Incentivize DV treatment

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3. Distinguish between best practices and state certified treatment
4. Organize a system-wide conversation about probation utilization
5. Develop tools for DV screening

3. Presentation by Wendy Jones

Wendy reviewed the “good time” structure at the Whatcom County Jail. “Good Time” is defined as days taken off a sentence.

There are three rates of earned time:

1. 1/6 is the base rate, it can be earned or taken away, depending on behavior
2. 1/4 is the rate earned by inmates with a minimum security classification
3. 1/3 is the rate earned by inmates headed to prison, and by inmates that volunteer to work in the jail. Good time earned through labor cannot be taken away if rules are broken.

Key information:

- If good time is equalized, there is no incentive for inmates to volunteer to work in the jail
- Security rankings drive an individual’s opportunity to earn good time
- Inmates that are not able to work because of physical limitations are still able to earn good time, up to 1/4
- RCW’s cap good time at 1/3
- There is some flexibility so that people can be transitioned into treatment

Q – is there an adjustment to good time that you believe would reduce incarceration?

A – not on a sustained basis

Pending Questions:

1. The County is researching the possibility of sending pre-trial defendants out on work crews
2. Wendy will report back on other good time policies in other facilities

4. Legal & Justice Committee Mission Statement

Deferred to a future agenda.

5. Review of Phase II Goals/Strategy & Process

Fred, Jill, and Moonwater will rearrange the list of Phase II goals and strategies

6. **Meeting Schedule** – approved.

7. **Public Comment** – none

8. **Adjourned** at 11:15am