

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Triage Facility Subcommittee
Meeting Summary for June 16, 2016

1. Call To Order

Committee Chair Chris Phillips called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Health Department Lower Level Conference Room, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham.

Members Present: Jeff Brubaker, Jack Hovenier, Chris Phillips, Tyler Schroeder, Kathy Walker, Dean Wight

Members Absent: Ken Mann, Jeff Parks, Sandy Whitcutt

Also Present: Jill Bernstein, Anne Deacon, Irene Morgan

Review May 26, 2016 Meeting Summary

Deacon moved to approve the May 26, 2016 meeting summary as presented. The motion was seconded.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Update on County Health Department and North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (NSBHO) Whatcom County Behavioral Health Facility Planning Report

Deacon described the Health Department's proposal to the regional Behavioral Health Organization. They recommended the development of a recovery campus, possibly on Division Street, as shown on page 19 of the report that includes:

- Two residential treatment facilities for substance use disorder
 - One facility near the recovery campus that will serve people with serious mental illness and substance use issues. This facility is being renovated and is operated by another agency.
 - One facility, location to be determined, for people with addiction as the primary concern and who may or may not have mental health concerns
- A recovery stabilization facility
 - One 16-bed unit for addiction stabilization
 - One 16-bed unit for mental health stabilization
- A recovery house
 - Proposed 30 beds
- Increased outpatient treatment services

Committee members discussed concerns about how this proposal is much different than the Task Force proposal for the Triage Facility, the increased impacts to the neighbors, lack of transportation to and from the area, whether a recovery campus could be built in a residential area, and whether all these facilities would be located in the same location on Division Street.

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Deacon stated the proposal will continue to evolve as it goes through the process with the BHO. The recovery campus has been much discussed in other committees. She described the components of a recovery house:

- People can live at the recovery house for up to six months
- They can come and go to work, school, and appointments
- Onsite programs
- A structured program that is staffed 24/7
- The location is not yet decided

This committee's scope is limited to the triage center, but it can provide input on co-locating the other facilities with the triage facility.

Bernstein stated the County Council and County Sheriff committed to the neighbors that the site would remain as it is. The proposal for a larger campus changes that dynamic. It's a significant change.

The committee discussed the most appropriate locations, commitments to neighbors, centralizing the services, this committee's role in the larger behavioral health discussions, developing the components of the campus as funding opportunities arise, how to present the committee's recommendations to the Council in light of the entire campus project, and needs assessment reflecting the full need of the community without consideration of political realities.

3. Phase II Report

Forrest Longman, Council Legislative Analyst, stated the most effective process to draft the phase II report is for the subcommittee chairs to write the first draft of their section of the full report. The information can be pulled from the meeting summaries. He will compile the draft reports from the chairs into a larger draft Phase II Report that the Task Force can consider. Chairs would provide him their first draft by August 31.

Phillips stated he will not have the time to write a draft report. Schroeder stated another subcommittee member can take that responsibility from the Chair.

Bernstein stated the draft Phase II Report will go to the Task Force members for review by the end of September. The Task Force can take a final vote at its meeting in October.

Phillips stated that he, Jack Hovenier, and Tyler Schroeder can collaborate on the first draft of the Phase II Report from the Triage Committee.

4. State Budget Capital Facility funding and State Department of Commerce grant

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Schroeder reported on the County's work with Skagit County, Snohomish County, and others to make a regional request next year in the State budget for capital facility funding. They are also beginning to look at two different grants from the Department of Commerce.

- The State Mental Hospital Diversion Projects,
 - A grant is best suited for the crisis triage facility
 - Up to \$2 million
- Acute and Residential Grant Application, which for evaluation and treatment centers, including involuntary treatment through RCW 71.05. Whatcom County is not planning for an involuntary treatment facility, so this grant is not appropriate.

Deacon stated the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization can use some of their Medicaid funds for "soft costs."

Schroeder stated he and staff are working on the grant application, due July 14, 2016. They need community partners, including the Task Force and the Region, to submit letters of support for the grant application.

5. Review of the Task Force discussion regarding the intersection of the criminal justice and behavioral health systems

Bernstein stated this discussion is a follow-up to a presentation to the full Task Force from Prosecutor Dave McEachran regarding a case study of a mentally ill person who kept entering the criminal justice system.

Walker stated she had hoped the discussion and case study could identify specific gaps in the systems. Recognize that some overlap of the two systems will continue to exist. It's likely the jail will continue to be a default in certain instances, regardless of what they can do to close the gaps. She described the case study.

The committee discussed the intersection of the criminal justice and mental health systems:

- Some people with mental health issues also have criminogenic risk factors, and they will revolve in and out of the jail, regardless of how good the systems are.
- Because of the civil rights laws in America, someone can't be treated against their will unless there is a substantial risk of harm to self, others, or property. Laws are set up to protect individuals.
- Sometimes mental health intervention isn't effective because of criminogenic risk factors.
- Some people with mental health issues need to be in long-term treatment facilities, but that doesn't happen voluntarily.
- Be clear in the report that they won't necessarily be able to resolve problems for all individuals, and some folks will continue to revolve through the system.
- The Task Force needs to be careful about how optimistic they are about how much behavioral health programs can help the overall population.
- The jail will always need some sort of behavioral health program.

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- Identify the limits to what the Task Force can accomplish.
- Prioritizing their work on the people who they can help.
- Educate the Task Force about the abilities of law enforcement and mental health systems.
- Also use case studies to demonstrate success stories.

Schroeder stated have a presentation on the case study from the behavioral health or crisis oversight perspective by identifying how the behavioral health community can and can't help this individual.

6. Next Steps: Ideas & Further Information

Bernstein stated she will work with behavioral health folks to create a presentation at a Task Force meeting regarding the case study from the mental health perspective.

Phillips stated County staff are working to submit the grant applications. Forrest Longman and Tyler Schroeder will work on the Phase II Report.

The committee discussed the draft June 2016 Report update and asked for more review time. The committee also discussed the need for a meeting in July and decided to cancel its July meeting.

7. Public Comment

Irene Morgan stated she appreciates the work of the community, approves of the grant application and the number of units proposed, although it's not enough. There are also not enough connecting services. The percentage of people with mental health and criminogenic factors is discouraging, however she is hopeful for the future.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.