

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Meeting Summary for May 22, 2017***

1. Call to Order

Task Force Chair Jill Bernstein called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Angela Anderson, Jill Bernstein, Anne Deacon, Stephen Gockley, Susan Gribbin, Daniel Hammill, Fred Heydrich, Jack Hovenier, Mike Knapp, Betsy Kruse, Ken Mann, Dave McEachran, Irene Morgan, Chris Phillips, Randy Polidan, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

Also Present: Jeff Parks (Proxy for Bill Elfo), Peter Ruffatto (Proxy for Kelli Linville)

Absent: John Billester, Jeff Brubaker, Bill Elfo, Nick Lewis, Kelli Linville, Byron Manering, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson

Review April 13, 2017 Meeting Summary

There were no changes.

3. Committee Update: Triage Facility Committee

Mann referenced the Triage Facility Committee meeting summary and reported for the Committee. He and the Task Force members discussed and on the Public Involvement Plan for the neighborhood; the architect's negotiation with the State about the facility design; funding and support for the facility; contacting State legislators to recommend funding the facility in the State capital facility budget; an upcoming Op-Ed in the newspaper; the status of the architectural plans.

He moved that the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force (IPRTF) recommend to the County that, no later than September 2017, the County will facilitate the community meeting for the expansion of the crisis triage facility. Prior to that, the IPRTF and County will try to educate the community about the benefits. The motion was seconded.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Committee Update: Jail Stakeholder Work Group

Hovenier reported for the Jail Stakeholder Work Group on the most recent meeting. He abstained from voting at the last Work Group meeting on a motion regarding the jail financial use agreement. At the last meeting, the Work Group discussed how the County Council will decide on jail size and location. The proposed agreement includes a recommendation to fund and implement recommendations from the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force and to develop a finance and operations advisory board for the jail that includes a representative from the Task Force. The Work Group is now done.

Task Force members discussed:

- Information presented to the Work Group at the last meeting.
- A memo from the City and County that recommended the framework of the jail facility use agreement and how it met the three items that the Work Group were tasked to do.

4. Committee Update: Behavioral Health Committee

Jackie Mitchell, Health Department, reported for the Behavioral Health Committee on the most recent meeting, which discussed the Ground level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program and a Medicaid transformation waiver project through the Accountable Communities of Health (ACH).

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Task Force members discussed an ad hoc advisory committee to oversee the GRACE program, the Health Department staff's capacity and the future direction of the subcommittee, and the relationship between the GRACE project and the committee.

Schroeder stated that he can work with Health Department staff to identify how the Health Department can best facilitate the work of the subcommittee.

5. Committee Update: Legal & Justice Systems Committee

Gockley referenced the Legal and Justice Systems Committee summary and reported on the committee's progress on pretrial risk assessment, a pretrial supervision unit, and Drug Court processes and programs.

Heydrich reported on his recent visit to Spokane to investigate their pretrial program. Their program is too new to have any relevant statistical information. He is confident that the best practice is to make sure any pretrial risk assessment tool is locally validated.

The Task Force members discussed whether the drug court meets best practices, could be eligible for federal funding, incentives for participants, the cost of pretrial risk assessment tool validation, the difference between the validation process and the data analysis that the VERA Institute consultants are doing, risk assessment only evaluating the possibility of failure to appear and committing new crimes if released from custody, and whether Whatcom County drug court could expand to include people who commit burglaries or delivery of small amounts.

McEachran described the history of Whatcom County drug court; excluding people with recent violent backgrounds; excluding people who deliver drugs, because drug court participants are vulnerable; excluding property offenders because there is a connection with rapes and assaults, and; working with the legislature to change the sentencing grid for drug offenders and fund drug courts and prison-based drug treatment.

6. Update by Jurisdictions on Jail Diversion Programs

Parks spoke for the Sheriff's Office and stated they are looking at ways to improve their programs and changing fees to reduce barriers to alternative programs. The City of Bellingham has achieved cost savings from its new jail alternative programs. However, the County has had jail alternative programs for a long time. The County also has the responsibility of operating the jail, which has fixed costs.

Task Force members discussed educating the County Council on existing programs, defining and using the same terms when discussing jail alternative programs,

7. Draft Phase 3 Report

Bernstein stated the committee reports have been completed. Forrest Longman is compiling and finalizing the report. Task Force members should make any comments before the deadline.

Heydrich referenced the draft report and stated the population snapshot was over three days, not one day.

8. Other Business

VERA Update

Bernstein reported on the work of the VERA Institute consultants and their upcoming site visit to present their preliminary data analysis of who is in the jail, why they're in jail, how long they are in jail, and to look at possible opportunities to reduce that population.

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Coordinating Municipal Defendants and the Jail Alternatives Work Center

Hovenier stated this agenda item will be discussed at the June meeting.

International Community Corrections Association

Gribbin stated this item was in National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) newsletter for Washington State and thought Task Force members may be interested in the event.

9. Next Steps: Ideas & Further Information

This item was not discussed.

10. Public Comment

Ray Baribeau spoke about creating a glossary of terms for the Phase III Report that includes pretrial diversion and jail alternatives, which should not be used interchangeably. Before the public meeting, explain the benefits of a triage facility in “you” statements by creating a handout of features, advantages, and benefits.

Joy Gilfilen submitted a handout (on file) and spoke about the County Council, Task Force, and community agencies hosting a public education event.

Amy Malone spoke on the necessity of hosting a public meeting. Also, the work of the Task Force is related to jail size, and its work should be communicated to the County Council.

Bernstein spoke about public outreach, which includes a program by the League of Women Voters, a newspaper article in the *Cascadia Weekly*, a radio interview about the work of the Task Force, and the meeting summaries, documents, and audio that are available to the public on the website.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.