

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Meeting Summary for August 28, 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, Jeff Brubaker, Anne Deacon, Bill Elfo, Stephen Gockley, Daniel Hammill, Fred Heydrich, Jack Hovenier, Betsy Kruse, Dave McEachran, Moonwater, Irene Morgan, Chris Phillips, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

Also Present: Todd Donovan (proxy for Ken Mann) and Peter Ruffatto (proxy for Kelli Linville)

Absent: John Billester, Nick Lewis, Susan Gribbin, Kelli Linville, Byron Manering, Ken Mann, Darlene Peterson

Review July 10, 2017 Meeting Summary

There were no changes.

2. Announcements

Bernstein reported on the work of the Washington Pretrial Reform Task Force.

Task Force members spoke about the August 7 initial report from the VERA Institute consultants being biased and going beyond their scope of technical assistance. The information is not useable and inaccurate. The observations about citations is irresponsible. The final report should include data on city inmates sent to Yakima.

The Task Force members discussed the contract scope of work through the end of the year, the timeline of the final report, who is monitoring the contract work, reaching a consensus on objective data versus not agreeing on subjective conclusions, and their expertise regarding national best practices.

3. Committee Updates: Triage Facility Committee (August 3)

Phillips and Hovenier reported for the committee on the discussion with capital funding, moving forward with building development, allocation of funds for architectural drawings, and exploring the option of constructing a new freestanding structure instead of a remodel of the current facility.

Phillips moved to ask the County to diligently explore and strongly consider the option of making the triage and crisis respite facility a free-standing facility for three reasons: 1. The cost differential for the remodel and a new facility is only 16 percent, 2. Hidden problems often occur with remodels, so the new construction forecast will be more accurate, and 3. It gives better use of the existing building by not eliminating the existing facilities.

Task Force members discussed the cost and operational differential between the two facility options, using the existing work center, creating a project-based budget, and amending the motion.

Hovenier restated the motion as amended: Ask the County to explore and strongly consider the option of making the triage and crisis respite facility a free-standing facility for three reasons: 1. The cost differential for the remodel and a new facility is only 16 percent, 2. Hidden problems often occur with remodels, so the new construction forecast will be more accurate, and 3. It gives better use of the existing building by not eliminating the existing facilities.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Schroeder reported on the status of the State's capital budget. There is no new progress.

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4. Committee Updates: Behavioral Health Committee (July 20 and August 21)

Deacon reported for the committee:

- Creating a consumer focus group: scientifically validated and contacting Western Washington University about developing the process to talk to consumers.
- GRACE project: invitations have been sent to the leadership team and programming team. They have hired a project manager.

Hammill reported on Dr. Adam Kartman's progress with a new local opioid treatment program.

Gockley reported on the lack of housing and treatment for drug court participants. There is potential to develop supportive housing units dedicated to Drug Court.

Task Force members discussed options for supportive housing for Drug Court participants.

5. Committee Updates Legal & Justice Systems Committee (July 11)

Gockley reported for the Committee on pretrial risk assessment, a pretrial supervision unit, potential improvements to drug court, getting presentations from Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services (DVSAS) about domestic violence treatment programs, and inviting Dr. Zachary Hamilton to present at the September Task Force meeting to present on pretrial assessment.

(Discussion continued later in the meeting.)

6. Update by jurisdictions on jail diversion programs

Elfo stated they are exploring the jail deputies' authority to reset court dates for minor offenses such as driving while license suspended (DWLS)-3rd to reduce jail capacity and other issues. He reported on upcoming jail repairs that will further reduce capacity.

Ruffatto stated the City is making greater use of SCRAM bracelets for pretrial defendants.

Task Force members discussed how they will handle the upcoming reduction in jail capacity.

7. Update on collaboration of law enforcement and St. Joseph Hospital

Phillips and Elfo reported on a meeting that included Bellingham Police, County Sheriff, and hospital personnel to discuss the perceived increase in the number of patients who are threatening and violent to hospital staff. They will work on better coordination for public safety. They have formed work groups that will meet in six weeks for clarification and update of protocols.

8. Update on Smokey Point Behavioral Hospital

Kruse reported that it seems one unit is now open at the facility. There is capacity for two units.

- The hospital needs 30 assessments before being credited
- The North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) is not the contractor, but is setting up quarter meetings with the facility
- The lack of professional staff may be a cause for the slow opening.
- When fully staffed, there will be 112 beds
- The hospital will accept involuntary patients
- There is potential for involuntary admissions from Whatcom County
- The hospital provides acute, but not long-term, care up to 14 days
- The facility is not a replacement for Pioneer Center North, which was for substance use disorder

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9. Opportunity Council & Northwest Youth Services housing project: 22 North

Winter reported on the project:

- Will provide long-term supportive housing and affordable housing
- For those with a long history of homelessness and young adults
- The model is similar to Frances Place
- There will be 40 studio apartments
- The first floor will include commercial and/or social space
- The list of services may include a residential counselor, physicians, housing case managers, and others
- Groundbreaking is September 15, and construction will start in October
- A standardized assessment and how long they've been homeless will help them prioritize applicants

He thanked everyone who has provided support for the project.

The Task Force members discussed the benchmarks for success and confidentiality concerns.

10. District Court Probation recent activities

Bruce Van Glubt, District Court Administrator, reported on three items:

1. Increased use of out-of-custody work program for probation violators.
2. An electronic home monitoring (EHM) pilot project that will soon be launched.
3. Training on the Ohio Risk Assessment and his certification as a pretrial release professional.

Task Force members discussed change in County policy to allow a subsidy for indigent defendants, the Sheriff's Office is hiring a clerical staff person for the courthouse to connect to the jail work center, increased cost and use of EHM, contracting with a service provider, and how success of the EHM pilot project will be measured.

11. Memorandum of agreement between Whatcom County and City of Bellingham

Schroeder reported on the memorandum of agreement (MOA). It includes the creation of an operations board, including one member of the Task Force and \$1 million per year to reduce incarceration.

Bernstein moved to appoint Jack Hovenier to the operations board as created by the MOA.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously with McEachran and Winter out of the room.

5. Committee Updates Legal & Justice Systems Committee (July 11)

(Discussion continued from earlier in the meeting.)

Gockley reported for the Legal and Justice Systems Committee and moved for the Task Force to formally recommend that they take positive action on recommending substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programmatic and for the drug court, such as a substance abuse treatment support staff person, not clerical staff, for additional support and education and to possibly contract with someone to provide additional support and education until there is a more robust provider network.

The Task Force members suggested amendments to the motion and discussed the context for the motion and the timing of County budget amendments.

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Hovenier restated the amended motion: The Task Force to recommend that the County Council appropriate additional programmatic funding for Drug Court to provide additional support and education to drug court participants.

The Task Force members discussed the best way to make additional funding available for Drug Court, the administration's and the Council's support for additional programmatic funding, urging the Council to support Superior Court's proposal for additional funding in the budget, and determining the specific amount later.

Motion carried unanimously, with McEachran, Winter, and Heydrich out of the room.

12. Other Business

Morgan submitted a handout (on file) and spoke about bail bonding.

13. Next Steps: Ideas and Further Information

This item was not discussed.

14. Public Comment

Joy Gilfilen stated she is encouraged by the work of the Task Force and thanked the members for their progress.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.