

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force  
Meeting Summary September 17, 2018***

**1. Call to Order**

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

**Present:** Angela Anderson, Jill Bernstein, Anne Deacon, Jerry DeBruin, Todd Donovan, Bill Elfo, Stephen Gockley, Daniel Hammill, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Betsy Kruse, Kelli Linville, Dave McEachran, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Chris Phillips, Tyler Schroeder

**Absent:** Travis Brockie, Deborra Garrett, Kate Hansen, Deborah Hawley, Byron Manering, Lisa McShane, Greg Winter

Review August 6, 2018 Meeting Summary

There were no changes.

**2. Policy discussion on defendants and offenders who are sent to the Yakima jail vs. Whatcom County Jail**

Elfo reported on the Whatcom County jail:

- The construction schedule which may not begin until 2019 due to delayed bid process.
- The County and Bellingham can work to retain more people through the work center.
- They will need to sort out medication assisted treatment (MAT) services as Yakima inmates transition back into the community. Deputy Erickson will do an onsite visit to a MAT program in Boston
- The daily jail rate per the interlocal agreement is \$116 plus a \$13 capital facilities charge per day. the County pays Yakima \$59.85 per day for regular inmates or \$91.50 per day for inmates who need intensive management.
- The County budgeted \$100,000 in 2019 for jail bed days in Yakima during construction. They have begun using those funds now. The County will budget \$250,000 in 2020 for jail bed days in Yakima.

Linville stated they need to look at the jail population as a whole, regardless of jurisdiction. Maximize opportunities where available, and continue to work as partners on this complex issue.

Peterson stated that the City transports defendants and sentenced inmates to Yakima twice a week. They are working with the Sheriff to identify more who can qualify for the Jail Alternatives Work Center. There are problems with transporting people with serious mental illness to Yakima. She understands that, unlike the City of Bellingham, the County still has jail costs it must pay even though they send inmates to Yakima.

King stated Blaine saved \$10,000 in 2018 by sending sentenced inmates to Yakima. Some small cities have begun using electronic monitoring bracelets, and are learning and adjusting the program as necessary. Currently, they transport inmates on Tuesdays and Fridays. Having more days available for transportation be more useful.

The Task Force members discussed:

- Small cities' savings by sending sentenced inmates to Yakima instead of the County jail.
- The priority is making sure there are beds available in the County jail for law enforcement to bring those defendants who are a danger to public safety.
- The County and all the cities coordinating transportation to and from Yakima.
- Medication assisted treatment in the Whatcom County jail

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- The need to identify impacts of being incarcerated in Yakima, far away from families. They need to maximize opportunities for inmates and families to connect.
- Court video-conferencing in Yakima.
- The behavioral health service provider in Yakima is working on how to send medication requirements for inmates from all mental health providers locally to the Yakima provider.
- The Yakima jail has benefits the Whatcom County jail doesn't have, including specialized housing.
- Whatcom County and the small cities need a contracted public defense attorney located in Yakima for its pretrial defendants.
- Current electronic versus in-person jail visitation policies in the jail and work center
- The jurisdiction should coordinate as much as possible on administrative tasks to free up other individual criminal justice resources.
- Hopefully the Task Force can systemically reduce jail population so they eventually won't have to send anyone to Yakima.
- Whether they can move juvenile offenders out of the Courthouse 6<sup>th</sup> floor and use that space for jail inmates.

### **3. Information Needs & Data Exchange (INDEX) Committee Update**

Schroeder updated the Task Force on the status of convening the INDEX Committee, including:

- Membership
- The first meeting on October 4
- First steps, including a data needs matrix
- Making sure the scope doesn't get out of hand
- A request for proposals/qualifications (RFP/Q) for a data analyst with experience in these issues

The Task Force members discussed whether they can engage someone from Western Washington University to do statistical analysis.

### **4. Committee Updates**

Philips reported on the upcoming agenda for the Crisis Recovery Facility Committee this week.

Deacon reported on a recent field trip to a similar facility in Lewis County that was opened in the last six months.

Deacon reported for the Behavioral Health Committee, including work on the INDEX Committee data and a study on behavioral health needs of jail inmates. The Committee will begin to review mental health courts in the county. There is an extreme lack of available housing in the county in general, and especially with people with mental illness. The committee will discuss funding options for housing.

The Task Force members discussed housing vacancy rates, reviewing both the City and County mental health courts, and taxing options.

Gockley reported for the Legal and Justice Systems Committee on drug court best practices and pretrial services. The National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) will review the County's drug court in 2019. The Pretrial Processes Workgroup is working on staffing needs for a budget supplemental request.

### **5. Update by Jurisdictions on Jail Diversion Programs**

King reported for the small Cities on jail alternatives for pretrial and sentenced and on the upcoming judicial changes in 2019.

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The Task Force members discussed the option of time serviced while on electronic home detention as allowed by statute and whether defendant costs are subsidized.

Elfo and Bruce Van Glubt, District Court Administrator, reported for the County on the recently-expanded electronic monitoring program in District Court

Elfo reported that the new crisis intervention deputy began September 1 and has been so successful that he is asking for more deputies for the next budget.

Deacon announced that the County Council approved SeaMar as the hub agency for the Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) Program, which will launch soon. She reported on the staff to be provided according to the scope of work.

Peterson reported that City defendants are now getting text reminders of court dates, and the criminal calendar will be regularly sent to the Lighthouse Mission to prevent warrants and failures to appear, beginning October 1. As of August, 781 City defendants have completed their sentence in electronic monitoring since inception of the program, with only three percent having warrants.

**6. Other Business**

Phillips reported on the status of the Opportunity Council's recovery house project. The Opportunity Council received a \$1 million grant and will own and operate the recovery house. The Health Department will run programs at the recovery house. The recovery house will have 10 - 12 beds and include space for drug court participants.

Deacon stated the recovery house will include a low level of treatment, and is not just housing, for drug court participants.

**7. Public Comment**

Irene Morgan submitted a handout (on file) invitation to a debate between candidates for Prosecutor and spoke about the need to hear from people serving time in jail.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.