

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Legal & Justice Systems Subcommittee
Meeting Summary for April 9, 2018

1. Call To Order

Committee Chair Stephen Gockley called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. in the Whatcom County Courthouse Conference Room 514, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham.

Members Present: Angela Anderson, Arlene Feld, Deborra Garrett, Stephen Gockley, Raylene King, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Peter Ruffatto

Also Present: Kristin Hannah (proxy for Deborah Hawley)

Members Absent: Bill Elfo, Heather Flaherty, Deborah Hawley, Eric Richey

2. 2019 Work Plan

Committee members discussed:

- Court case processing improvements: Fluctuating caseloads and timelines, internal policies, and changes to the court calendar. Anderson is scheduled to meet on April 10 with the judges about improvements to superior court case processing, and will update the committee at the June meeting.
- Restorative justice: Mapping of current local efforts, determining what other jurisdictions do for restorative justice, identifying if there are any best practices.
- Identify who would take responsibility for the different work plan items
- Focus on specific actions that could immediately reduce incarceration over broader issues
- Warrant quash: current options and barriers. City of Bellingham clerks will not be allowed to quash warrants, but anyone can request a warrant quash at the end of any court calendar. The City of Bellingham has accomplished this goal. There is no change in felony court; clients have to wait eight days to get a warrant quashed. The County court resources are a barrier to a more frequent warrant quash schedule.
- Drivers licensing fines and suspensions: the proposed State legislation on DWLS3 did not pass. The small cities will discuss it at an upcoming court meeting. King stated she would report back to the committee.
- Reentry: Work with the Behavioral Health Committee; get an update on why support was cut for in-custody evaluations; and the need to link people between incarceration and services, particularly for inmates returning from Yakima. Include an update on in-custody evaluations at the joint meeting between this committee and the Behavioral Health Committee.
- The need for updated data on jail use
- Book and release practices: There's nothing more Bellingham can do to expand at this time. It's not clear what book and release accomplishes over allowing an officer to release in the field.

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- Electronic home monitoring (EHM) and probation violations: EHM has been accomplished in the City of Bellingham, and it also addresses probation violations. District Court seems to have increased use of electronic home monitoring.
- Courthouse kiosk for jail alternatives: Engage Sheriff Elfo and Chief of Corrections Wendy Jones to get an update on the possibility of creating a kiosk.
- Pre-arrest diversion is a big topic and should be included as a separate work plan item as a high priority. Identify if there is a model that can take advantage of the economies of scale from use by all jurisdictions that can share resources and make it fiscally viable.

3. Joint meeting with Behavioral Health Committee on May 14

Gockley reported on a joint meeting with the Behavioral Health Subcommittee and its proposed agenda topics.

Committee members discussed agenda topics, information sharing between the committees, the specific outcomes that may come from the joint meeting, and adding a discussion of the status of in-custody evaluations in the jail. Agenda topics will include:

- Prosecutor referrals to specialty courts, including Drug Court and Mental Health Court
- The Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program
- Fast-track and drug court
- Jail transition and re-entry
- Training needs across law enforcement, jail, legal and judicial systems, such as trauma-informed care
- Presentation by Dan Hammill and Barry Buchanan on Policy Academy effort to reduce young adult incarceration
- Status of in-custody evaluations

4. Drug Court Updates

Gockley submitted a handout of drug court program use statistics from Chris Furman and reported they are awaiting the final report from the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), due by the end of April. The Committee concurred to schedule the report on its June agenda.

5. Request for funding for presentation from Judge Cedric Kerns on youth court

This item was not discussed.

6. Other Business

The Committee discussed the possibility of changing its regular meeting schedule to a different Tuesday to accommodate members' conflicting schedules, and to possibly move to an every-other-month meeting schedule. Task Force staff will look into options for new meeting dates on the calendar.

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Gockley stated he would like another committee member to take over as chair of the subcommittee.

7. Public Comment

Mark Gardner, City of Bellingham, stated that it would be helpful for the annual plan to put the work plan in a structure that assigns work items to responsible parties or agencies and identifies timelines, specific topics, descriptions, and actions required.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned due to loss of quorum at 1:30 p.m.