

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Meeting Summary April 15, 2019

1. Call to Order

Task Force Co-Chair Jack Hovenier called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Present: Barry Buchanan, Jerry DeBruin, David Doll, Bill Elfo, Heather Flaherty, Arlene Feld, Stephen Gockley, Daniel Hammill, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Kelli Linville, Moonwater, Eric Petersen, Darlene Peterson, Eric Richey, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

Kristin Hanna (proxy for Deborah Hawley), Perry Mowery (proxy for Anne Deacon)

Absent: Angela Anderson, Anne Deacon, Deborra Garrett, Byron Manering, Dave Reynolds, Bruce Van Glubt

The Co-Chairs welcomed new Task Force members and reviewed the annual report timeline.

Hovenier reported on changes in membership to the Behavioral Health and Crisis Stabilization Committees.

2. Update of Jail Standards Code Chapter 1.28

Buchanan stated the County Council has referred this item to the Task Force acting as the Law and Justice Council.

The following County staff reported on the proposed update of jail standards in County Code Chapter 1.28:

- Bill Elfo, Sheriff
- Caleb Erickson, Sheriff's Office
- Jeff Parks, Undersheriff
- Wendy Jones, Chief of Corrections
- Liz Gallery, Whatcom County Prosecutor's Office

Elfo reported on the challenges with the existing outdated standards in the Code and reasons for proposed changes.

Gallery reported on how the existing jail standards came to be codified in the County Code. The County Code allows the jail standards to be temporarily suspended during times when the jail is overcrowded. She requests that the Task Force recommend to the County Council that the jail standards continue to be suspended while the code review is underway. Corrections staff will make its existing policy manuals available on the website.

Task Force members discussed:

- How the Code is suspended
- How the code is in conflict with operational manuals
- How frequently policies and procedures can change to reflect case law and other changes
- The flexibility of updating policies and procedures as needed while balancing accountability
- How updated standards would impact the building of a new jail
- Community interest in how policies impact an inmate's experience
- Guidelines for updating policy manuals and the website
- Hiring of a community outreach coordinator position in the Sheriff's Office
- Lack of internet and language accessibility
- Codes that refer to policy updates
- How best to keep the Code updated going forward

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The Sheriff stated he will return to the Task Force when they have further developed the proposal.

3. Committee Updates

Update on Committee membership

Hammill moved to approve the 2019 Committee assignments as shown on packet page 35. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Steering Committee

Buchanan reported for the Steering Committee:

- Update on Task Force membership
- 2019 annual report
- Developing a strategic plan for the Task Force
- A joint meeting of the Behavioral Health and Legal and Justice Systems Committees

Schroeder reported on a meeting with committee chairs to develop a strategic plan for the full Task Force by developing a customized sequential intercept map and program inventory.

The Task Force members discussed Crisis Stabilization Facility operational funding.

Crisis Recovery Facility Committee

Hovenier reported for the Crisis Stabilization Facility Committee on construction funding sources.

The Task Force members continued to discuss Crisis Stabilization Facility operational funding.

Behavioral Health Committee

Hammill referenced the Behavioral Health Committee meeting summary in the packet and reported for the Behavioral Health Committee.

Legal & Justice Systems Committee

Gockley reported for the Legal and Justice Systems:

- Updating on hiring a pretrial services manager
- Drug Court Review
- Joint Behavioral Health and Legal and Justice Systems Subcommittee meeting agenda topics

INDEX Committee

Schroeder reported for the INDEX Committee.

Caleb Erickson, Sheriff's Office, submitted and referenced a handout (on file) and reported on a workgroup of staff from the Sheriff's Office, County Information Technology Division, and Bellingham staff to develop more efficient reports between the courts and jail and make jail inmate population information more available on the website.

Task Force members discussed next steps and the need for demographics of who is currently incarcerated.

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4. Other Business

Mark Gardner, City of Bellingham, will schedule a presentation of the annual report to the Bellingham City Council, in addition to the County Council.

5. Public Comment

Irene Morgan, Restorative Community Coalition, spoke about focusing on incarceration reduction and prevention and taxing for operational funds of the crisis stabilization facility.

Joy Gilfilen spoke about maintaining the existing crisis triage facility in addition to the new crisis stabilization facility, the need to involve inmates in the planning process, and focusing on prevention.

6. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.