

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force
Legal & Justice Systems Subcommittee
Meeting Summary for December 10, 2019

1. Call to Order

Committee Co-Chair Arlene Feld / Raylene King called the meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. in the Whatcom County Courthouse Conference Room 514, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham.

Members Present: Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Deborah Hawley, Raylene King, Darlene Peterson, Maia Vanyo

Also Present: Wendy Jones (proxy for Bill Elfo)

Members Absent: Bill Elfo, Deborra Garrett, Moonwater, Eric Peterson

2. Jail reentry action plan: What's next?

Wendy Jones, Chief of Corrections, reported on current jail efforts, including:

- Increases in the number of people who are participating in the withdrawal program, continuation of treatment, and induction
- Tracking the need and the possibility of requesting an additional navigator position in the next biennial budget
- The jail's ideal staffing level of two additional full-time care coordinators, as shown on the IPRTF Sequential Intercept level 4.B, Incarceration Reentry Services
- The number of psychiatric services hours provided in the jail
- Eighteen to 24 percent of inmates have serious mental illnesses (SMIs), and everyone else have a personality disorder. That level is going to get worse since they will try to get minimum security offenders diverted and there are fewer nuisance arrests.

Jones and the committee members discussed reentry versus navigators; other reentry systems, such as housing and transportation, that aren't related to behavioral health; figuring out reentry best practices; using the Ground-Level Response And Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) program as a reentry model; creating a handoff between corrections and the community; defining the scope of the committee's work on reentry; whether a reentry specialist would be embedded with the public defender's office; how difficult it is for people who have been incarcerated to transition back into the community; the impact of incarceration on the family; the need for cognitive testing for learning disorders; beginning the reentry process at booking; working through Probation to get people to engage in treatment and services; whether they can help inmates who may have fetal alcohol syndrome; the cost of programs vs. the cost of recidivism; and the County jail transitioning to an electronic health records system.

3. Incorporating prevention into the committee's work

Gockley reported for the Steering Committee on each committee incorporating prevention to address the ordinance amending the Task Force's purpose. The committee discussed how each committee could limit prevention work to those programs that reduce criminogenic factors, and focusing

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on prevention through the legal and justice system, such as the work of the behavioral health officers. The committee should schedule a prevention brainstorming process.

4. Update committee work plan

Committee discussed changes to the sequential intercept and work plan:

- The appropriate level for the law enforcement assisted diversion (LEAD) program
- Review of juvenile justice programs

5. 2020 Meeting Schedule

Committee members discussed whether they should meet monthly or every other month. The committee concurred to meet monthly, and schedule meetings for 90 minutes instead of two hours.

6. Other Business

The Committee discussed the County Council's Public Health, Safety, and Justice Initiative, which creates a jail needs assessment stakeholder advisory committee. One representative of the Legal and Justice Systems Committee is asked to be on the stakeholder advisory committee. The committee members concurred to hold the item to the next meeting and look into how the Public Defender's Office, Prosecutor's Office, and other committee members could participate.

Staff submitted a handout on a draft Task Force report to the County Council, as required by the County ordinance. No action is necessary.

7. Public Comment

Mariah Vincent stated she has experience in and is a resource for reentry issues.

Irene Morgan, Restorative Community Coalition, stated she is pleased with the committee. More work is necessary. She is available to help develop new prevention programs. Include the perspective of people who are in the system. Incarceration can cause mental health issues. Create a prevention committee.

Jones answered questions on how the jail provides prescription medication.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.