

Incarceration Prevention & Reduction Task Force / Law & Justice Council Meeting Summary February 1, 2021

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1. Call to Order

Task Force Co-Chairs Jack Hovenier and Stephen Gockley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on February 1, 2021. The meeting was a remote-only Zoom webinar.

Present: Barry Buchanan, Anne Deacon, Bill Elfo, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, Stephen Gockley, Daniel Hammill, Mike Hilley, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Scott Korthuis, Seth Fleetwood, Byron Manering, Moonwater, Darlene Peterson, Dave Reynolds, Eric Richey, Flo Simon, Donnell Tanksley, Bruce Van Glubt, Maia Vanyo

Absent: David Freeman, Deborah Hawley, Eric Petersen, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

2. [Behavioral Health Crisis Response Expansion \(01:50\)](#)

Deacon reported on development of behavioral health crisis response expansion:

- They are currently looking at what is happening successfully in other areas and what the local programs are currently and are working successfully, such as the Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) and the Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE)
- A question is whether they could expand GRACE to include a crisis response model
- Now, they are looking at models, gathering data from 9-1-1 on behavioral health calls and their outcomes, and looking at emergency medical services (EMS) response
- Participants include Law enforcement, EMS, GRACE providers, County Health Department, and city and county councils

The Task Force members discussed opportunities for the community to participate in planning, the timeline for incorporating community feedback, and plans for a stakeholder forum,

3. [Crisis Stabilization Center \(10:50\)](#)

Hovenier talked about the background and history of planning for a new facility.

Deacon showed a video of the new facility, from the Bellingham Herald website, and reported on the new facility:

- The goal was to build a welcoming, not institutional, building
- Inside, they wanted to make the individual rooms more welcoming, and are talking about having local artists paint soothing and welcoming murals in the individual residential rooms.
- Bellingham City Council Member Hollie Huthman is seeking artists and donations for the murals
- In the detox unit, Pioneer Human Services, the vendor, is operational, working with EMS for direct drop-offs, and finalizing protocols to screen for Covid. Direct referrals are always possible
- In the mental health unit, services will potentially available for involuntary hold for law enforcement for up to 12 hours to divert from arrest and incarceration. Four of the five managed care organizations (MCOs) and the North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization (ASO) are willing to pay for that level of care. They are finalizing the agreement with one other MCO, and then the vendor can provide that involuntary service.

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- To secure continued operational funding was a question. She is working with the State to identify the center as a pilot program for the State to fully implement this law enforcement diversion program, and asked for State money to support it operationally for the next two years

The Task Force members discussed:

- Which patients are being seen at the center now
- The detox unit opened in January.
- Compass Health had to work out their licensure for the new location, but they are still working out of the old facility;
- reports on who is using the center, by how many Whatcom county residents vs people from outside the county
- The number of beds in the old facility, and how it will be used
- Access to the Center regionally, and new centers in other counties
- The monthly program advisory committee for the new facility
- Working with city attorneys and Prosecuting Attorney's office about conditions in which someone can be diverted from prosecution
- The status of involuntary holds
- The ability to operate, even if one MCO has not yet agreed to fund
- Bipartisan support for the Center
- Reminding the community that involuntary status is only on a law enforcement hold
- The need for data, including how many are diverted from jail
- Making sure diversion from hospital happens, and the center is not just a place for self-referral

7. [Committee Reports \(42:06\)](#)

Erickson reported for the Information Needs and Data Exchange (INDEX) Committee, and referenced and reported from the summary.

The Task Force members discussed the ability to have a repository for the data across all platforms.

King reported for the Legal and Justice Systems Committee, and referenced and reported from the summary; incompetency with domestic violence; working toward making sure restoration facilities are open, and; the next meeting's agenda.

Feld discussed the Behavioral Health Committee discussion with the Bellingham School district.

Hammill reported for the Behavioral Health Committee, and referenced and reported from the summary.

Buchanan reported for the Steering Committee, referenced and reported from the summary, and discussed next steps and the March agenda items.

The committee spoke about the coordinating with the to-be-formed racial equity commission and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) toolkit.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Public Comment

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There was no public comment.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.