

Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Law and Justice Council

Meeting Summary for February 27, 2023

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1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Stephen Gockley called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar and in person at the Whatcom County Council Conference Room, 311 Grand Ave., Suite 105, Bellingham, Washington

Members Present: Arlene Feld, Barry Buchanan, Bill Elfo, Bruce Van Glubt, Dan Hammil, Darlene Peterson, Deborah Hawley, Donnell Tanksley, Eric Richey, Heather Flaherty, Jack Hovenier, Maia Vanyo, Mike Hilley, Perry Mowery, Raylene King, Rebecca Mertzig, Scott Korthuis, Stephen Gockley, Tyler Schroeder

Members Absent: Dave Reynolds, David Freeman, Eric Petersen, Greg Winter, Jason McGill, Jenn Lockwood

2. Justice Project [\(00:01:15\)](#)

Barry Buchanan spoke on the Needs Assessment report and the 3 amendments that passed. County Council voted 7-0 to pass the report. The next phase is the implementation plan. There are upcoming workshops in March and April to go over systems, services, facilities and funding, which will be presented to the County Council in June to place on the November ballot.

3. Legislative priorities for State Representatives [\(00:26:00\)](#)

Mike Parker gave an update on the behavioral health “wish list” presented to legislature. He was able to meet with both the City and County officials to get input on the priorities. Members ended up talking to all representatives in the 46th District. The legislative priorities should be competency restoration, reimbursement rates to the work force, prescription abilities in the jail, a behavioral health facility, and a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment facility.

4. Competency Restoration Workgroup [\(00:39:02\)](#)

Perry Mowery talked about composition of the workgroup and their focus on challenges going on in the state. The main goals and purpose of the group are as follows:

- Understanding challenges Whatcom County in experiencing in competency restoration
- Tracking current legislation
- Legislation communication
- Researching outpatient competency restoration / diversion programs

Thomas Kinlan with the Department of Social Health Services (DSHS) will present on Trueblood implementation at the next joint Behavioral Health / Legal and Justice meeting on March 14th.

5. Committee Updates [\(00:49:08\)](#)

Barry Buchanan spoke on behalf of the Steering Committee. The contract with Pyramid Communications is working on message development and community outreach, which include

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reaching out to community partners via email, updated webpages, local and statewide op-eds, Facebook and Instagram. The Steering Committee is working on the make up of the committee and becoming more diverse.

Arlene Feld spoke on behalf of the Legal and Justice Committee. They had a presentation on the Family Justice Court from Angela Anderson and Jake Wiebusch with District Court.

Caleb Erickson and Wendy Jones with the Whatcom County Jail spoke on the need for re-entry specialists, medication and a better process for court hearings. Many people are waiting for a long time in jail for their hearing to be set.

Mike Parker spoke on the Behavioral Health Committee. They have been reflecting on what they did in 2022 and what remains to be worked on in 2023. They are focusing on competency restoration, re-entry specialists, new trends in drugs and their effects.

6. Other Business [\(01:05:20\)](#)

There was no other business.

7. Public Comment

- Michelle Mason – FOTi / re-entry director
- Kehaulani Walker – FOTi /Founder
- Andi Douglass
- Josh (no last name provided)

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.