

**Skagit County Law and Justice Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 9th, 2011, 8:15 a.m.**

ATTENDANCE:

Ken Bergsma	Will Reichardt	Richard Weyrich
Dave Needy	Charlie Wend	Gregg Freeman
Ken Dahlstedt	Tim Holloran	Jennifer Kingsley
Alan Erickson	Chuck Benjamin	Delilah George
Linda Eiford	Peter Browning	Andrea Vallee
Michael Ellis	Rebecca Clark	Gary Shand
Laurie Jarolimek		

Today's meeting began at 8:15 a.m. with introductions and a welcome from **Ken Bergsma**, *Mount Vernon Police Chief and Law & Justice Council Chairman*.

January 12th, 2011 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion and second by the Council that the January 12, 2011 meeting minutes be approved with changes as noted. The motion carried.

Future Ideas for meetings and focus of Law & Justice Council: Chair Ken Bergsma asked if there were any comments from the members as to future direction and ideas for speakers. **Delilah George** suggested **Mike Almvig** come and talk to the Council regarding all projects the I.S. Dept is working on for various Law & Justice Departments. **Peter Browning** suggested information on what are minimum acceptable standards for health care in the jail. He is aware of concern from the public as to inmates getting better care than the average guy on the street, and would like to find out what the county's response to this would be. **Tim Holloran** mentioned that the jail video filming is wrapping up, and is anticipated to be previewed to the Council at the April meeting. He stressed that the new jail presentation will need the whole Council behind it as they take it to each city for support. **Charlie Wend** brought up that the video completion will ramp up the Jail Task Force in order to get the City Presentations under way. Several members of the Council attended a meeting in Whatcom County last week regarding public issues surrounding the proposed building of their new jail. An overflow crowd of Whatcom citizens backed the necessity for a new jail but were upset about the lack of communication and the site selection. We hope to avoid the same problems.

SPEAKER:

Domestic Violence Programs in Skagit County, Mount Vernon Police Officer Mike Lumpkin, spoke to the Council regarding New DV Offender program: DV impact panel, Grants and Collaboration between Law Enforcement, Skagit DV & SAS, Prosecutor and Probation. (see L&J website for detailed information.)

Discussion followed: **Tim Holloran** suggested asking the director of the *Eagles Wings Project*, Bruce Shellhammer, come and speak to our group. **Peter Browning** mentioned the importance of exposing High School teens just starting to date to this DV education program. **Charlie Wend** commented that the accountability element (jail/prison) was a huge deterrent to recidivism in DV behavior, stressing the much needed space offered by a new jail. **Alan Erickson** commented on the low number of DV offenders actually in treatment compared to the extremely high number of those committing DV offenses.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

JAIL & TASK FORCE UPDATE, Charlie Wend updated the Council on the jail video status. The final piece, an interview with a former inmate, was just filmed. He restated that the Task Force will be ramping up to start their presentations to the cities as soon as the jail video is ready. As the new Chief of Corrections, he said he is better prepared to step up and address the need for a new jail and public awareness. Several members will be talking to people from SCORE regarding their new jail in Des Moines that will house 822 inmates and is being built with a construction budget of \$54 million, and their suggestions after recently going through this process. **Tim Holloran** mentioned that we want to be sure we determine the court's needs correctly as Yakima had recently overbuilt their jail and now cannot fill it. **Wend** stressed the need to get the message out to the public regarding incarceration and the need for a jail to be safe for staff and inmates and not just a place to lock up more people without regard to safety. Skagit County already uses many jail alternatives and plans to continue this important practice in the new facility. Offenders need to be held accountable before release.

The question was raised about less expensive jail designs. Horizontal designs generally are less expensive to build, but building site restrictions and other factors must be taken into account, which would favor a multi-storied structure. **Peter Browning** asked how many offenders were currently taking up jail space for possession of pot. **Charlie Wend** said that there were currently no offenders in jail for possession as space is needed for the more serious offenders at this time. Judges are the final say in determining who is released when overcrowding conditions must be addressed.

DOC Update- Gregg Freeman, provided a new report on Washington State Recidivism Trends: Adult Offenders Released from Prison (1990-2006). He pointed out that this study finds that recidivism rates have declined for all four Risk Classification Levels with the largest reductions in higher risk offenders. Immediate action, such as incarceration for violations in supervision, has made the biggest impact on recidivism. This action interrupts and disrupts offender behavior patterns. Having the jail space in which to do this is essential.

OLD BUSINESS/ FOLLOW UP:

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/DRUG COURT follow up RSAT (Residential Substance Abuse Treatment) was provided by **Alan Erickson** in the form of the 2008 Study on Recidivism and Cost Benefit Analysis developed by Skagit County Human Services. This study will also be posted in the handout portion of today's meeting on the Law & Justice Council's website.

Next Meeting- is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9th, 2011.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

Approved 3/9/11