

Skagit County Law and Justice Council

Sheriff's Department Training Room
600 South Third Street, Mount Vernon

Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 8, 2009

Attendance

Rick Grimstead	Ken Bergsma	Scott McMullen
Gary Shand	Nancy Scott	Gregg Freeman
Ken Dahlstedt	Tim Holloran	Maile Keli'ipio-Acoba
Chuck Benjamin	Delilah George	Peter Browning
Andrea Vallee	Al Jongsma	Mike Ellis
Phil McLaughlin	Jackie Brunson	Vickie Maurer
Bob Hicks	David Asia	Roxane Goss

Handouts:

Human Services/Mental Health/Substance Abuse Budget Spreadsheet, Department of Corrections Budget Updates, Victim Offender Reconciliation Program-Edward Bryne memorial Grant

Today's meeting began at 8:20 a.m. with a welcome from Gary Shand, Skagit County Jail Administrator, Chair of the Law & Justice Council.

March 11, 2009 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion and second by the Council that the March 11, 2009 meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried.

Community Justice Center Update

Gary Shand spoke on behalf of Charlie Wend who was not available for today's meeting. There will be a Speakers Bureau training session on April 15 and April 16. All Law and Justice Council members are encouraged to attend this valuable training. Gary mentioned that because of the potential high cost of this project, development may occur in phases. The Action Plan Timeline indicates the project goal is to present this on the November 2009 election ballot. Skagit County Administration is currently working on cost and revenue numbers.

Legislative Updates

Human Services

Chuck Benjamin reported the State budget reductions for mental health. The outlook doesn't look good. \$1.9 million will be cut in Medicaid funding and \$1.4 million in other State funding for a total of \$3.3 million in budget reductions. These reductions are in addition to the

\$541,000 already cut earlier in 2009. A group of stakeholders will meet on April 14th to prioritize programs.

David Asia reported the State budget reductions for substance abuse. North Cascades Secure Detox is currently operational, but is not listed in the budget and will likely be cut in the future. David commented that in the past, users could get outpatient treatment within six days in Skagit County; with the proposed cuts effective July 1, he anticipates a waiting list, which means that treatment on-demand is taking a step backwards. The Drug Court will also have funding reductions, with support continuing through local funds. ADATSA living stipends are eliminating clients. A greatly reduced, more narrowly focused number of rent only stipends will be available through June 30, with no guarantee beyond that. The Skagit County Crisis Center in Burlington, the sub acute, voluntary detox and mental health stabilization program, will remain funded. These anticipated budget reductions will take effect July 1, 2009.

Bob Hicks discussed that community Juvenile Justice programming had no significant cuts in the Senate state budget, but the House budget contained over \$2 million in cuts to community programming. Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facilities for longer term detention took big hits in both budgets. The budget will now go to committee to determine the final state legislative budget. Readiness To Learn (RTL) was included in both Senate and House budgets. However, the Senate did not include RTL funding in a proviso, so it is uncertain whether such funding may be vulnerable from the Senate side. Funding will not be certain until the final state legislative budget followed the Governor's final budget. However, RTL's inclusion in both budgets is very promising. Representative Dave Quall was instrumental in getting the Readiness to Learn Program in the House budget. Bob also thanked the Law and Justice Council for their support.

Dispute Resolution Center

Resolution Washington, the statewide association of Dispute Resolution Centers (DRC), was awarded \$1.6 million of state general fund dollars for the 2007-2009 biennium to increase DRC capacity. Resolution Washington is working to have this funding continued in the 2009-2011 biennium. Currently \$1 million for DRC capacity improvement has been included in both the House and Senate budgets. The funding was not included in the governor's budget so Resolution Washington will continue lobbying efforts to the Governor's office to support this funding. If awarded, Skagit County Mediation & Facilitation Services will receive about \$50,000.

State Department of Corrections

Gregg Freeman reported that the State is getting ready to make deep budget reductions. The House proposes to cut \$117 million and the Senate \$114 million over the next biennium. There will be a significant reduction in the community supervision program by up to 11,000 clients. That is a reduction of about one-third of the current case load. Under the proposed legislation, the DOC will supervise only those offenders classified as High Violent and High Non-Violent. Sex offenders will continue to be supervised regardless of their classification level. The biggest impact to the counties, should SSB 5288 pass, is that the department would no longer supervise gross misdemeanor cases coming from Superior Court. These cases are predominantly DUI's pled down from felony traffic offenses, and domestic violence convictions.

Gregg also discussed that the budget reduction proposals include closing McNeil Island Corrections Center. Inmates will be transferred to the Coyote Ridge or the

Washington State Penitentiary. There is also legislation under review that would shorten inmate sentences, reduce the sentencing range for some crimes, and remove a significant portion of transition programs currently offered to inmates.

Program Updates

Bob Hicks discussed the Edward Bryne Memorial Grant and how it will be used for the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP). Below is a summary of the VORP program discussed by Andrea Vallee:

- VORP is a restorative justice approach that brings offenders face-to-face with the victims of their crimes with the assistance of a trained mediator.
- Offenders take meaningful responsibility for their actions by mediating a resolution agreement with the victim, to restore the victims' losses, in whatever way that may be possible.
- Community partners include: Mediation & Facilitation Services, Mount Vernon Police Department Community Officer; Skagit County Juvenile Probation Officers, Diversion Panels, and Juvenile Court.
- \$56,385 is available through the grant effective October 1, 2009.
- Victim/Offender Mediation Training (VOM) will occur October 2009 to provide community volunteers with VOM skills
- Mediation & Facilitation Services will hire a grant funded Program Assistant to support the new program
- Mediation & Facilitation Services will convene a Restorative Justice Conference in October 2009, with guest speaker Azim Khamisa.

There was a motion and second to support the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program. There was further discussion by Commissioner Ken Dahlstedt clarifying the sustainability of this program. Andrea explained that she hopes this program could be sustainable and supported by Skagit County in the future. The Coordinator for the VORP would be trained and in place to sustain the program. After no further discussion the Council unanimously voted to approve the motion.

Other Business

Law and Justice Council Vacancy for Commissioner District 3

Gary Shand asked for names to fill the Law and Justice Council Citizen vacancy representing County Commissioner District 3. Tim Holloran mentioned that Commissioner Dillon has some potential candidates and will report back at a later date.

Other County Law and Justice Councils

Linda Christensen requested meeting information from Law and Justice Councils throughout the state. Linda made inquiries to Benton, San Juan, Clark, Whatcom and Kittitas Counties. Meeting notes have been received from Whatcom and Kittitas County.

Whatcom County currently meets quarterly. Their notes include: budget concerns; working on their Law & Justice Council Plan; discussions about jail population, work release issues, new jail, fast track program, and mental health money issues.

Kittitas County meets monthly. Their notes include: budget concerns; remodeling, repair, and expanding the existing jail; intern interest from Central Washington University; standing

committee reports from Justice, Budget, Mental Health, Technical, and Public Relations; and agency updates.

The next Law and Justice Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:20 a.m.

Minutes Approved on may 13, 2009 by the Law & Justice Council Members.