

Skagit County Law and Justice Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2011, 8:15 a.m.

ATTENDANCE:

Will Reichardt	Ken Bergsma	Richard Weyrich
Nancy Scott	Letty Alvarez	Gregg Freeman
Tim Holloran	Jennifer Kingsley	Alan Erickson
Linda Eiford	Andrea Vallee	Phil McLaughlin
Delilah George	Gary Shand	Lynsi Burton-SV Herald
Mike Mahoney	Bonnie Bowers-APD	Laurie Jarolimek
Dale Ragan-MV Council	Jill Boudreau-MV Candidate	

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*.

April 13th, 2011 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion and second by the Council that the April 13th, 2011 meeting minutes be approved as written. The motion carried.

SPEAKERS:

Gang Issues and Law & Justice Response- A 5 member panel discussed their role in dealing with gang issues in Skagit County. Panelists included **Officer Chris Zimmer** of the *MV Police Dept Gang Unit*; **Dave Anderson** of the *Mount Vernon School District*; Prosecutor **Rich Weyrich**; and **Mary June Curtis** and **Liz Silva** of *Youth & Family Services*, with input from Under Sheriff **Gary Shand**.

Several groups, including MV Police Dept, MV Schools and Youth & Family Services, have been working together for some time to reduce gang activity in the city. Anderson stated that the biggest deterrent in the high school has been the presence of a community service officer assigned to them. The addition of security cameras and a NO Tolerance for Gangs policy have also contributed to the reduction in gang activity they have seen over the past few years. Helping teenagers connect with their community has been a major focus with the graffiti abatement program as well as pairing with Work Source to teach life skills and offering a Gang Exit Strategy for those wanting to change.

Gary Shand brought up the problem of gang members in the jail. With current jail overcrowding conditions, the large number of gang members in jail has created a very real safety issue for corrections officers, fellow inmates and the community at large. Sheriff Reichardt added that a large portion of the Federal Task Force Grant has been earmarked to concentrate on gang activity. Gang members with drug activity will be dealt with on a higher priority.

It was brought up that parents of gang members are concerned but afraid to contact law enforcement, and that a bigger outreach to Latino communities would help. Officer

Zimmer said that they currently have 4 bilingual officers and they are targeting certain at risk areas in the city for community outreach at this time.

FOLLOW UP ISSUES:

Linda Eiford of *District Court Probations* introduced **Mike Mahoney** who will be replacing her when she retires later this month. Her retirement party will be held May 20th from 3:30-5:00 in Hearing Room A. Mike was also nominated and elected to fill the Law & Justice Council's position on the .1% committee. Linda also announced that the Domestic Violence Education Program was awarded "Program of the Year" by the Misdemeanant Corrections Association.

Jail Video Update: Charlie Wend is meeting with the video team to modify existing footage in a couple key areas. Members commented that the violence factor, with regard to inmates, corrections deputies and the public needs to be stressed more. **Tim Holloran** said they hope to have the changes made before the next meeting. **Delilah George** suggested that pertinent jail statistics be placed on the Skagit County webpage to raise awareness of the overcrowding situation.

Several Jail Facilities Task Force members toured the SCORE jail facility in So King County and advised the Council of many innovative ideas they came away with. This 800 bed facility was built faster, with a much lower budget and with the funding and cooperation of multiple agencies, all of which are also important to our situation.

A letter of endorsement from the Council was sent in support of the Eagles' Wings Domestic Violence victim housing project in Burlington.

NEXT MEETING- is scheduled for Wednesday, June 8th, 2011.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:27.

Approved 6/8/11