

**Skagit County Law and Justice Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 8th, 2010, 8:15 a.m.**

ATTENDANCE:

Ken Bergsma	Scott McMullen	Gary Shand
Gregg Freeman	Ken Dahlstedt	Tim Holloran
Jennifer Kingsley	Alan Erickson	Margaret Rojas
Delilah George	Pam Springer	Linda Eiford
Phil McLaughlin	Laurie Jarolimek	Lin Tucker

Today's meeting began at 8:20 a.m. with introductions and a welcome from **Gary Shand**, *Chief Corrections Deputy and Law & Justice Council Chairman*.

November 10th, 2010 Meeting Minutes

There was a motion and second by the Council that the November 10th, 2010 meeting minutes be approved. The motion carried.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

.1% Committee: Linda Eiford gave an update as a Law and Justice member on this committee. With reduction in funds, she asked the council members to provide input on which programs they would rank highest in importance. (See *HANDOUTS* for a breakdown of the groups of services, as well as the individual programs within each group.) Existing services will need to be cut as additional outside grant funding has also stopped in many cases. Several members requested a breakdown of how many people are served by each program as well as the cost per participant and overall success of each program. Jennifer Kingsley from Community Services will look into this information as it was not available at this time.

It was brought up that the original purpose of the .1% fund was to improve and enhance mental health and chemical dependency treatment thereby helping to break the jail recidivism cycle. Providing housing support was originally a high priority, now due to the high cost involved this has had to take a lower priority. The taxpayers have made it known that no tax hikes will be approved so the only other alternative is to cut programs. Input is needed as to what programs these will be.

Also mentioned was the fact that when programs are cut the resulting increase in mental health and drug abuse falls back on the County's already over burdened jail and other county related departments. Some of the burden has been taken over by "treatment on demand" provided at some health care facilities.

It was summed up by one member that the programs that remain should be the ones that keep the community the safest.

Please contact any of the Law & Justice members who are on the .1% committee if you have questions or input. The members include Linda Eiford, Dave Needy, and Keith Tyne.

Dept of Corrections: Gregg Freeman updated the council on a couple of bills being debated at the moment that would have major affects on the community. One proposal would do away with “tolling”, meaning the supervision clock would keep counting when offenders are back in custody on violations, thereby reducing their supervision when released. Another proposal would seriously cut DOC supervision for offenders released from jail. Statewide (but not in Skagit County) offender numbers have dropped prompting further cuts in pay and positions for DOC, resulting in decreased supervision for offenders.

On a positive note, Freeman related that the Community Integration Grant has found alternative funding and will continue through 2011. There are currently 14 participants who are all doing very well at Skagit Valley College. This program has been a big success to date.

County Administrator’s Office: Tim Holloran briefed us on the current financial situation and recent County changes. He says the budget situation is grim at this time. Revenues continue to fall. Public Defender’s office has eliminated their investigators, and will now contract out for that service. Youth & Family Services is undergoing major reorganization from the top down. There is a proposal for 12 furlough days again next year. Most departments have indicated that they will be going along with the furloughs for the good of the whole.

The jail Video is moving towards completion. Most of the interviews have been completed and Holloran reported that they have some very good footage. They are planning on including footage of Letty Alvarez to capture her perspective of the current situation at the jail. The video focuses on the problems the county faces without a larger jail. He expects to be able to show the council the video in the near future.

Commissioner Dahlstedt again stated that the only alternative to cuts would be to raise taxes, which is not an option at this time. He thanked all the departments for helping to work together during this difficult period. He did indicate that the Commissioners are continuing to look to bring in more businesses to the county to strengthen the economy.

Sheriff’s Office: Gary Shand announced the new administration for the Sheriff’s office and their continued support of the Criminal Justice Center. The incoming administration consists of:

Will Reichardt, Sheriff; **Gary Shand**, Undersheriff; **Tom Molitor**, Chief Criminal Deputy; **Don McDermott**, Chief of Field Services; **Charlie Wend**, Chief Corrections Deputy; **Jackie Brunson**, Chief of Administrative Services.

Law & Justice Executive Board Nominations:

Chairman: Open

Vice Chairman: Gregg Freeman has agreed to run again if needed

Member Representative: Linda Eiford has agreed to run again if needed

Nomination for Chairman is forthcoming. Voting will take place at the January 12th meeting.

Jail Substance Abuse Treatment: Several members expressed praise for the new program run by Skagit Recovery and Corrections Deputy, Julie Zorn. They currently have 8 inmates enrolled and expect that to go up to 12 shortly. Gary Shand gave praise to Dep Zorn for her hard work in organizing of the program as well as screening and supervision of inmates involved.

It was suggested that when there is time the media may want to be informed of this important new program.

Next Meeting- is scheduled for Wednesday, January 12th, 2011.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:15.

Approved 1/12/11