

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for August 15, 2022

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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.

Members Present: Barry Buchanan, David Crass (for Rebecca Mertzig), Caleb Erickson (for Bill Elfo), Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, David Freeman, Deborah Hawley, Jack Hovenier, Stephen Gockley, Dan Hammill, Raylene King, Scott Korthuis, Jenn Lockwood, Jason McGill, Perry Mowery, Darlene Peterson, Dave Reynolds, Donnell Tanksley, Bruce Van Glubt,

Members Absent: Seth Fleetwood, Mike Hilley, Eric Petersen, Eric Richey, Tyler Schroeder, Maia Vanyo, Greg Winter

## 2. [Justice Project Needs Assessment \(00:01:55\)](#)

Buchanan reported on the fourth meeting of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). He stated that Erickson had presented on a wish list for the new jail facilities and that the next meeting would focus on facility needs. He added that they have met with the communications consultant and cleared up misunderstandings on the scope of work. Gockley said that the consultant would be working to revise their work plan and the Phase II contract for communications is being drafted. Buchanan explained the survey that David Goldman is conducting among the staff and inmates at the jail.

## 3. [Competency Restoration Workgroup \(00:06:25\)](#)

Buchanan told the group that the Justice Project has seen some of the same issues that the Task Force has as far as the length of time the competency restoration process takes. He has established a workgroup to discuss the issues and how they might be addressed. Eastern State hospital is at risk of losing their license which would further exacerbate the problem. He hopes that the State Legislature may be able to partner with the group to address funding needs and alleviating the issues. Committee members discussed, including:

- The issues lie not just with funding but with finding providers.
- The importance of advocating for funding resources and staff quickly, as the legislative session is coming up soon.
- The role that the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization could play.
- The possibility of competency restoration being handled by entities other than the State Hospitals and the credentials required to provide the services.
- If the old St. Joe's hospital could be used for restoration and treatment services. Many agreed that it was likely not a plausible solution.
- The makeup of the workgroup and whether others should be added.

## 4. [Securing alternative bed space in Snohomish County \(00:25:50\)](#)

Erickson gave an update and answered questions on the interlocal agreement Whatcom County recently approved for use of alternative jail beds in Snohomish County:

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- The agreement allows for use of up to 45 beds in the Snohomish County jail.
- The earliest that inmates could be transferred to Snohomish would be the 18<sup>th</sup> of August.
- There have been COVID outbreaks at both facilities recently.
- The Sheriff's office will be responsible for selection, transfers, and transportation. The Sheriff's office is currently significantly understaffed, but are ready to facilitate transfers.
- The contract is \$1.2 million for the remainder of this year and will be over \$3 million for each of 2023 and 2024. These costs are coming out of County funds.
- The goal is to focus on transferring those who are already fully sentenced, however that is a small percentage of the jail population. Secondly, they will focus on those who have long term pre-trial outlooks.
- They will transfer inmates gradually in groups of five or eight.
- How the costs will be passed on to the small cities and whether or not we will pay the full costs if we do not utilize all the bed space available.
- The pre-trial inmates will be transferred back to Whatcom County for court appearances.
- The potential difficulties in coordinating public defender access and court dates.
- Previous contracts with other counties, challenges that arose that caused those to be terminated, and how those challenges will be avoided with this contract.
- Bellingham is currently transporting inmates to South Correctional Entity (SCORE) in Des Moines, the majority of whom are mentally ill, which is causing issues for SCORE. Erickson stated that they would not be sending inmates with severe management issues to Snohomish.
- The importance of video conferencing being set up for inmates to be able to communicate with counsel.

5. [IPRTF approval of the Justice Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee \(SAC\) Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team \(BHGAT\) Updated Sequential Intercept Model \(SIM\) \(00:50:35\)](#)

Hovenier read the draft of the motion for the Task Force to to adopt the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) created by the Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team (BHGAT) with the understanding that it is a living document that will be updated. Mowery explained the history of the BHGAT SIM and its addendums. Members discussed the motion, the SIM, and potential changes, including:

- Changing the title to reflect that it is being used for IPRTF purposes.
- The needs and gaps analysis piece of the SIM and the best way to determine estimates for establishing the needed services. It was decided that those should be considered by the Steering Committee.
- The Task Force has an opportunity to advocate to other entities in order to fill the gaps.

*Hammill moved to adopt the Whatcom County Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) along with the related supporting documents created by the Whatcom County Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team to replace the current IPRTF sequential intercept service inventory, with the understanding that the SIM and*

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*supporting documents shall be updated by the IPRTF. King seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Tanksley absent.*

### **6. [Committee Updates \(01:06:40\)](#)**

Buchanan reported for the Steering Committee. He said that they had discussed the implementation strategy for the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE). There was recently a meeting with the Executive, members of the Task Force, and Council Office staff. The Executive has since sent a letter to GARE leadership to request that IPRTF members and other boards and commissions to be able to access the complete suite of GARE resources. Gockley added that they were not optimistic that GARE would make an exception for access, however Kayla Schott-Bresler had offered to work with the Task Force to access GARE resources via her account. It was also acknowledged that GARE is not the only resource available for advancement of racial equity goals.

Buchanan also reported on a Special Steering Committee during which Pyramid Communications presented to the Steering Committee on their work plan. They will be working on refining their messaging and they will be attending the next meeting of the full Task Force. Hammill brought up that things have changed as far as the jail population and needs over the years. Most of those currently incarcerated in the jail are those with more serious offenses and this has caused the landscape to change. Given this, Hammill felt that Pyramid was using some outdated statistics in their messaging.

Mowery reported on the Crisis Stabilization Facility Committee. The Committee discussed bed utilization at the Center and the effects of implementation of a streamlined intake process. Compass Health has also obtained certification for 12-hour law enforcement holds and is currently working on establishing staff necessary to provide that service.

Erickson reported on the INDEX Committee. He summarized their discussion of potentially hiring a data analyst at the County level who could make information available across all departments involved in the criminal justice system. Additionally, Gockley presented to the Committee on his data dissemination project and they viewed a portion of the presentation that the Whatcom Resource Information Collaborative gave to the Behavioral Health Committee

### **7. Other Business**

Feld had sent out an e-mail regarding the Washington Courts Board for Judicial Administration's creation of an Alternatives to Incarceration Task Force. Hovenier encouraged members to apply if they were able.

### **8. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:32 A.M.