

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force  
Steering Committee***

**DRAFT Meeting Summary for March 23, 2017**

---

**1. Call To Order**

Committee Chair Ken Mann called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. in the County Council Conference Room, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham.

Members Present: Jill Bernstein, Jack Hovenier, Ken Mann, Anne Deacon, Chris Phillips, Stephen Gockley

Members Absent: Tyler Schroeder

Review January 19, 2017 Meeting Summary

There were no changes.

**2. VERA Update**

Forrest Longman, County Council Legislative Analyst, updated the Committee on the work of the VERA consultants:

- The initial Phase 3 report is due in July, and the final Phase 3 report is due on December.
- The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between VERA consultants and the Sheriff's Office for jail data sharing is signed and has been sent to the VERA consultants for their signature.
- The consultants should receive data the week after next.
- The consultants are almost done with the mapping exercise.
- The purpose of the data is to show opportunities and challenges.
- The consultants have had some difficulty getting data from certain other jurisdictions.
- Once, the MOU is signed, it won't take much effort or time to deliver the raw data to the consultants.
- Once the raw data is received, it will take some time to analyze the data.
- The delays and bureaucracy have been frustrating.
- VERA consultants have planned a site visit April 11-13, 2017, during which they will present the latest draft of the system map.
- The consultants will define and quantify the data.
- During the April site visit, the consultants will meet with: Lummi, Bellingham municipal court administration, the small cities, and various community groups.
- The consultants will also meet with the County judges and commissioners about developing a pretrial supervision unit.

VERA consultants have asked if it's worth the time and effort to map the competency/insanity process.

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force***  
***Steering Committee***  
**DRAFT Meeting Summary for March 23, 2017**

---

The Committee discussed whether it would be beneficial to map and facilitate how the mental health process at the hospital works:

- There are places within the competency/insanity question for actual improvements, such as the involuntary commitment evaluations at the emergency room, mental health court, and delays at Western State Hospital.
- A lot is happening regarding this at the State level.
- The County is eligible to bring someone in locally to do forensic evaluations and get reimbursements from the State.
- It isn't necessary to map the State Hospital process.
- There could be mapping of how the hospital deals with mental health cases.
- There is a difference between civil commitment and the process for determining one's ability to aid in their own defense.
- There are things regarding mental health that hold very sick people in the jail for felony assault charges committed in the emergency room.
- VERA consultants should not address competency issues.
- Regarding Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA) consumers, VERA consultants should facilitate discussion and problem solving as an objective third party, but it's not necessary for the consultants to explain a process that members of the Task Force.
- There's a difference between knowing the system and developing a systemic remedy.
- Deacon and Phillips could meet to define a problem statement so they can engage the appropriate parties to delineate pathways to solutions.
- The first step is to quantify the data, which has not happened.
- Quantify the number of people with a severe mental illness who are brought to the hospital for an involuntary treatment evaluation, act out against emergency department personnel in a way that results in felony assault charges, and then are sent to the jail and into the criminal justice system.
- Deacon and Phillips will review the situation to find a problem and make a recommendation for a path forward to the Task Force through its Behavioral Health Subcommittee.
- VERA consultants can meet with hospital staff to gather information to:
  - Provide information on how other jurisdictions deal with the problem
  - Provide best practices.
- The consultants need this information, regardless of whether it helps members of the Task Force, so they can understand the entire criminal justice system and its various inputs.
- Define the problem more broadly than just the number of people who were ITA'd, because there is a bigger consumption of resources when they refuse medication in jail.

The Committee discussed the role of the Steering Committee:

- To keep track of the big picture.
- Reach consensus on the focus and direction of the topics addressed.

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force  
Steering Committee***  
**DRAFT Meeting Summary for March 23, 2017**

---

The Committee decided to schedule a special Task Force meeting during the April VERA consultant visit on April 13 at 9:00 a.m. and cancel the regular April meeting. The presentation from the Lt. Caleb Erickson of the Sheriff's Office on jail alternatives will be scheduled at the April 13 special Task Force meeting.

**3. Phase 3 Report**

Longman reported that the initial Phase 3 report is due in July, and the final Phase 3 report is due on December.

The Committee discussed the timeline for developing the initial Phase 3 due in July.

- Committee chairs will need to provide Mr. Longman with their drafts at the end of April.
- A draft of the initial Phase 3 report will be presented to the Task Force for review in May.
- A final of the initial Phase 3 report will be presented to the Task Force for approval in June.
- The report is due to the Council for its meeting on July 11.
- The Executive must accomplish the public outreach to the community before May.

The Committee also discussed the scope of the initial Phase 3 report, which focuses on the specifics of a triage facility:

- They need updated cost estimates.
- Information from the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (NSBHO) capital request may be sufficient for the July report.
- Deacon can write the content regarding crisis intervention.
- Deacon and Phillips can write the content about the triage facility.
- Gockley can write the content about prevention and reduction programs.

**4. Public outreach regarding Task Force accomplishments**

The Committee discussed plans for public outreach to the Division Street neighborhood regarding the triage facility plans:

- The County will receive information from the State budget on capital funding next week.
- She is working with the architect and two triage facility service providers to meet within the next two weeks.
- Public outreach will likely occur the end of April.
- Whether they need exact architectural plans and budgets to meet with the public.
- Whether the County will bond for the remaining capital funding if there is no money from the State.

The Committee discussed a communication strategy to inform people of Task Force accomplishments:

***Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force  
Steering Committee***

**DRAFT Meeting Summary for March 23, 2017**

---

- Bernstein recently spoke to the City Club.
- Bernstein and Hovenier can provide information in an Op-Ed.
- Create an ongoing message and community strategy.
- A question is whether the Task Force Chairs can speak on behalf of the Task Force, given specific language in the ordinance that prevents members from speaking on behalf of the Task Force without the its blessing.

**5. Other Business**

Deacon reported on the Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) project of the City of Bellingham, Whatcom County, and St. Joseph Hospital and the two stakeholder sessions being scheduled. The second session will be targeted to system administrators. The partners will share equal ownership in the system they create. She asked for feedback from the Committee.

The Committee discussed inviting the behavioral health specialist in the Public Defender's Office and Lynden Deputy Police Chief John Billester, who is the small cities representative on the Task Force; whether the list of invitees is too big; and the Blaine City Clerk may represent the small cities.

Bernstein reported on the tour of the Lummi Tribe's medication assisted treatment facility and stated similar tours would be very helpful. They are treating 250 people each day, and have capacity for 500 per day.

The Committee discussed maintaining a consistent subcommittee meeting whenever possible to keep people on task and maintain momentum without having meetings that are unnecessary and don't produce useful information.

**6. Next Steps: Ideas & Further Information**

This item was not discussed.

**7. Public Comment**

Tim Johnson asked if the VERA consultants will identify roadblocks and what prevents incarceration prevention and reduction programs from moving forward. Mann stated he hopes they will.

**8. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Meeting Summary for March 27, 2017

---

## 1. Call to Order

Task Force Chair Jill Bernstein called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m in the County Courthouse Fifth Floor Conference Rooms 513/514, 311 Grand Avenue, Bellingham.

Present: Angela Anderson, Jill Bernstein, Anne Deacon, Bill Elfo, Stephen Gockley, Susan Gribbin, Daniel Hammill, Jack Hovenier, Mike Knapp, Betsy Kruse, Kelli Linville, Dave McEachran, Moonwater, Chris Phillips, Randy Polidan, Tyler Schroeder, Greg Winter

Absent: Jeff Brubaker, Fred Heydrich, Nick Lewis, Byron Manering, Ken Mann, Irene Morgan, Darlene Peterson,

Also Present: Deborah Garrett (proxy for Fred Heydrich), Joy Gilfilen (proxy for Irene Morgan)

### Review of Upcoming Meetings and Events

Hovenier reviewed the list of upcoming meetings and events as shown in the meeting packet.

### Review February 27, 2017 Meeting Summary

Gilfilen asked to include a comment from Darlene Peterson about the number of Bellingham inmates sent to the Yakima jail facility.

The Task Force made no other changes.

## 2. Committee Updates

### Steering Committee

Bernstein reported for the Steering Committee and referred to the Committee summary in the Task Force packet. She stated the Steering Committee had a discussion about Task Force members being allowed to speak to the public, given a restriction in the ordinance of members speaking on behalf of the Task Force. The Chairs should be able to speak about the Task Force to the public when asked.

The Task Force members discussed the parameters for discussing the Task Force with the public:

- They may educate people about the Task Force, but may not speak about decisions or positions the Task Force has not officially made.
- Several members indicated they have spoken to the public, citizen groups, or written op-ed articles in the newspaper about activities of the Task Force.
- **The Task Force could hold a public information session to educate the public.**

Hovenier also reported for the Steering Committee on a discussion to confirm that the Steering Committee does not make decisions on behalf of the Task Force.

## Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force Meeting Summary for March 27, 2017

---

### Behavioral Health Committee

Deacon referenced an article in the March 27, 2017 edition of the Bellingham Herald about the success of the mental health court. She described the history and success of mental health court.

Deacon reported for the Behavioral Health Committee on its recent meeting at the Lummi Nation and tour of their medication assisted treatment services:

- The Lummi serve 250 members of the Lummi and other tribes per day.
- The capacity of the Lummi program is 500 people per day.
- At this time, they only serve registered members of a tribe.
- The Tribe's program uses suboxone and vivitrol, not methadone.

Deacon reported for the committee on the treatment efforts in the rest of the community:

- A small medication assisted treatment clinic will be locating in Bellingham soon.
- The certification difference between a treatment facility and treatment clinic, including the type of medication prescribed.

Deacon updated the Task Force on the Ground-level Response and Coordinated Engagement (GRACE) project:

- Two work sessions are planned in April.
- The first work session will present a framework and gather feedback.
- The second work session is for system administrators to bring back a proposal that was developed in the first work session and get their commitment on a final product.
- They must be clear about the target population, which includes people who are disruptive to the community, but it doesn't include people who are violent.

The Task Force members discussed:

- An upcoming domestic violence prevention training course.
- Whether the Lummi program could be modeled in the later community in Whatcom County.
- The Lummi Program requires clients to participate in their treatment program.
- The need in the community is much greater than the service capacity of two new treatment programs.
- There is data on need that is based on first-time admissions for treatment for opioid use from the Medicaid database.
- The needs assessment from the North Sound Behavioral Health Organization (BHO) is related to the triage facility and addresses questions about the need.
- The North Sound BHO will work with communities on services in addition to facilities.
- **Possibly creating a frequently asked questions (FAQ) webpage for the Task Force.**

### Legal & Justice Systems Committee

Gockley reported for the Legal and Justice Systems Committee:

- The April 11 meeting will begin an hour late, at 12:30 p.m.

Name: **Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force**

Membership: 24 Members. Thirteen permanent members and 11 appointed members

Purpose: The Task Force reviews Whatcom County's criminal justice and behavioral health programs and makes specific recommendations to safely and effectively reduce incarceration of individual struggling with mental illness and chemical dependency, and minimize jail utilization by pretrial defendants who can safely be released.

Enabling Statute(s): WCC 2.46: Ordinance 2015-025, 2015-037, 2017-004

Term Information: Appointed Members: 4 year terms, no term limits. (Initial Appointments: 5 positions are for 2-year terms and 6 positions are for 4-year terms)

Meeting Information: Monthly, the fourth Monday of the month, 9-11 a.m. (Committee must meet at least quarterly.)

Staff Contact: Jill Nixon 778-5010

PERMANENT MEMBERS		
#	Position	Name
1	Whatcom County Councilmember	Ken Mann <a href="mailto:kmann@co.whatcom.wa.us">kmann@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
2	Whatcom County Executive (or designated representative)	Tyler Schroeder <a href="mailto:tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us">tschroed@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
3	Whatcom County Sheriff (or designated representative)	Bill Elfo <a href="mailto:belfo@co.whatcom.wa.us">belfo@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
4	Whatcom County Prosecuting Attorney (or designated representative)	Dave McEachran <a href="mailto:dmceachr@co.whatcom.wa.us">dmceachr@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
		Proxy/Alternate: Kathy Walker
5	Whatcom County Public Defender (or designated representative)	Angela Anderson <a href="mailto:aanderso@co.whatcom.wa.us">aanderso@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
6	Whatcom County Superior Court or District Court Representative	Commissioner Alfred Heydrich <a href="mailto:aheydric@co.whatcom.wa.us">aheydric@co.whatcom.wa.us</a> (Alternate: Judge Deborra Garrett <a href="mailto:dgarrett@co.whatcom.wa.us">dgarrett@co.whatcom.wa.us</a> )
7	Bellingham Mayor or Representative	Kelli Linville: <a href="mailto:mayorsoffice@cob.org">mayorsoffice@cob.org</a>
8	Bellingham City Attorney, Municipal Court, or Police	Darlene Peterson <a href="mailto:dlpeterson@cob.org">dlpeterson@cob.org</a>
9	Bellingham City Council Member	Daniel Hammill <a href="mailto:dchammill@cob.org">dchammill@cob.org</a>
10	Small Cities Caucus Representative	John Billester, Lynden Interim Police Chief <a href="mailto:billesterj@lyndenwa.org">billesterj@lyndenwa.org</a>
11	Tribal Representative	Nick Lewis
12	Health Dept., Human Services Division Representative	Anne Deacon <a href="mailto:adeacon@co.whatcom.wa.us">adeacon@co.whatcom.wa.us</a>
13	North Sound Behavioral Health Organization Executive Director (or designated representative)	Betsy Kruse, Deputy Director <a href="mailto:betsy_kruse@nsmha.org">betsy_kruse@nsmha.org</a>

**APPOINTED MEMBERS**

	<b>Position</b>	<b>Name/Address</b>	<b>Term Information</b>
1	Whatcom Alliance for Health Advancement (WAHA)	Stephen Gockley WAHA Board Member	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020
2	Peace Health St. Joseph	Chris Phillips	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020
3	Community Health Center - Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC):	Randy Polidan Unity Care NW	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020
4	Emergency Medical Services (EMS)	<b>Jeff Brubaker</b> Community Paramedic	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2018
5	Community Action Agency or Provider 1	Greg Winter Opportunity Council	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020 <i>(Officially replaced Dave Finet when Finet resigned.)</i>
6	Community Action Agency or Provider 2	<b>Byron Manering</b> Brigid Collins	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2018
7	Community Action Agency or Provider 3	<b>Moonwater</b> Dispute Resolution Center	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2018
8	Consumer 1	Jack Hovenier	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020
9	Consumer 2	<b>Susan Gribbin</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2018
10	Citizen 1	Jill Bernstein	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2020
11	Citizen 2	<b>Irene Morgan</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> term ends 1/31/2018

Updated: 1/12/2016