

Skagit County Law & Justice Council

Charlie Wend
Jail Commander
Chairman

Lisa Tremblay
Juvenile Court Dir.
Vice-Chair

Rob Sullivan
Director PHS
Member-at-Large

Cathy Sisk
Jail/Court Coordinator
Secretary

WEDNESDAY, April 8, 2015
8:15 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.

Attendance:

WILL REICHARDT
DON MCDERMOTT
RON WESEN
LADESSA CROUCHER
DALE RAGAN
MICHAEL ELLIS

CHARLIE WEND
ROB SULLIVAN
CATHY SISK
ROXANE GOSS
MAVIS BETZ
JERRY DODD

TIM HOLLORAN
DAVE NEEDY
JENNIFER JOHNSON
SEAN CONNOR
KEITH TYNE

LISA TREMBLAY
DELILAH GEORGE
KEN DAHLSTEDT
MARGARET ROJAS
LETTY ALVAREZ

I. Welcome – Charlie Wend, Chair

Chairman Charlie Wend called the meeting to order at approximately 8:15 a.m. and welcomed the Council and guests.

II. Introductions

All present introduced themselves with the names listed above.

III. Review and approval of March 11, 2015 minutes

The minutes from the March 11, 2015 Law & Justice Council meeting were reviewed. The minutes were approved.

IV. Jail Update – Charlie Wend

Chief Wend shared a jail status update. Environmental mitigation continues on the jail site and is on schedule to be completed in mid-June. We are still looking at an August to September groundbreaking. The design is 60% complete, including minutiae that is very important to the design e.g., power outlets, etc. The transition teams are coming together and roles are being assigned to move the project forward.

Delilah George asked how the acoustics and sound will be between the rooms. For example, when in a courtroom will there be noise that can be heard from another room? Charlie responded that this issue is definitely being looked into to the degree you can plan for that before moving in and setting up. This has been a topic of discussion from early design.

Tim Holloran stated that DOE will pay 90% of clean-up costs. He is cautiously optimistic that the state will provide funds for the clean-up. There is money dedicated to that cause. Charlie Wend asked when we would know whether the

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state will provide the funds for that. Commissioner Wesen advised that information will come out of the legislative session.

V. Victim Offender Mediation and V.O.I.C.E. Education supported by the DOJ Byrne Grant - by Lisa Tremblay, Office of Juvenile Court, LaDessa Croucher & Sean Connor, Volunteers of America, Dispute Resolution Center

Lisa Tremblay shared information regarding a DOJ Byrne Grant that the Office of Juvenile Court applies for on an annual basis. This grant supports programming for youth who have been referred for a first time/minor offense and is assigned to go through the Diversion Program. When youth successfully complete the terms of their Diversion Contract, the offense does not become a part of their criminal history and is confidential. The DOJ Byrne Grant award in 2014 was \$10,779. If the Office of Juvenile Court is awarded the grant this year, it is expected to be roughly the same amount. These grant dollars fund a part-time position at Volunteers of America, Dispute Resolution Center to provide case-management and programming in the form of the V.O.I.C.E (Victim Offender Impact Competency Education) Class and Victim Offender Mediation. Last year, these dollars served 46 youth.

Sean Connor explained how the Dispute Resolution Center's V.O.I.C.E. program benefits juveniles in the juvenile court system. Using a restorative justice model, monthly classes are offered to juveniles in the juvenile court system. The classes offer a less punitive and more educational goal to help juveniles understand the impact the crime they committed has on the offender, the victim, and the community as a whole. The juvenile offenders are assigned homework which they must complete and return to Sean. Also, role playing is incorporated into the interaction with the juveniles. The program targets first time juvenile offenders. In addition to referrals through the court, a parent may contact Sean to ask for their child to be accepted into the program. Each case is reviewed on a cases-to-case basis for acceptance. After attending the VOICE class and when appropriate some situations may be referred to a Victim Offender Meeting (VOM) where the Victim and youth offender are brought together by a trained mediator to discuss the crime and how the youth may make amends for their actions. The program is a success in helping juveniles to understand how their actions impact themselves and others.

Charlie Wend asked about the age of the youth in the program which is 13-17 years of age. LaDessa shared that 2 youth 12 years of age had been referred from Upper Skagit Tribes but they felt they were too young for the program so future requests for youth under 13 will be a one-on-one service.

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Tim Holloran asked if we could partner with the Chamber of Commerce to recruit possible businesses to volunteer to participate in the VOM meetings because the youth would benefit from those meetings.

LaDessa Croucher asked if this Council would vote to support that OJC and DRC apply for Byrne Grant funds to continue to provide Restorative Justice Services, VOICE and VOM to the youth in Diversion. Jennifer Johnson made a motion based on this request, Tim Holloran seconded the motion, and the Council unanimously approved.

VI. Announcements from the floor

Mavis Betz commented that the Clerk's Office has been working towards a bench software that would allow her office to go "paperless" for a very long time. The estimated cost for the vendor they have been looking at is now at \$250,000.00. Four, five or six years ago when the process began, a new statewide case management system was still in the planning states. They also didn't know then that a new case management system would include a judge's component with it. Now, AOC has procured a case management system that encompasses a judge's component and also a document management component. Skagit County is two years from implementation of those systems. Mavis commented that it made no sense to spend a quarter of a million dollars on a system that will be implemented "for free" in two years. Mavis also advised that, should the judge's component not be satisfactory to our bench, her office and Court Administration will be renewing the request for funds and permission to go out to bid.

Mavis thanked Roxane Goss for all the work she has put into this project.

Commissioner Wesen thanked the jail staff for reviewing all jail design plans to catch mistakes before they become a reality in the new jail.

Chief Wend agreed and shared a story of how a Sergeant asked if there were pass-throughs in the doors to the outdoor recreation areas in case it was necessary to hand-cuff an inmate from the other side of the door. Charlie reviewed the design plans and found that pass-throughs were not included in the design. This has now been added to the design, avoiding a costly fix.

Tim Holloran discussed the use of the Northern State property and the opportunity for Janicki Bioenergy. He also discussed that there are only two mental health treatment facilities in western Washington. The issue is how to use the property and also how important keeping open mental health treatment facilities is in our community.

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Margaret Rojas shared how much they appreciate the County's assistance. She is concerned with the senate budget which proposes taking away community mental health funding and increasing funding for inpatient mental health treatment.

Lisa Tremblay thanked Tim Holloran for the County's commitment to mental health treatment. She explained that many juveniles end up in detention because of the lack of mental health programming. Lisa welcomes anyone for a tour of the Juvenile Detention Facility.

Delilah George shared that Judge Meyer is retiring effective June 30, 2015. She also shared that Judge Cook received the Washington State Association for Justice - Judge of the Year award.

Chief Wend shared that P.M., the Mount Vernon citizen representative to the Council, has been unable to be at Council meetings because of medical issues. Also, that he is recovering well and will be back to the Council meetings as soon as he is able to do so.

Chief Wend passed a letter around from a former inmate and it speaks highly to the level of deputies we have in jail. He also stated that the jail is continuing to add medical staff to the jail and keep jail deputies away from providing medical care.

Chief Wend mentioned that he met with an organization called Women Hand in Hand, a faith based organization which, amongst other things they do, supports the jail ministry. They had approached the jail previously to ask if there was a particular need for anything in particular for female inmates. Because of the need, sports bras were provided by their organization. Their donation was greatly appreciated.

VII. Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 13, 2015, 8:15 a.m.

VIII. Meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.