

## Coordinating Council Meeting - Public Safety Jail Project

Sheriff's Department, Training Room, 600 South Third Street, Mount Vernon

Thursday, June 14, 2012, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

### NOTES

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Eron Berg, Sedro-Woolley Supervisor/Attorney

Ken Bergsma, Mount Vernon Police Chief

Jill Boudreau, Mayor of Mount Vernon

Lynsi Burton, Skagit Valley Herald

Chris Cammock, Mount Vernon Police

Ken Dahlstedt, County Commissioner

Sharon Dillon, County Commissioner

Marc Estvold, Project Manager

Brian Geer, Anacortes Councilmember

Bryan Harrison, Burlington Administrator

Tim Holloran, County Administrator

Amber Kllogjeri, Assistant Clerk

Dean Maxwell, Mayor of Anacortes

Dale Ragan, Mount Vernon Councilmember

Will Reichardt, Skagit County Sheriff

Michael Rickert, Superior Court Judge

Steve Sexton, Mayor of Burlington

David Svaren, District Court Judge

Bill Turner, Anacortes Councilmember

Keith Wagoner, Sedro-Woolley Councilmember

Charlie Wend, Chief of Corrections

Ron Wesen, County Commissioner

Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator

#### **Introductions, Roles:**

County Administrator Tim Holloran welcomed everyone and introductions were made. He said that Marc Estvold was hired as the Project Manager November 21, 2011. The County decided to take a different approach to the jail project and switched from using international consultants to a local consultant. Tim said that some of Marc's projects have included the hospitals, port projects, and the McIntyre Hall. Tim introduced Lisa Dally Wilson who was hired May 21, 2012, to facilitate the meetings.

#### **Agenda Review and Expected Outcomes:**

Lisa Dally Wilson asked how the group would like to be addressed: formal names or first names? The group decided to use informal first names. Lisa read the agenda and expected outcomes and said that she would clearly announce what would be discussed at the next meeting so that members could meet with and, if needed, bring appropriate personnel to upcoming meetings.

#### **Confirm Meeting Schedule – July 2012 through January 2013:**

Amber Kllogjeri announced that a meeting held on July 23, 2012, and August 6, 2012, worked the best for all Coordinating Council members, and that, starting in September, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month worked the best to set reoccurring monthly meetings. All members agreed to those dates and Eron Berg requested Outlook invitations be emailed to members.

Tim Holloran asked if the Coordinating Council would be open to holding future meetings in the Commissioners Hearing Room due to parking, public interest in meetings, and the capacity of the room. The group agreed to hold future meetings at the Commissioners Hearing Room, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Eron Berg believed more time would be needed for Coordinating Council meetings. Bill Turner agreed and said that two to three hours would be more sufficient. Lisa Dally Wilson agreed that more time would be needed at some of the meetings and possibly extra work sessions would need to be scheduled. She asked Amber to check with the members to see if the reoccurring Thursday appointments could be extended to two to three hours.

**Decision Making and General Ground rules:**

Lisa handed out the proposed decision making model, a scale from 5 to 1 designed to give members a qualifying vote on issues. She clarified that the model was not 4 yeses' and 1 no, but really 1 yes and 1 no. She said that the 4 yes options allowed participants to qualify their vote. She asked if the model would work for the group. Keith Wagoner suggested what the Sedro-Woolley School Board used: thumbs up: yes, thumb side-ways: neutral, and thumbs down, no. Bryan Harrison asked if the goal was for a vote or for consensus. Brian Geer was concerned that the 5 to 1 scale would alleviate discussion and cause confusion. Mr. Geer suggested voting yes or no and he said that if no was the vote, then the no vote could be discussed and clarified. Lisa said that the model was proposed to help the public understand where members of the Coordinating Council stood on each vote. Brian Geer thought that having 4 yeses' to choose from was excessive. Bill Turner said that the model felt political. Lisa asked who favored the 5 scale model and who favored a yes/no vote. Voting use was briefly discussed. Lisa asked if the thumbs-sideways, neutral, meant yes, or a no. The group decided it would be yes. Lisa asked the group to think about which voting method to use and she went on to discuss some other expectations.

Lisa said that the Coordinating Council would be given the agenda for each meeting and that they would include decision points, decisions to discuss, and items to vote on. She said that she understood that Coordinating Council members would need to meet with their City Councils and other Elected Officials and Department Heads at times in order to make informed decisions at Coordinating Council meetings. She wanted to make it clear that all discussion being held on an issue would be finished before a decision would be made. She said that she felt comfortable that the members would agree to listen and respect one another. She said that the meetings are open to the public but that public comments would not be entertained due to time constraints. She said that members of the public could send comments and concerns to the Commissioners and/or Mayors.

Dean Maxwell pointed out that the public would be deciding on the issue: whether to fund a new facility or fund the remodel the existing facility.

Tim Holloran pointed out an oversight: the Sheriff, an elected official, was not listed as a voting member of the Coordinating Council and should he be included as a voting member? Brian Geer said that the Sheriff should be a voting member. The rest of the group agreed that in all future decision making, the Sheriff would be included in the voting process.

**Coordinating Council Role, Goals, Milestones:**

Tim Holloran said that everyone was aware of the public safety issue and the need to find a solution to the problem. He said that if Skagit County could not find a solution then the Federal Government would likely become involved and dictate a solution. Tim said that Skagit County is ready to work with the

Cities as partners to work together to solve the problem. Anacortes, Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley are all paying partners (pay bed rates to Skagit County jail).

Tim stated that approximately 80% of a budget goes towards operating a facility and 20% of the budget goes towards the capital. He said that the Coordinating Council would need to decide on the number of beds; courtrooms, keeping in mind the cost of transporting prisoners to and from jail and hearings; program areas, keeping in mind that proper programming can reduce recidivism; and the potential of future expansion. He said that the Coordinating Council would need to discuss the ownership of the facility and he said that Susan Musselman was researching financing models, partnerships, bed rate formulas, and the model used at SCORE. Tim said that a capital and operations funding structure would also need to be discussed along with bed rates and utilization commitments from the cities. He said that the Coordinating Council would need to work together on Interlocal Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding that formalized each party's commitment of support for the project.

Keith Wagoner said that the options seemed to be to remodel the existing facility or build a new facility. He asked if any changes in the operating procedures of the current jail had been reviewed to find efficiencies or if better uses of technology could be implemented as a solution to the problem (how people were moved and monitored and what was automated).

Eron Berg suggested the SCORE facility down south be toured.

Lisa said that the goal of the Coordinating Council was to create agreements between Skagit County and City partners that are willing to jointly support the proposed facility.

Tim Holloran said that it was up to Skagit County to fix the overcrowded jail and that the County wanted to work together with the Cities to achieve an agreed upon solution. He said that construction of a facility could take four years from the date of voter approval. He said that a solution was needed now and that the jail could only redistribute a portion of its community to other locations due to courtroom access issues.

Dean Maxwell said that the Federal Government could decide to regulate the problem by assessing a certain fee per parcel and either build a new jail or take over operations. He said that penalties would be involved in such a scenario, and that funding their solution would not cost less. He wondered if Skagit County's problem had been brought to their attention yet.

David Svaren said that Federal lawsuits would bring it to their attention. Charlie Wend said that issues of confinement, population, medical care, and access to healthcare would bring it to their attention.

Jill Boudreau said that Skagit County was asking for consensus but that if none could be made, then a decision would be made anyway.

Lisa brought up the proposed voting model again for a vote: the 1 through 5 scale, or yes/no. Dale Ragan clarified that with the recent addition of Sheriff Will Reichardt as a voting member, there would be eight voters. After polling the Coordinating Council members, it was decided to use a yes/no voting method and Bill Turner clarified that non-voting members would have the opportunity to speak.

Lisa wanted to make sure that the members interjected during meetings if they needed more time to think about something, talk with someone, or ask questions.

Lisa wanted to discuss the proposed meeting schedule and expected milestones. Bryan Harrison wondered if the proposed milestones were out of order. He felt it would be more helpful to make a decision on the location of the jail after the “when, where, what, and how funded” questions were answered. He thought that the Coordinating Council should first determine the level of service, need, demand, population, and current trends, in order to determine whether to remodel the jail, contract out more of the jail population, or build a new jail. He said that the number of beds needed would also factor into the site selection. He felt that they needed to know what they needed to site before choosing the site.

Marc Estvold said that all of those factors will drive the site selection and, that for now, he wanted the Coordinating Council to conceptually decide where to site the jail, in Mount Vernon or at the Port of Skagit? Marc said that each site offered different options for a remodeled or new jail.

Bryan Harrison said that he believed their City Council would want answers to those questions before choosing a site.

Keith Wagoner agreed that they needed to know what size facility would be needed.

Will Reichardt said that some of the sites offered expansion.

Bill Turner asked if the intent was to relocate to the Port?

Ken Dahlstedt pointed out that the Cities were not required to bring offenders to Skagit County jail and Skagit County was not required to accept them. He believed that first, Skagit County should find out who would be partnering with Skagit County on this issue, and agree to help fund it, before the size and location of the facility could be determined. He said that the County would need stable partners to help fund a facility if the plan was to build a new facility. Otherwise, if the Cities planned to move their prisoner population elsewhere, then perhaps the County could remodel the existing facility. He also wanted to make sure that the County and Cities brought a unified message to Skagit County voters.

Eron Berg said that Sedro-Woolley wanted to be part of the decision making process and that they wanted to know the plan so that they could decide how to act on it.

#### **Discussion & Decision Point – Preferred Location:**

Lisa Dally Wilson asked Marc Estvold to discuss the locations being considered. Marc said that a previous study evaluated 11 sites and that the property at the Port had been recently added as a possibility. He said that some of the sites allowed for reduced operational costs since they could be built on one level but that those sites were not near the current courtrooms, which was another cost to consider: the transport of prisoners to and from court. Marc briefly discussed each of the 4 sites under consideration.

Steve Sexton asked how big site #4 was. Jill Boudreau said that it was just over 10 acres.

Dean Maxwell asked if the Port was chosen, would new courtrooms would be built or would individuals be transported to and from court? It was believed new courtrooms would be built.

Eron Berg clarified that each site would require comp plan amendments.

Will Reichardt clarified that the current jail could not be expanded vertically without also expanding outwards.

Eron Berg asked if the Judges were willing to travel between different campuses.

Michael Rickert expressed frustration with the situation and said that the entire issue should have been solved 8 years ago. He said that Superior Court had to stay in Mount Vernon. He said that if the jail was built at the Port, then the County Clerk, bailiffs, and courtrooms would all need to be relocated as well. He discussed scheduling issues, transport issues, and violent offender jury trial issues, and said that the distance between the courtroom and the facility was critical. He said that it was not feasible to build the jail at the Port location. He said that it looked good on paper and that the location should be vetted but he did not see how it would be possible, in the end, to build a jail and relocate the courts to the Port.

Keith Wagoner asked how much each location would cost to purchase and Marc said that the property at the Port would be leased and the property at site #4 would be purchased. He said that an appraisal of the property at site #4 had been performed in 2009 and he would get those numbers to the Coordinating Council.

Mike Rickert pointed out that the property at site #4 had issues too, but that it was convenient since it was located near the existing court campus.

Eron Berg wondered what Skagit County's plans were for the departments located at the downtown campus. Tim said that options were being evaluated and that there was a vision for downtown to be the law and justice campus. Tim pointed out that the existing courtrooms at District Court were small and inadequate. Eron wondered about relocating the Sheriff's Office. Eron clarified with the judges that law and justice needed to remain together downtown Mount Vernon.

Will Reichardt said that remodeling the current facility would create a lot of issues relating to real estate space downtown and would create more parking problems. Tim Holloran said that a remodel would probably include a bridge or tunnel for prisoner transport.

Michael Rickert agreed. He said that the way they transport prisoners is the same way they did in 1923, by blocking off the road and running them across the street.

Jill Boudreau said that City Councils would be considering costs and they would like to know how much each different option costs. She said that they would also need to determine the level of service before committing to a plan.

Mike Rickert said that the proposed schedule should be more aggressive and that site selection and facility size should be worked on simultaneously.

Marc said that he was hoping for the site to be narrowed down to which region should a jail be located: downtown Mount Vernon or at the Port?

Dean Maxwell said that what he had heard so far made it sound like a facility would cost more to construct if it was built at the Port and so the facility should probably be located in Mount Vernon.

Lisa wondered if the Coordinating Council could decide on whether or not to consider the Port or to only consider sites in Mount Vernon? She agreed that it would be helpful to make some of the decisions at the same time: site selection and the details. She asked what information the Coordinating Council would need in order to decide which site to choose?

Dean Maxwell wanted to know what programs would be offered, how much space they would take, and what could be afforded? He said that programs reduce recidivism which should be one of their considerations.

Steve Sexton wanted to know how many beds would be needed. He wanted to be sure whatever was decided on would meet the needs of the Judges and Sheriff.

Bill Turner wanted to know the cost of the properties.

Dean Maxwell wanted to know if planning could be phased.

Will Reichardt said that answers to these questions would be different depending on whether the Cities agreed to be partners. Lisa said that number of beds needed would be less if the Cities were not going to partner, and that the number of beds needed would be higher if the Cities did partner with the County.

Michael Rickert said that in the past, some Cities chose not to partner with Skagit County.

Bill Turner said that he would need to know how many courtrooms would be needed, and what size courtrooms.

Ken Dahlstedt reiterated that these questions could not be answered without knowing if the Cities were going to partner with the County for services or not.

Brian Geer believed that the Cities would need to know the total cost for the project before they could make an informed decision of whether or not to partner.

Eron Berg wanted to know if the prison population could be segregated into lower and higher level offenses and services split up accordingly between the two sites.

Charlie Wend was concerned about the screening methods for that type of segregation and Will Reichardt pointed out that one consolidated facility was cheaper to run than two separate facilities.

Jill Boudreau pointed out that having each city at the table showed that they were interested in the project and wanted to participate. She said that the Cities needed to discuss their concerns and build trust between the entities.

Lisa said that answers to these questions would be based on the assumption that all of the Cities would continue to move forward with the County as partners.

Marc asked if a decision could be made regarding whether to consider only downtown Mount Vernon sites or other sites outside of Mount Vernon? Michael Rickert wondered if the Coordinating Council could vote on that. Will Reichardt said that relocating to the Port felt like a “deal breaker” and suggested that they no longer consider site #1. Michael Rickert and Bill Turner agreed.

Eron Berg wanted to know if page 7, point 15 of the 2005 report could be updated: who is in the jail and why?

Lisa clarified that Superior Court would like to remove site #1 from consideration.

Jill Boudreau said that she would like to discuss site locations with City Council before the Coordinating Council votes.

Lisa asked the Coordinating Council if they would discuss site locations with their City Councils and then return to the next Coordinating Council meeting with an answer on what sites to consider. She said that requested information would be gathered for the Coordinating Council under the assumption that the Cities would be partnering with the County.

Tim Holloran requested that any other information requests be emailed to him or the Commissioners as soon as possible so that the City Councils could decide on which site to focus on. His email: [timh@co.skagit.wa.us](mailto:timh@co.skagit.wa.us).

The meeting ended at 1:37 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, July 23, 2012, Skagit County Commissioners Office, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

*Notes finalized and approved July 23, 2012.*