

Coordinating Council Meeting - Public Safety Jail Project

Commissioners Hearing Room, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon

Monday, July 23, 2012, 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

NOTES

ATTENDANCE:

Eron Berg, Sedro-Woolley Supervisor/Attorney
Ken Bergsma, Mount Vernon Police Chief
Jill Boudreau, Mayor of Mount Vernon
Bonnie Bowers, Anacortes Police Chief
Sharon Dillon, County Commissioner
Marc Estvold, Project Manager
Bryan Harrison, Burlington Administrator
Ramon Hayes, Mayor of La Conner
Tim Holloran, County Administrator
Roger Howard
Amber Kllogjeri, Assistant Clerk
Dean Maxwell, Mayor of Anacortes

Carl Molesworth, Port of Skagit
Susan Musselman, Financial Advisor
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
Keith Wagoner, Sedro-Woolley Councilmember
Charlie Wend, Chief of Corrections
Ron Wesen, County Commissioner
Lisa Dally Wilson, Facilitator
Citizen and representatives from the press

Introductions, Plans for Next Meeting and SCORE Tour (00:04:09)

Tim Holloran welcomed everyone to the second Coordinating Council meeting. He stated that meetings would be recorded which would benefit the Coordinating Council, their city councilmember's, and the public for easy viewing, sharing, and transparency. The Council agreed to record the meetings.

Financing options and budget implications would be discussed at the next meeting scheduled for August 6, 2012. Discussion followed to extend the meetings. It was agreed to extend the August 6th meeting, beginning at 11:30 a.m. and ending at 1:30 p.m. It was also agreed to extend the remaining meetings from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. David Svaren and Michael Rickert informed the Council that they would only be able to attend until 1:20 p.m. It was agreed that any matters which needed to be voted on would be scheduled before 1:20 p.m.

Tim said the SCORE tour would occur in September or early October and that a poll would be emailed to everyone for their availability.

Agenda Review and Expected Outcomes (00:10:40)

Lisa Dally Wilson reviewed the agenda and explained to the Council what to expect as outcomes from the meeting. She wondered if a section "What else do you need to know to move forward?" should be included at the end of every agenda.

Decision Point – Vote on General Facility Location (00:14:00)

Marc Estvold showed the current sites under consideration for the location of a new facility. One site was located at the Port of Skagit in Burlington. The other sites were located downtown Mount Vernon.

Marc said that each site could work for a facility. He said that Michael Rickert and David Svaren voiced their preference during the Coordinating Council meeting held on June 14, 2012 for the Mount Vernon sites.

Steve Sexton and Marc discussed the order in which decisions were being made: where the facility would be located and what kind of facility was needed. Marc informed the Council that a facility could work on any of the sites and he reminded the council that a tremendous amount of work had already been performed by Voorhis Associates, Inc. regarding the type of site needed for a facility.

Jill Boudreau pointed out that Marc seemed to be looking for direction from the Council regarding whether or not to consider the site at the Port of Skagit. Marc agreed that he wanted the Council to either focus on the Port or downtown Mount Vernon.

Dean Maxwell said that he had enough information to decide to take the Port site off the list. He based his decision on the information provided by Michael Rickert and David Svaren on June 14th and he also did not feel it would be cost effective, or accountable to the citizens, to have to build a new facility to house the jail as well as the court systems.

Keith Wagoner stated that he shared the same concerns as Steve Sexton (the order in which decisions were being made: where the facility would be located and what kind of facility was needed.) He went on to say that he believed the City of Sedro-Woolley was also ready to eliminate the Port site from consideration.

Ron Wesen pointed out that Skagit County's Law and Justice Center was downtown Mount Vernon and he said that it made the most sense to keep the facility in the same central location. He did not feel prepared to move the entire Law and Justice Center to another location.

Michael Rickert said that he understood the cities' concerns about the order in which decisions were being made. He wanted to point out that Skagit County has been working on the project since 2005 and has multiple plans and studies and is ready to make a site selection. He informed the Council that any site chosen would fit the facility.

Steve Sexton and Ramon Hayes echoed that the Port should not be considered but that the remaining questions Steve Sexton had would still need to be discussed as the process continued.

VOTE on General Facility Location (00:25:10)

After discussing the language for the vote, all eight members voted to approve to narrow the site considerations to Mount Vernon.

VOTE on Approving June 14, 2012 Coordinating Council Notes (00:28:44)

After discussing the editorial changes to the notes, all eight members voted to approve and finalize the June 14, 2012 notes.

Jail 101 (00:29:06)

Charlie Wend said that RCW determines that counties can charge booking fees. All Washington State jails have similar formulas and fees. Skagit County's booking fee is \$40 per inmate. Charlie discussed the booking process. He said booking one person takes approximately two hours. Charlie said that the \$40 fee goes towards covering the costs of the staff utilized for booking.

Charlie said that for jurisdictions without booking fees, the booking process is rolled into the daily bed rate. Skagit County receives revenue from the Criminal Alien Assistance Program through the Federal Government, Social Security, commissary sales of snacks to inmates, the Department of Ecology through a grant for the litter crew, Skagit Transit through an agreement for inmates to wash their busses, commission from the telephone company which is received when an inmate makes a phone call, and the booking fee received by the cities. Charlie said that these revenues are balanced with direct and indirect costs which include salaries, labor and industries, maintenance of the building, food, laundry service fees, staff, training, utility bills, administrative costs, phone costs, etc. which then gives the county the net cost.

Charlie said that the last piece of the formula was the total number of bed days, over a one year period, which is divided by the net costs and gives the county the bed rate. Skagit County charges \$68 per day which is based on figures from 2009 calculations. The actual bed rate would be higher if recalculated: at about \$72 or \$73 a day. Charlie said that the total number of bed days have gone down, but that was because the county was paying to house inmates in other jails. Charlie said that the average Washington State jail bed rate was \$68.88.

Programming was discussed: what is currently offered and what could be offered given available staff and space.

Medical costs were discussed. In house doctor's visits within the jail are included in the daily bed rate. Outside medical costs, being transported to the hospital or doctor's office, are billed directly to the arresting agency. Charlie said when a misdemeanor is changed to a felony; the county takes over all costs except medical costs, which stay with the arresting agency. Medical costs are also sometimes split between two cities: when one city arrests, but another city also has warrants out for arrest, all fees are split between the two cities.

Discussion was held regarding the calculation of the daily bed rate and Lisa asked that the formula be provided in a handout to the Coordinating Council. Charlie informed the Council that the County does not calculate their outside medical costs into the daily bed rate which, he said, would be impossible to determine since medical costs are not predetermined and change from inmate to inmate, year to year. Discussion was also held regarding the Washington State Patrol fees and that Skagit County absorbed their fees.

Keith Wagoner requested a mission statement from the jail since it sounded like it would be more than just a place to house inmates, but a place to provide rehabilitation programs as well.

Charlie said that programming impacts the recidivism rate and was the most cost effective way to keep from having to build a bigger and bigger jail to house inmates.

Will Reichardt said that programming would need to be discussed and considered.

Lisa asked the Council to email other questions to Amber Klogjeri.

Bed Capacity, Population Trends and Potential Financial Impacts (00:52:46)

Marc discussed the population and cost projections. These figures showed the number of beds Skagit County may need to accommodate the cities' housing needs for inmates.

Questions were asked about housing inmates at other facilities. Marc showed that 39% of the population was post sentencing and could potentially be housed outside Skagit County.

Bryan Harrison appreciated the population updates. He requested background information which analyzed the current bed to population ratio and recommendation since these numbers would be important to make a decision on what size facility would be needed.

Steve Sexton asked that the numbers include misdemeanants versus felons as well. Marc asked the Council to keep in mind that all of the projections were based on the current trends remaining the same.

Dean Maxwell shared that the Law and Justice Council had good information about this subject and that it might be helpful for the new mayors to review. Link to the website: <http://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/asp/default.asp?d=Lawandjustice&c=General&p=main.htm>

Eron Berg asked if the County tracked declined bookings. Charlie said they do; however, there was no way for the County to track when an officer on the street decides not to arrest someone. He said that the County denies approximately 300 bookings per month.

Discussion followed on the number of declines and it was agreed upon by Charlie, Will Reichardt, David Svaren, and Michael Rickert that the county was turning away 1/3 of their current jail population.

The Judges discussed how sentencing and holding had changed due to the demands on the jail.

Discussion followed regarding the 39% post sentence population and why they were not all housed at other Counties in order to open up more beds for inmates in Skagit County. Charlie and Will answered that some of the 39% could be housed at Snohomish County, but the Sheriff's budget would be impacted in multiple ways. Part of the 39% post sentenced population are accounted for but are on jail alternatives, part of the population is needed to help run the jail.

Lisa asked if Jackie Brunson could put together a handout showing the bed rate formula and how the numbers were affected when inmates were housed at other locations.

Steve Sexton asked if information for the Coordinating Council meetings could be sent to the members prior to meetings.

Tim Holloran apologized and informed the group that data capture was behind and that the population projection form also needed to be updated to show the County's figures as well. Lisa added that an effort would be made to email materials to the Council a week in advance.

Charlie was questioned about programs. He said that the most helpful would be drug, alcohol, and mental health programs.

Charlie said that the Snohomish County jail, where Skagit County houses inmates, is at 88% capacity and that the option to use them into the future could not be guaranteed.

Bonnie Bowers pointed out that it was not always practical to house 39% of the post sentenced inmates elsewhere since there could still be transportation costs associated with them in another city in Skagit County.

Responses to Last Month's Questions (01:18:33)

Marc apologized for not having answers to all of the questions. He reviewed them and said much of it was yet to be determined. He answered that the estimated property costs for the Alf Christianson Seed Company site was \$7,865,000 and totaled 9.24 acres. He said that the project would need to be phased. He shared that the 2005 Voorhis report was updated in 2008 and he would send it out, and he said that the budget for the project was still to be determined and that the next meeting would explore options for raising funds and financing a facility.

Tim Holloran said that the Voorhis report brought up the fact that the County no longer had the Court Expeditor position (it was cut in 2009 by the Sheriff at that time). Tim said that they are revisiting filling that position.

Discussion on Building Size – Needs, Budget, Affordability – How Impact City and County Budgets and Some Next Steps (01:22:26)

Lisa suggested that the cities' budget and finance directors attend the August 6th meeting since financing options were going to be explored. She said that programs would be discussed in September and the number of beds would try to be narrowed down.

What Else Need to Know to Move Forward? (01:23:44)

Eron Berg pointed out that discussing financing before knowing what was needed to be built seemed premature.

Tim answered that they wanted to start the global discussion and try to get some ideas on what would be palatable to the cities and what would not. Susan Musselman also said that the County was trying to move forward on parallel tracks and that it would be helpful to understand some of the different financing options and the parameters built around each of those options.

Keith Wagoner asked for the Jail's current mission statement and asked what their mission statement would be if funding was not an issue.

Lisa reviewed the information that would be put together and provided to the Council.

Charlie let the council know that information, including declines, could be found online under the Jail's Weekly Statistics, found at:

<http://www.skagitcounty.net/Common/Asp/Default.asp?d=Jail&c=General&p=weeklystats.htm>

Eron Berg wondered about the Council being added to the Law and Justice email list serve.

Lisa said that they could work on tracking declines and putting some figures together for the council.

Eron Berg pointed out that it would be interesting to be able to show what kind of bed days the declined bookings would have been.

Next Steps (01:31:38)

Lisa said that it was after 1:30 p.m. and that the SCORE visit would be scheduled via doodle poll. She also said that an FTP site would be set up in order to access all of the information provided for the Council and Eron Berg suggested everything be placed on the County's website. Lisa asked that questions or concerns be emailed to Amber.

The meeting ended at 1:33 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, August 6, 2012, Skagit County Commissioners Office, 1800 Continental Place, Mount Vernon.

Notes finalized and approved September 13, 2012