

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for July 18, 2022

*Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however, YouTube links may change. Links in this document will not be updated. Please refer to the time notation on each agenda item.*

---

## 1. Call to Order

Committee Chair Jack Hovenier called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M. The meeting was held via remote-only Zoom Webinar.

Members Present: Barry Buchanan, Caleb Erickson, Arlene Feld, Heather Flaherty, David Freeman, Stephen Gockley, Daniel Hammill, Mike Hilley, Jack Hovenier, Raylene King, Scott Korthuis, Jenn Lockwood, Jason McGill, Rebecca Mertzig, Perry Mowery, Eric Petersen, Darlene Peterson, Dave Reynolds, Eric Richey, Satpal Sidhu, Bruce Van Glubt, Maialisa Vanyo

Members Absent: Bill Elfo, Seth Fleetwood, Deborah Hawley, Dave Reynolds, Donnell Tanksley, Greg Winter

## 2. [Justice Project Needs Assessment \(00:01:25\)](#)

Buchanan gave an update on the work of the Justice Project. He reported that the Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team (BHGAT) had given a presentation on the updated Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) and that they also had a meeting with IPRTF Behavioral Health Co-Chairs. Meetings and discussions have been well attended. The fourth full meeting was held recently and they discussed vision and goals, the gaps identified by the BHGAT team, and a wish list for facilities put together by the BHGAT team. One of the SAC members will be distributing an inmate and staff survey to learn more about needs for the facility. King suggested that the mall would be a good location for the new campus.

## 3. [Pretrial Services Workgroup and Unit \(00:08:31\)](#)

Gockley reported that he has communicated with the Pre-Trial Services Unit Lead and had learned that the public safety risk assessment tool created by the Arnold Foundation has been used about 750 times so far this year. The people being scored are those who are still in custody at their first appearance; those who are booked and released are not given the assessment because they do not meet with a Pre-trial Unit staff member. About 55% of those booked and released have bail. Gockley summarized further the conditions established when a person scores at a low, medium, or high risk level on the assessment. The group is meeting every month now, instead of every other month. As long as booking restrictions remain in place, they will not be able to put as many people through the assessment as they would like to. Until they are able to assess more people, they won't have complete data available.

Committee members continued to discuss the pre-trial risk assessment tool. Topics covered included:

- Further data on the outcomes of the assessment or those who did not go through the assessment.
- Other pre-trial monitoring tools.
- Why the risk assessment can't be used for those who are booked and released. Reynolds explained that the goal of the risk assessment is used to determine if someone should be released or not; if booking restrictions already dictate that a person be released, there is no

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for July 18, 2022

*Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however, YouTube links may change. Links in this document will not be updated. Please refer to the time notation on each agenda item.*

---

reason to put them through the assessment. Freeman and Reynolds added that a judge can implement pre-trial services without the risk assessment having been completed.

- Concerns over victim safety when someone is released and then goes on to commit further crimes, especially in domestic violence cases.
- Possible outside impact of the assessment on people of color and what data could be gathered about that. Gockley stated that this particular assessment tool has been shown to be neutral at worst and improves racial equity outcomes in some jurisdictions. We do not have enough data in Whatcom County to evaluate it here yet.
- How the assessment tool was developed and where it's being used.
- If the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) has a position on this tool and if it's been vetted by communities of color.
- Capacity of the jail and the work center.
- Current staffing levels at the jail and the contract with Snohomish County.

#### 4. [IPRTF Public Communications \(00:43:59\)](#)

Buchanan gave background on the Communications Specialist hiring process. He told committee members that a preliminary meeting with the vendor has been held and that he felt that they understand the needs of the Task Force. The first official meeting is upcoming and will be held with the Steering Committee. Hammill asked how the IPRTF's work with the SAC would be communicated. Buchannan responded that there was a separate communications vendor for the Justice Project.

#### 5. [Draft updated sequential intercept model service inventory for Justice Project \(00:49:16\)](#)

Mowery gave some background on how and why the Behavioral Health Gap Analysis Team (BHGAT) was brought together to update the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) as well as the structure of the SIM. Mowery went on to state that the intent is to introduce this updated SIM to the IPRTF for review and possible adoption. Gockley added that approval of the SIM would be on the agenda for the next meeting and asked that members carefully review the document before then. Mowery encouraged committee members to pay particular attention to their respective areas of expertise because his group did not include experts from each and every category that appears on the SIM.

#### 6. [GARE Implementation \(1:00:53\)](#)

Gockley reported that he, Mike Parker, Jill Nixon (Legislative Coordinator), and Jackie Lassiter (Legislative Clerk), have been meeting to discuss how to implement the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) toolkit into IPRTF operations. He explained the difference between the GARE toolkit itself and the other GARE resources offered on its online portal. Though the County is a member of GARE, Task Force members who are not County employees are not able to access the portal. He summarized the next steps to work around or change that and the work they are doing to integrate the toolkit into discussions and other Task Force business.

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for July 18, 2022

*Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however, YouTube links may change. Links in this document will not be updated. Please refer to the time notation on each agenda item.*

---

Committee members discussed the toolkit and racial equity as a whole. Topics included:

- Racism has been declared a public health crisis at both the City and County level. The Task Force should be an actively anti-racist organization and GARE should be in the forefront of all of its work as much as possible.
- The Task Force should apply a lens of racial equity to everything it does. The Task Force has the opportunity to be leaders in this area. The how of implementing it is still up in the air and mistakes will be made along the way.
- The VERA Institute report identified racial equity as one of the main things the County needs to improve upon to reduce incarceration.
- The importance of specific actions rather than simply making statements or using words.
- Each Task Force member has a personal responsibility to work towards racial equity and to make connections to other communities.
- The importance of data, gathering the correct data, and re-visiting topics as additional data becomes available.
- GARE can be implemented on a committee-level now and there should be someone responsible for ensuring a GARE lens is being used during committee discussions.
- Status-quo interventions will not improve racial equity outcomes. It is essential to speak truth about these issues.
- The budget allocation to contract with other counties should be kept in our community, and should not be going towards incarcerating individuals. Erickson clarified that the contract does not involve housing people with low-level crimes.

## 7. [Committee Updates \(1:29:56\)](#)

Committee Chairs reported on their respective committees as follows:

- Buchanan reported for Steering Committee, stating that everything they talked about has already been covered in the meeting.
- Hammill reported on the Joint Behavioral Health and Legal Justice Systems meeting. They had a presentation from the National Alliance for Mental Illness about their Clubhouse model. Maialisa Vanyo presented on the Mental Health Sentencing Alternative.
- King reported on the Legal and Justice Systems meeting. They discussed tablets being used in custody and the new co-responder program. Hammill reported that the City's Alternate Response Team will be recruiting for staff starting next month and that there is already a Downtown Ambassador program in place that seems to be effective. Feld emphasized the importance of the co-responder and alternate response team in changing the way the justice system operates.
  - Flaherty said that she is appalled at the number of people who are currently jailed pre-trial. She asked that the Legal and Justice Committee work towards case management solutions to figure out what is failing in the system, rather than simply building a larger

# Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force: Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force

Meeting Summary for July 18, 2022

*Agenda item links to YouTube video are functional at the time this meeting summary was created, however, YouTube links may change. Links in this document will not be updated. Please refer to the time notation on each agenda item.*

---

facility. Erickson responded that he agrees that this is an untenable situation, though he also thinks that the state of the facility is important to address. King gave an overview of some of the complexities that are causing the backlog in court cases and the number of inmates that are being housed pre-trial. Hammill asked about competency restoration and Vanyo said that it could help to have adequate mental health resources in the jail, but the state hospitals are primarily responsible for those services. Buchanan said that he is working on starting a work-group to look into what long term solutions can be made to the competency restoration system. Feld said that she sees this as a money and a leadership issue, as it is very expensive to provide care for someone who is severely mentally ill.

## **8. [Other Business \(1:52:57\)](#)**

Erickson gave some statistics on who has been booked and released so far this year in response to an earlier question from Gockley.

## **9. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

## **10. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 A.M.