THURSTON COUNTY LAW & JUSTICE COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 15, 2014

PURPOSE: Provide an inter-jurisdictional forum for consideration of initiatives and resources to improve criminal justice services, enhance public safety and reduce crime throughout Thurston County.

In attendance:
Sharonda Amamilo; Robin Campbell; Tammy Devlin; Judge Jim Dixon; Mike Fenton; Mark Freedman; Ken Garmann; Kristin Guizzetti; Zack Hofstad; Chief John Hutchings; Judge Carol Murphy; Yvonne Pettus; Chief Dusty Pierpoint; Bob Ritchie; Daryl Rodrigues; Charles Shelan; Cheryl Selby; Don Sloma; Kurt Smith, John Snaza; Sheriff Jon Tunheim; M. John Way; Judge Kalo Wilcox

Staff: Cliff Moore
       Jerry Noviello
       Vickie Larkin

Guests: Anita Meyers of Commission for International Affairs, members of Justice not Jails, Lisa Smith of Enterprise for Equity, Meghan Sullivan of Together!

Introductions:
Jon Tunheim welcomed everyone: self introductions were given. The minutes of the March 20, 2014 Council meeting were reviewed and approved.

Law and Justice Council Leadership:
Chair and Vice-Chair were selected for the next year.

  Chair: Jon Tunheim was nominated to continue as Chair by Cheryl Selby, and 2nd nomination was by Don Sloma. All other voting members voted to select Jon Tunheim as the Chair for the next year.

  Vice-Chair: Charles Shelan suggested Daryl Rodrigues. Daryl confirmed that he was open to serving as Vice-Chair for this council. Charles nominated Daryl for Vice-Chair.
Second nomination was given by Judge Wilcox. All other voting members voted to select Daryl Rodrigues as Vice-Chair for the next year.

Driving with License Suspended (DWLS) 3rd Re-Licensing Program:

- Zack Hofstad gave a presentation about DWLS in Thurston County (PowerPoint is attached). The presentation reviewed two main components: how we prosecute DWLS 3rd and what we can do to get these individuals out of the DWLS 3rd cycle.

- Problem: large portion of Misdemeanor prosecution involves DWLS 3rd offenders. Many times these people have a suspended license because they have unpaid traffic tickets. When their fines are sent to collections, they are too large for them to pay. They keep driving because they need transportation, but are unable to do so lawfully. Penalties for DWLS 3rd can be as high as 90 days in jail, $1,000 fine. Fines balloon when unpaid and sent to collections. Only about 15% of fines sent to collections are actually paid.

- Goal – give this population a method to reinstate their license and successfully pay their fines, as well as build life-skills that will help them to become financially stable.

- It was pointed out that many companies that require driving a company vehicle have their own set of restrictions. Example: If someone has a DUI on their driving record, they will not be able to drive a vehicle for CYS, regardless if they have their license or not. There will still be employment barriers for some of these individuals, even if they are able to obtain a valid license.

- When DOL sends out a notice of suspension, they do so to the last known address on record. However, many people living in poverty move often; and many do not update their address with DOL. So they never receive this notice. This is also true for the courts. Courts use the DOL address for court appearance communication. When the defendant does not appear in court as required, a warrant is issued. About 20% of all misdemeanor arraignments result in DWLS warrant.

- What might help:
  - Amnesty programs – fee forgiveness
  - Consolidated Payments – pay 1 bill for all fines.
  - Financial counseling
  - Community service option to reduce fine

- A work group was convened to study established relicensing programs: Seattle and Spokane were 2 of the programs that were evaluated.
o Seattle: Key finding in this evaluation - participants in this program have life-skill deficits, such as financial literacy.

o Spokane: This program was developed largely because the city was facing cuts.
   ▪ Became self-sustaining after a few years (started with grant funds).
     Millions of unpaid fines have been paid. These payments are divided between the municipalities based on where the citations were issued.
   ▪ Program is housed in the Prosecutor’s Office. All local municipalities participate in this program. The program can consolidate fines and pull them all from collections. This allows for one payment.

o What we hope to do in Thurston County:
   ▪ Develop a regional solution, similar to Spokane
   ▪ Include financial counseling into the program, partnering with local resources like Enterprise for Equality and Tulip Credit Union. These are supplemental to the relicensing component.

o What is needed of Law and Justice Council Members:
   ▪ Support this project with your city councils
   ▪ Daryl, Jon, and John will request that city councils in the county support this program, in order to consolidate multiple fines from different municipalities. Contact them if you would like support.

o Status of the DWLS workgroup
   ▪ Elements of an ideal program have been identified
   ▪ Partnerships are being developed (Tulip CU and Enterprise for Equality)
   ▪ Clerk’s Office is sending Daryl data to identify the size of the target population in Thurston County

Discussion:

▪ How can we have regional consolidation? MOUs from each city to allow for fines in collections to be consolidated. Many cities use Cheryl Selby would like input from Jon and Daryl and support in bringing this topic to Olympia City Council.
▪ TC Dist. Court for DWLS 3rd arrests. This might make consolidation easier.
▪ DOC has 800 supervised people in Thurston County. Many of these people have a suspended license. Having a program that enables them to drive legally helps to support a lawful lifestyle. A program like the one
proposed helps people to EARN their license back. This can have a powerful impact on people.

- Not all cases of DWLS 3rd involve someone only charged with DWLS. Hit and Run plus DWLS, or a weapons charge plus DWLS; these are not the type of cases that would be included in the program generally.

Law and Justice Strategic Plan:

- Need for plan to be county wide in order to support extremely competitive federal grants, tight local budgets and changing realities of Law and Justice agencies
  - Many criminal justice grants require a Law and Justice strategic plan. Currently, Thurston County does not have one. A strategic plan will give TC credibility for larger grants. It will also provide a unified vision of criminal justice for the community. **Consensus was that this Council was an appropriate oversight group for a county-wide strategic plan.**
  - Recommended timing for development of plan: July-December, 2014 (propose to have facilitator for the work)

- How Law & Justice strategic plan will intersect with Thurston Thrives and Sustainable Thurston work
  - For future discussion. Thurston Thrives includes participation from the community, so we should include this in our strategic planning. It was suggested to include the public from the very start of this project. A retired judge or elected official could fill this position. Gary Alexander was suggested.

- Community Corrections tied into plan for the ARC.
  - Definition – loosely defined at this point. Ideas for this have come from a visit to Hillsborough, OR. They have a non-corrections facility next to their county jail. This facility is totally separate from the jail (physically, but also separate management and philosophy). Community Corrections offers treatment, job search resources, EHM, work release, and social services – all in 1 location.
  - In Hillsborough, Community Corrections cost 50% less than standard corrections (jail). Their recidivism rate over 3 years was **10%**.

Updates:

- Mentally Ill Offender study recommendations: triage facility – Mark Freedman
  - If built, the triage facility will be a place where police can drop off people at the front door. No emergency screening is needed. It was noted that this is the type of facility that was supposed to be built a few years ago, but turned out to not be the case. In order to make sure that the new facility will act as promised, funding for this population must be determined. Medicaid will cover some costs, but not all.
- 2013 Legislative session – funding approved to create new treatment facility. TC was awarded capital funding for a triage facility. There are a couple sites being considered. A site must be selected by late summer. If St. Peter’s detox facility permanently closes, it might put a strain on the triage facility, which isn’t meant to be a detox facility.

- Update on CBT program at DOC Community Corrections-Kurt Smith
  - 2 DOC Officers have been trained in Thinking for a Change curriculum (type of cognitive behavioral therapy)
  - In January, there were 25 people who started out in this program (in 2 groups). Earlier this month, 17 of these 25 graduated. 2 new groups start later this month.

Updates deferred to next meeting:
  - Downtown Olympia Public Safety Initiative – Chief Roberts
  - Update on work of Law & Justice Workgroup – Jon Tunheim

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Next Meeting, July 17, 2014 4:30 PM, County building 1, room 280

Law & Justice Council meetings – 2014 (4:30-6:00 p.m. in County bldg 1, room 280)

July 17
September 18
November 13