

**Work Release Siting Advisory Committee**  
**SeaTac Ramada Inn, 1:00pm – 5:00pm**  
Minutes – October 3, 2007

Committee members present: Ida Ballasiotes, Anne Fiala, Ross Gallagher, John Hickman, Ed Holm, Tim Quenzer, and Marie Sullivan

Committee members absent: Nancy McLaughlin

Moderator: David Jansen

Support: Simone Currier and Sandy Robertson

**Welcome**

David Jansen welcomed the committee and provided logistical information regarding the meeting location.

Chair Ed Holm asked for review discussion of the agenda. Judge Hickman moved to approve the agenda and all agreed.

The committee next reviewed the minutes from the August 22, 2007, meeting. With no discussion, Ross Gallagher moved to approve the minutes. All agreed.

David recommended that the notes from the September 17, 2007, conference call not be considered minutes, as business was not conducted, the sole purpose was to provide preparation for the meeting materials to be presented at today's meeting.

**Information Sharing**

Judge Hickman indicated that the president of the Superior Court Judges Association sent to the membership information regarding the Committee. At this time, only one judge has provided feedback.

David reported that the Department has only received one inquiry regarding work release siting. That inquiry, from a potential vendor, will be forwarded to the Committee.

Ida Ballasiotes asked if there have been any further discussion on 6157 and county of origin. Anne Fiala indicated that since work release is still confinement, 6157 will not apply to work release. However, Secretary Clarke has asked that offenders be sent to the work release that is within (or near) the county of origin and the Department is working towards this goal. For Rap House and Lincoln Park, the specialized offender populations at those facilities require they serve the statewide need, rather than just that of Pierce County.

Ida is concerned with the offenders whose first conviction was years ago, and how that makes compliance with 6157 much more difficult.

Anne explained that every county is currently covered by a work release facility. In response to a question by Ross regarding families that move to communities to be near incarcerated

offenders, Anne said the Department has found few instances where this occurs. The Department often transfers offenders to different prisons for various reasons. While some families move to be near an offender, it does not happen very often.

### **Review of Conference Call Notes**

David led a review of the notes from the September 17, 2007, conference call. While the Committee has requested data regarding the county of origin, that data is not yet available since the law just took effect. The first data is expected to be available in December.

- Tim Quenzer expressed interest in the bill sponsor and what data was used to reflect work release occupancy. Ed indicated that Prosecuting Attorney Gerry Horne had done some work regarding Pierce County and that data was likely available from Mr. Horne.
- Tim would like to see some accurate statistics to inform the process. Anne indicated the Department does have some old data for Pierce County. In 2004, the Department signed an agreement with Pierce County that the only offenders sent to Pierce County would have been convicted there; therefore, older data regarding Pierce County would pre-date this agreement.
- Judge Hickman spoke about the report that was done by Bertha Fitzer of the Pierce County Prosecutor's Office. He will forward that report to the David.

Marie Sullivan requested a change to the conference call notes. In paragraph three under County of Origin, Marie would like the notes to reflect that CTED is required by statute to provide housing services. The revised notes are attached.

### **Review of Revised Data**

David explained each of the revised data sheets and charts. Audience member Bertha Fitzer indicated the physical capacity reflected for Progress House Work Release was incorrect – rather than being 68, it is actually 75. Anne agreed that the higher number was correct.

Ida asked if work release offenders could be housed in local jails. Anne responded that under our current program, this does not work except in Clark County. There is no reason why the Department cannot contract with other counties; in fact, Skagit County has indicated it might be willing to explore such an agreement. Most counties don't have enough extra space for such contracting, although the Department is open to exploring different arrangements.

Audience member Ginger Richardson is concerned that contracting out would result in a loss of state jobs and that this would have to be negotiated with the Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE). Anne stated the Department contracts for safety and security, not Community Corrections Officer work.

David cautioned that the charts provided do not include overlays for gender or special needs.

Regarding the data on crime rates, Tim expressed concern that the data does not seem to accurately reflect county crime rates. The data, obtained from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, may not be reported consistently by each county.

The Committee discussed the various approaches and agreed on the need for an equitable list of criteria, to include public support and the availability of job opportunities and treatment support services. They discussed whether or not work release is effective and will wait for the report due from the Washington Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) regarding the efficacy of

work release. Judge Hickman reminded the Committee of the data provided at the August meeting by one of the work release contractors, which showed that work release has a positive impact on recidivism rates.

Small communities will be difficult to serve. The Committee discussed potential partnerships amongst adjacent counties; however, the lack of services in small communities will be problematic.

Judge Hickman asked David what the Department recommends. David indicated the Department tends to use the client base in decision-making of this type. In considering the county of origin focus, the Department would lean towards using population as the main criteria. This would remove any bias and would be equitable; additionally, it would be responsive to future changes. To partner with jails in small communities and have adjacency agreements in rural areas would be very functional.

Judge Hickman asked what other weighted factors should be considered if population is the main criteria. David responded that other criteria identified by the Committee could be easily folded into the population model.

Tim asked if adjacency agreements are just between counties or if they are between counties and the Department. Anne explained, using Cowlitz County as an example. In working with Cowlitz County, both Lewis County and Wahkiakum County were invited to participate. The end result is that Cowlitz County agreed to be the catchment area for all three counties. In these discussions, the Department is always upfront regarding which counties would be included in a designated catchment area. David added that counties may also choose to expand current agreements and partnerships.

### **Public Input**

Following a brief recess, Ed welcomed input from the public.

Ginger Richardson, representing the WFSE and Community Corrections Officers (CCOs), asked the Committee to keep the following in mind:

- Supervision of work release facilities should be maintained by state employees
- The staff-to-offender ratio should not be increased
- Consider allowing work release to maintain a violator capacity as an opportunity to break the cycle of offender behavior. This has been beneficial. For example, if an offender has a relapse of drug abuse, the offender would be sanctioned back to work release for habilitation or rehabilitation.
- Work release is the perfect environment to help provide the possibility for change. CCOs need a place to put violators, with 50-75 warrants issued daily.
- CCOs are frustrated that offenders in work release are from different counties and have to return to the county of origin, even though they have obtained employment in the county where the work release is located. It would be nice to have a work release in every possible county to provide services and help with transition.

Bertha Fitzer is the Deputy Prosecuting Attorney in Pierce County. The 2006 report from the WSIPP concluded that there was insufficient research and therefore, no conclusion could be reached. There is one study that indicates work release is effective. This is a policy decision. If 600 new beds are needed, we need to know if it is a good way to spend resources. Ms. Fitzer

## **Public Input (continued)**

believes that the Clark County Work Release is a good example of a successful program because most offenders there can maintain jobs and support mechanisms upon release. Regarding the data provided by the Department today, Ms. Fitzer indicated some of the data is incorrect. She is concerned that, if the Committee heavily emphasizes services in its criteria, then the state will continue to “dump” into Pierce County. She asked that the Committee adopt a system that reduces as many biases as possible and indicated the population model would be the most appropriate because it is the most neutral and bias-free.

## **Committee Discussion of Models**

The Committee discussed the potential for further legislative changes. David indicated that using the population approach would not only serve as a leveler, but would also be least susceptible to legislative change. Regarding the efficacy of work release, David reminded the Committee that the 6308 Task Force did conclude that work release is appropriate. The Department feels work release will be more effective if it is broadly distributed.

- Judge Hickman expressed his support for the population-based priority; however, he would also like to include additional criteria for the Department to use so there is room for mitigation and consideration of special factors.
- Tim agreed that population is the least biased and would be most acceptable; he would like to see employment as a criteria.
- Marie indicated that CTED often weighs criteria in the competitive grants it oversees. While population is a neutral factor, the Committee should also consider county of origin, jobs, and services. She likes the idea of a regional approach and suggested there may be opportunity to provide funds to small communities that are currently under financial stress.
- Ross agreed with using population as the approach. He stressed the need to have to work with the limitations of county of origin.
- Anne agreed that the population approach is the most equitable and fair and there is solid data on population. In terms of other criteria, Anne suggests using employment rates to help define where a work release facility would be suitable.

Judge Hickman suggested each member bring to the next meeting a list of criteria so that the Committee can come to consensus on which criteria would best complement the population approach. Ed asked the Committee members to get their written criteria and ideas to David by November 1.

David will use the population model and overlay the other criteria to help inform the Committee and assist in arriving at a comprehensive approach. He will also obtain employment data (job availability and job market).

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on November 14, 2007 in Vancouver, Washington at the Hilton in conjunction with the WSAC Conference. David's office will make the arrangements and inform the Committee.

### **Action Items**

By November 1, Committee members will provide David with their written criteria and ideas to supplement the population approach.

David will forward the vendor inquiry to the Committee.

David will ensure the data is changed to accurately reflect the population at Progress House Work Release.

David will create overlays of the population data to reflect other criteria.

David will forward the Bertha Fitzer report to the Committee, upon receipt.