

Willamette Criminal Justice Council 2013 Strategic Plan

Wednesday – January 23, 2013 1:00-5:00 PM

In Attendance: Mike Beilstein, Ed Boyd, Justin Carley, Ken Elwer, Rick Hein, Linda Hukari, Bessie Johnson, Sharon Konopa, Mary Moller, Jeanne Nelson, Nicolas Ortiz, Jack Rogers, Jon Sassaman(p), Dan Schwab(p), Diana Simpson, Terry Thompson, Stewart Wershow, Deb Williams, Penny York

Staff: Jodi Robin

Guests: Gloria Sica, Pete Sandrock, Scott Jackson, Dave Henslee, and Joel Pickerd

WCJC 2013 Strategic Plan

WCJC Mission Statement:

The mission of WCJC is to (1) promote and facilitate fair, efficient, and coordinated criminal justice services; (2) provide long range planning for the delivery of criminal justice services; and (3) provide timely information to governmental agencies and to the public on criminal justice matters of concern.

Strategy One: To improve the communication and relationship between law enforcement and the mental health department to become more efficient serving the mental health community.

The first goal set by the WCJC at the planning session will focus on mentally ill offenders in our community. Law enforcement members of the WCJC agree that an increasing amount of their time and resources are being devoted to responding to people who are mentally ill and in crisis. It was discussed and agreed that there is a genuine lack of resources available in our community to appropriately deal with this mental health issue. Sharon Konopa stated that she felt our current system is only reacting to the problem and is not being proactive. Jeanne Nelson pointed out there is a lack of collaboration and connective processes between law enforcement and the health department concerning this issue, not because of will but caused by the current system in place. Housing is a big issue pertaining to the mentally ill in our community, as many of these individuals are living on the streets. The jail is not an appropriate place for mentally ill offenders who are in crisis. It was noted that the WCJC must be mindful of the public vs. law enforcements perception. Focus on compassion, safety and care.

The intent of this goal is to research and inform. The WCJC will work to define this mental health issue. The WCJC will look at the best practices and see if/how we could apply them. The WCJC will conduct research focused on mental health issues involving law enforcement and then make recommendations. Research will also be conducted to see how local law enforcement and the health department are currently handling situations when they arise, including any policies currently in place. Once the recommendations have been shared the WCJC can decide how to share the information collected with the public. Diana Simpson expressed interest in using OSU graduate students to conduct the research.

Strategy Two: To promote school safety in order to protect our children and provide a safe learning environment.

This goal was brought forward from WCJC member Penny York pertaining to school shootings and proactive involvement in school safety. WCJC law enforcement members assured the Council that all local law enforcement agencies have practiced and are prepared for these types of tragedies. Penny York stated that the Corvallis School District would like to have a school resource officer in every school within Corvallis, but currently there are no funds to make this happen. This issue is on the minds of the public and people want to know what can be done locally. Two goals the WCJC could address in regards to school safety are: 1). Reassure the public that law enforcement is proactive and ready. 2). Stress the need for additional resources in schools.

Diana Simpson stated that the WCJC could support the need to supply school resource officers by sharing the information we collect with the city councils and commissioners. Penny York pondered what are the models out there already being used? What would best fit our community? How are dollars being spent wisely? Are there federal funds available? The WCJC could investigate practices elsewhere, the pros and cons, alternative models, and best

practices and provide models in the report that all local jurisdictions could implement. Starting with looking at what we currently have in place in our community.

It was proposed that the Lay Committee would spearhead looking into this issue and then make recommendations. Pete Sandrock stressed the point of focusing on schools, instead of mass shootings in general. Mr. Sandrock also said it's important for the council to not ask for more money or resources as our first contact with the public. Many members agreed that it's important to not promise we can prevent these types of tragedies from occurring. The WCJC members made a list of the types of violence to include in the research pertaining to school safety to include: catastrophic events, bullying, sexual assault, drugs and alcohol, building safety, and physical assaults.

The WCJC Lay Committee will conduct research into school safety and the preparedness of law enforcement to handle the situations that may arise and report findings. The WCJC will start by requesting department heads to write up their current protocols. The Law Committee will work to engage the school districts in these discussions. The following school districts will be contacted: Corvallis, Philomath, North Albany (GAPS), rural schools and private schools. Sharon Konopa reminded the council that this issue really falls under the school administrations territory. Mike Beilstein brought up the point that we should ask the school administrators what they perceive as safety needs within the schools. The WCJC will research what is currently happening between the local criminal justice agencies and school administrators. Jodi Robin and Ken Elwer were elected to write up the information collected to be shared within the WCJC. The WCJC will then decide who to share the information with externally and how to influence change.

Strategy Three: Research and communicate the criminal justice needs in our community.

By conducting a criminal justice survey the WCJC hopes to find out if the perceptions of the public are the same as the council. Pete Sandrock stated a good starting point would be to use current surveys already conducted as a guide for what questions to ask in our survey. Jeanne Nelson said a similar survey was recently done by the Health Department and may be available to read on the Bentranet. It was also pointed out that United Way may have conducted a similar study in our community. It was agreed that law enforcement staff would possess more knowledge than the community at large as to giving guidance on how to best deploy resources. Pete Sandrock stressed the importance of including the voice of interested parties, disadvantaged citizens, minority populations, students and the elderly.

The WCJC members compiled a list of interested parties and organizations we should talk to about criminal justice needs to include:

- Benton County Parole and Probation
- Benton County Juvenile Department
- Boys and Girls Club
- Business owners
- CARDV
- Children's Farm Home
- Chintimini Neighborhood Association
- Corvallis Homeless Shelter Coalition
- Corvallis School District
- Community Alliance for Diversity
- Courts
- Corvallis Multicultural Learning Center
- Crime victims
- DHS staff
- Downtown Corvallis Association
- Faith community leaders
- Geographic hot spots
- Hewlett Packard
- Homeless Shelter Commission
- Individual town citizens
- Jackson Street Youth Shelter
- Legal Aide
- Local schools
- Mental Health Department
- NAACP
- Neighborhood groups
- Neighborhood housing associations

- Neighborhood watch
- Old Mill Center
- Oregon State University
- Rural towns/schools
- Senior Services
- Service organizations
- Social service clients
- Strengthening Rural Families Inc.
- United Way

The goal of the WCJC is not to create the survey but to give guidance and a list of interested parties to the OSU Graduate students who hopefully will be performing the survey. The Benton County Sheriff's Office also conducted a survey in 2005 that can be used as a good example for this survey. One good approach to the survey may include asking what citizens are willing to pay for certain services. The survey results will be used to find out what the community's priorities are regarding public safety. The proposed outcome will be a list of priorities that will give us guidance on how to deploy resources.

Benton County Jail.

Diana Simpson stated that the Benton County Jail project is currently in a holding pattern until the consulting report is complete. The report should be available this coming May and will be shared with the WCJC once available.

Potential Strategy: Study the effects of drugs and alcohol on our local community and criminal justice resources.

The WCJC discussed the issue of student drug and alcohol use in schools and its correlation to crime. This issue was brought to the table by Terry Thompson, as he stated this is where the juvenile department is seeing a rise in their caseloads. Terry Thompson defined the issue involving mostly middle school and high school age students. Other WCJC members pointed out that crime involving local college student populations are also affected by drugs and alcohol issues. Mary Moller shared that the majority of cases DHS handles stem from drug and alcohol abuse and many clients have mental health issues as well. Ms. Moller stated she could share local DHS statistics pertaining to this issue with the WCJC. Jeanne Nelson pointed out that there are inadequate resources available to those without insurance to get clean and stay that way. Jack Rogers said as a citizen of the community he would like to know how large of financial burden these cases are putting on the system. It was decided to focus this issue around the impact on the system and not the community as a whole, as that would be too large to quantify. Sharon Konopa stated that this would be a great project to join resources with Linn County to accomplish. Members of the WCJC expressed concern as to how we could influence change pertaining to this issue. Jack Rogers also stated that most people in our community have no idea about the amount of crime there is locally in general.

The goal of researching this issue would be to effectively communicate with the public about the effects of drugs and alcohol on our community. The WCJC would work to compile data on the influence of drugs and alcohol on community and criminal justice resources. Penny York stated that the WCJC could compile data that already exists locally on this issue. General consensus at the planning session was to not move forward at this time with this strategy and to reevaluate in the future.