

Whatcom County Re-Entry Coalition

March 24, 2011 – 5:00 pm - WorkSource, 101 Prospect St.

Mission Statement: *To provide an efficient and supportive network of assistance for citizens re-entering our community after incarceration, those homeless and others at-risk in Whatcom County.*

Members present: Jim Cozad, Joy Gilfilen, Irene Morgan, Lori Childs, Debbie David, Charlie White, Kim Burkhardt, Robbi Ferron, Allan Linde, Kay Sardo and Barbara Giannetti. Guests – Shannon Hager and Teresa Hertz.

Jim opened the meeting with introductions.

Social Service agency reports:

League of Women Voters, Robbi Ferron – former felons have ‘provisional’ voting rights – do not have to pay off their fines first, County clerk is very helpful. Offered to do more in-depth presentation next month. She is scheduled for 30 minutes April 28.

- Debbie would like to see a volunteer advocate in place
Fines need to be looked at.

Irene – Parking meter project – Morse Steel has donated 3 steel plates for the bases for the meters. Need to find donors for posts, and ‘head dress’ for the info on the meters. Have 2 w/ finished artwork, 3 in progress. Have 1 host, working on finding hosts and sponsors. Any business or person that can sponsor (\$1,000 /yr.) or host a meter at their business, please contact Irene – 354-3653. Will contact D. Anderson at Vo Tech for welding.

- It was suggested we have a contest for most money collected per meter.
- Write a letter to the editor regarding the project.

Jim – REUniversity – explained the program – we still need a 3 bedroom house. Robbi has the name of a landlord.

Irene – District Court presentation – Joy and Irene attended a staff meeting with 13 Probation officers in attendance. They were very interested in our program and plans for Restorative Justice. The areas of most concern for them and their clients are housing and employment. There was a lot of interest for collaboration.

Joy and Irene met with **Jon Komorowski, Public Defender** to share our program and ideas with him. He shares our views in many aspects and is willing to work with us. Encouraged us to go to Olympia to testify before the Legislature on our findings. Lori wants to go to testify.

Irene – Law & Justice Council – County officials never approved the L&J proposal. This was their first meeting for several months – low attendance. Irene was the only new person attending. Still no representation from the County or City. There were committees formed that will meet monthly – larger group will meet quarterly.

Restorative Justice – Charlie gave Irene his book written by Jim Consedine, from New Zealand. After grasping the concept this has been one of the focus of our talks with those we meet with to help reduce the numbers going into the jail system, public safety, harmony in community.

Charlie –Punitive measures “Destroys the fabric of the family.” He feels with RJ a healing between the perpetrator and the victim is very likely, keeping the community in tact. Parents need help with informing their children of the dangers of their actions.

Washington State ID – Irene and Joy met with Sen. Carrell, 2 DOC and 2 DOL representatives plus Rep. Buys and people from Sen. Erickson's, and Rep. Overstreet's office. After 30 minutes Sen. Carrell was called to a meeting but we continued to meet with the 4 agency people. We are much closer to having a system that will provide Washington State ID for citizens releasing from our State prisons. Our next meeting will be after the session closes in late April.

Kay – New Jail – Pete Kremen told the Right Size Jail committee that the County was NOT going to purchase the Rural Ave property! The RSJ committee wants alternatives in place like treatment programs to reduce the jail population, expand the Division St area for other programs and to keep the jail downtown with all the linkages in place.

Charlie – Employment Co-op meeting – set up Community Service projects partnering with What. Volunteer Center for insurance – to keep people busy and out of trouble (work & life skills)

~ Will go to some churches to set up speaking engagements for us.

Kim suggested we contact What Comm. Coll for interns and possible Intern Coordinator.

~ Her Re-Entry program is now expanded to 7 states.

Allan suggested we build a Big Brothers/Big Sisters type mentorship platform to support people returning to our community.

NEXT MEETING

April 28 – 5 pm - WorkSource – 101 Prospect St. . – near old red Museum (same side of street toward Holly)