

Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee
Meeting Notes
November 21, 2022

Voting Members Present: Debbie Ahl, Ryan Allsop (Committee Vice Chair), Clark Campbell, Pete Dawson, Andrew Gamble, Bob Pritchett, Sarah Rothenbuhler (Committee Chair), Chris Trout, Paul Burrill

Voting Members Not Present: Brad Rader, Troy Muljat

Nonvoting Members Present: Don Goldberg, Bellingham Mayor Seth Fleetwood, Whatcom County Executive Satpal Sidhu, CJ Seitz

Nonvoting Members not Present: Council Member Tyler Byrd, Eva Schulte, Jori Burnett

Public Present: Ellen Baker, Ken Bell, Lance Calloway, Barbara Chase, Liz Coogan, Jefferson Dunn, Dan Dunne, Peter Frazier, Nadia Ghuman, Elizabeth Gibbs, Stephen Gockley, Cathy Halka, Dillon Honcoop, Jon Howe, Buddy Johns, Bryan Jones, Wendy Jones, Pamela Jons, Cliff Langley ?, Erika Lautenbach, Rob Lee, Lisa McShane, Ted Mischaikov, Lynn Murphy, Tim Northrup, Jennifer Noveck, Guy Occhiogrosso, Hannah Ordos, Andrea Ruback, Lyle Sorenson, Gina Stark, RB Tewksbury, Patrice Valentine, Carryn Vande Griend, Sandy Ward, Jude Widmann, DBD – Council Staff (no name given), 360.733.6670 (no name given), Hannah Ordos, Ellen Baker, apologies for the other attendees whose names we did not get

Introductions / Administrative business / Comments welcome from the Public (5 min)

- Committee Chair calls meeting to order
- Committee Members introduce themselves
- Approve October 2022 minutes
- Invite public to participate along with Committee members during Q&A sessions

Public Safety— Rapid Deployment Interim & Design/Build Opportunities Utilizing Alternative Possibilities to Current Funding (Tax Levy) & Time Frame (Current path best case is 5+ years) for new Whatcom County Jail that also supports mental health and addiction crisis

Presentation (20 mins), Q & A (20 mins)

Jude Widemann- Business Development Manager for Tate Inc- Introductions

Buddy Johns- VP of Business Development at Coastal Detention Holdings- Rapid Deployment
Jefferson Dunn- Corrections Consultant- Funding, Design, Build & Construction of Correction Facilities

Former Head of Alabama Dept of Corrections- Public / Private Partnership

Water / Fish / Farm - Brief Overview of the WRIA 1 Resource Management and Alternatives to Adjudication

Presentation (20 mins), Q & A (20 mins)

County Executive Satpal Sidhu

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We're going to get started, it's 11:00. Thank you for coming to the November Whatcom Business Commerce Committee meeting. Thank you, everyone, as Ryan said, with the U.S. playing in the World Cup right now, thank you so much for everyone who's here in person. We understand for those zooming and what the sound is. As Ryan asked, please put World Cup updates in the chat for us. I want to first start off with, we have an updated agenda and my apologies to Executive Satpal. I put words in his mouth. He is going to give us a WRIA resource management and background to our water scenario. I had incorrectly said alternatives to adjudication. If anyone has any questions, don't hesitate to call out, and with that, we're going to move forward and do some of our housekeeping.

Don Goldberg: Sarah, can you mention to everybody if they want to talk, they can sit in that seat.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Part of the housekeeping. Thank you. We've officially called the meeting to order. Committee members, could you all introduce yourselves?

Ryan Allsop: Ryan Allsop, Allsop incorporated.

Clark Campbell: Clark Campbell, Gear Aid.

Don Goldberg: Don Goldberg, Port.

Paul Burrill: Paul Burrill, Fathom Seafood.

Pete Dawson: Pete Dawson, Dawson Construction.

Debbie Ahl: Yes. I'm Debbie Ahl, For Profit Health.

Chris Trout: Chris Trout with Wood Stone.

Clark Campbell: And just a little interruption there. There's a congratulations, Chris, on the New York marathon. So well done.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Hats off to you. Way to go.

Chris Trout: Thank you.

CJ Seitz: Good morning, CJ for higher ed, Western Washington University.

Bob Pritchett: Bob Pritchett, Faith Life.

Seth Fleetwood: Seth Fleetwood, mayor of Bellingham.

Satpal Sidhu: Satpal Sidhu. Whatcom County Executive. Thank you.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Satpal, Did you hear my apology at the start of this?

Satpal Sidhu: Yes, I did. Thank you very much. It was just a clarification. Things happen, we are all so busy and things keep going on. When I got reminded of that, then that's why I wanted to share with everybody.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: My apologies. And thank you for your understanding. Okay, so now the meeting minutes. Does anyone want to make a motion to approve the meeting minutes?

Paul Burrill: My name was not on the list of attendees. So that would be the only change. But it's not a huge deal. I came in late.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Okay, well, we'll get that changed.

Ryan Allsop: That'll teach you. (Laughter)

Paul Burrill: Exactly.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Anyone want to make a motion to approve the meeting minutes?

Clark Campbell: I'll make a motion for that.

Ryan Allsop: Second.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Alright, meeting minutes approved. This is not a meeting for just committee members to talk, we invite members of the public to speak. We'd love to hear what you have to say, too. In person and in Zoom too we love your participation. For people in person, Don has set aside these chairs. The Owl has trouble picking up people speaking in the back row. And so if you don't mind just coming forward stating your name and we'd love to hear what you have to say. With that being said, we're going to start with Jeff Dunn. Then we are going to jump topics and have Satpal speak. Both of them have meetings coming up that they need to get to. Jeff Dunn, thank you. We're just meeting you now via Zoom. And thank you so much for coming and helping us learn about some alternatives.

Jeff Dunn: Well, good morning to you and thank you so much for the opportunity to have a few minutes of your time. Very briefly, just who I am. I'm Jeff Dunn. I recently retired as the Department of Corrections commissioner for the state of Alabama for almost seven years. Prior to that, I was a career Air Force officer for about 28 and a half years. My role today is just to describe some potential options for the committee and the county as it pertains to your correctional facility. I've been made aware through Lyle Sorenson, that there is some discussion and some consideration from that. Having recently just gone through an extensive process in the state of Alabama for a \$1.3 billion infrastructure revitalization plan. There may be a couple of ideas that I would have to move your process along. I want to just bring up four or five quick areas that you'll need to consider. The first area is the area of assessment. I would just give an encouragement that as you're thinking about going forward, obtain a third party assessment, not only of community expectations and public safety expectations, but also some of the issues surrounding your potential inmate demographic over the next 5 to 20 years, what that looks like and also what is the stated mission and goals of the facility. One of the things in the state of Alabama that we were working very hard to move towards is to having an extensive focus on rehabilitation and reentry, providing services for inmates so that when they go back into society, they're prepared.

That's involved in the mission of the institution. That assessment would get all the way down to size and what types of housing arrangements you would need. All the way down to the types of materials and what type of structure that you would need, and then give you some rough estimates of what it would take to do that. So that would be phase one, just some sort of assessment. Phase two would be the design phase where you would bring in someone to be what we call the owner's rep. That's the person who is going to be on your team working directly for you to help create this design of the facility. That's usually done with other architects, potentially architects that are competing for the business to provide proposals. But I would encourage you, when you go into that design phase to have thought through and have someone that's on your team that's not representing possibly one of the construction companies or an independent architectural firm, I'd encourage you to have someone. The next is obviously the build phase, and that's more of a traditional construction phase. Again, we found that program management was key and crucial at this point. To have an expert on your team to interface with your construction

support team and the construction team as your representative, who knows the business and can identify and get you ahead of challenges that are often faced with public works projects like these.

The next phase is oftentimes one of the trickiest ones. We've talked about the assessment, the design, the build. The next is the financial phase and how you choose to finance. There are lots of options, and I'll talk about those here in a few minutes, but they run the gamut of a pay as you go system. Some municipalities and counties have a pay as you go. Others are willing to take out bonds. Others are willing to enter or consider entering into public-private partnerships. There's lots of options there. That's something that we could have a further discussion on. You've got the assessment, the design, the build, the finance, and then the second to the last piece is to maintain. One of the most crucial elements, but oftentimes the most neglected elements of a large facility, particularly a correctional facility, is that of the maintenance. A correctional facility is a 24/7 facility. It never closes, although inmates sleep, the operations of the facility never stop working. Maintenance is a very critical component. Oftentimes you can have maintenance included in some sort of financial arrangement at the beginning so as to ensure that ten, 15, 20 years down the road you have a fully maintained facility that that meets your expectations.

Lastly is the operational side of it. To the extent that you would like, there are folks that can come in and help you begin to build your operational policies and procedures around a new institution. One of the things in Alabama that we were seeking to do was to change the culture and to change the way in which we were conducting corrections and moving away from maybe an older view of a carceral state into more of a rehabilitative institution. That required a lot of operational changes in the way in which our staff conducted themselves and the way in which we treated inmates, those types of things. So all of those phases, the assessment, the design, the build, the finance, the maintain, and the operate, all start and are informed by a kind of a third party assessment to kind of get you started. Let me close with just this idea. Within a public-private partnership that is an option and that is there are entities, companies within the corrections space that are willing to partner with counties or states to whatever degree the state of the county is interested.

Maybe it's just a simple maintenance relationship, or it could be all the way up into a design, build, finance, and maintain relationship. A few have gone the entire gamut, which would be design, build, fund, maintain, and operate. That's all something that would need to be contemplated within the discussions of your committee. The decision that you make would then drive forward what type of facility, what your objectives are, what you want to accomplish with respect to public safety and those types of things. In my judgment, it starts with an initial kind of third party assessment as to kind of where you are now and with respect to the facility, where you might need to go. I'll stop there and see if there maybe are any questions. I don't want to take up too much of your time. I know you've got a full agenda.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We do have a few minutes for questions. Does anyone have any?

Ryan Allsop: Did I understand you correctly? You said the majority of people are just doing the design/build or they're not actually operating or hiring outside companies to operate. That counties are operating them locally is the majority of the cases, is that what you said?

Jeff Dunn: That's my experience. Of the roughly 3300 counties in the United States, a vast majority of them operate as public employees operating. There are very, very few that I'm aware of privately operate prisons within their counties.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I really like the rehabilitation focus. I feel like that represents such a need in our society today. Thank you for being available with this information. What about time frames? What are the time frame with these phases? I think you talked to Lyle quite a bit, thank you Lyle for bringing these speakers.

Jeff Dunn: The time frame is highly dependent upon what, in my judgment, the initial assessment determines. That's a collaborative process that would go on with the stakeholders, particularly the person who's running the operation, running the facility and those making the assessment. From that you would establish a set of requirements and then you could begin to program manage in however your system works to develop a timeline. It's hard to say. An assessment is fairly easy to do. You could have that done in probably 3 to 6 months. As far as the design, the build, the finance piece, those things aren't a linear process. All of those things can occur simultaneously or at different parts during the process so that you're not having to finish one to go to the next. Like I say, it starts with an assessment, and that's a pretty easy thing to do. Then the assessment would really drive what the rest of the timeline would do. As far as the construction piece, I have many contacts involved in the construction of a project right now, and it seems that the construction world is slowly getting back on its feet a little bit. The supply chains are beginning to improve a little bit and some of the commodity prices are beginning to slowly edge down. Hopefully in the next 2 to 3 years, that's going to be something that's going to smooth out a little bit and enable the experts in those fields to really give you good, solid projections of timelines with respect to the construction phase.

Ryan Allsop: Maybe this is a question for our local representatives. Have you seen options from financing that take it off of a ballot measure? That's currently how we are planning it. We've always tried to finance it since 1988. I think we've been trying to pass it again...

Sarah Rothenbuhler: 86?

Ryan Allsop: 1986, and it hasn't passed. We're way past due. Maybe Executive Sidhu and Mayor Fleetwood can answer help answer this. What are the options that take it off of being a ballot measure, but some other way of financing this so that we can actually get this moving forward? Because that seems to be one of the major limiting factors every time.

Seth Fleetwood: I'm happy to offer my thoughts just from a longer term perspective. I've been engaged in some capacity or another with jail issues since 2004. People might remember that when we were doing the comp plan update, we had to consider master facility planning and it was flagged back then. From the time I was involved, and I'll defer to Executive Sidhu because he knows more about this, it's going to be primarily a county project. It's always been considered as a public funding source as the primary means. There are just not other options in my experience that generate the kind of funds that are necessary distributed across large group of people, the public, to generate that kind of money, but, Executive Sidhu?

Satpal Sidhu: Good morning, everybody. I think that I want to say that the perception here is that somehow the county having either no financing, or the county takes so long to build it, or the county doesn't know how to maintain, or the county has failed to operate the jail. These are not correct assumptions to start with. I think the assumptions are, our community started this process in 2004. It's a community issue more than it's a management or construction or money issue. We did one tax in 2004, built a small, temporary jail with the idea to build the larger jail. Then 2008 happened, because that was completed in 2006, the temporary jail and immediately in a two-year planning and assessment. All these things were underway and then 2008 happened and that took three years to recover back. Then in 2013, actually, the committee was recalled and they started the process. The process was completed. Land was bought. Assessment was done on the size, location and three different consultants. Th county has spent almost \$2 million to date. We had talked to DLR, we have talked to HOK, I forget the third company's name, They're big consultants in the jail industry. All three have been consulted by county at different times and the issue has been how to pass the public threshold where the community is behind it. Jail is not a construction project as if we are building a county building to put in Public Works Department. I think you guys all understand that this is very, very sensitive issue and the culture in the Northwest or in Washington State is probably different than the Southern or Midwest as well.

That's a big hurdle to overcome for a community. It's not a mechanical process that we just want a building so big, so long, and how to maintain it and how to run it. We had a levy on the ballot in 2015 that failed. The public didn't pass it. It was very close. And then 2017 again, which failed even more miserably. And then 2019 we wanted to restart this whole process to put it on ballot in 2020 and we were going to refresh the needs assessment in 2020. And of course, COVID happened. We had started the process in January of 2022, and it is in the last month or so of finalization and presentation to the council and to the community. I think that is the nutshell where we are and about the people are very averse to having any private piece of this. It's been very well because one of the levy failed because there was a big rumor or argument made that we are a border county and we had increase of ICE presence in Whatcom County because being on the border and that this jail is being built to rent it or lease it to ICE to keep the other people in there, not for our public use. when these kind of things are in the community it's very hard to reach consensus or passage of things like this. So I just wanted the lay of the land, the background. Please go ahead.

Ryan Allsop: That's why I ask the question, how do we take this off of a ballot measure so we can finance it outside of that? Because everybody on this committee, as well as the council, the police chief, the sheriff, all believe we need a new jail. Our current jail does not meet standard. It's not safe. It doesn't do all the requirements we want as a community, from a drug and alcohol recovery center, from a mental health bed standpoint. we've been talking about it since 1986, but we haven't able to get past the ballot measures. What I keep hearing and it's what it seems like, whether there's rumors that ICE is using it or not, or how do we just get past that from a finance standpoint? Is there an option that other counties have done?

Jeff Dunn: If I could, I know my time is about taken up here and this will be my last comment, I think, to the answer, yes, there are other options out there that don't require the initial commitment of public funds, and it comes down to a discussion of risk and what level of risk is involved. For instance, I'm aware of facilities that were designed, built, financed by a private company and then leased back to the county and the county fully operated them, maintained them or a whole different set of options there. It doesn't require a significant amount upfront capital investment on the case of the county. There are other options and there's variations on those options. Lyle has my information. I'd be happy to discuss that further, if that would be of any interest.

Ryan Allsop: Personally, I'm not speaking for everybody here, but for myself. I think it would be really interesting to understand how other counties, cities around the country, the state, as Executive Sidhu said, we're not the South, Washington state, especially the Northwest, is obviously very left leaning. We need to make sure we account for that in how we design and build. We also all acknowledge that we need it. And so if we can't get it passed the ballot measure, then we have got to figure out another way to do this, because we're getting we're at the point of almost desperation. The elevator stopped working in our jail this year, things like that. They're not it's not safe anymore for the inmates, and if we can't count on a ballot measure working in the future, what are the options?

Seth Fleetwood: Can I just make a final comment there? Just as it relates to that, I know there's anxiety based on past experiences as to whether or not it's going to pass this time. That's understandable. As, I think, some of us have shared before, there are some processes in place this go around that I think dramatically increase the likelihood that it's going to be successful next year. The county is overseeing what's generally known as a justice project that includes a Stakeholder Advisory Committee that is going to be issuing an assessment in January with recommendations that relate to a variety of things that will inform rehabilitation generally and services that are needed. They're going to be giving a report to the County Council in February, and I think in our culturally divided county, broad agreements between left and right that are going to ensure that this measure is successful next November. I'm feeling confident about that. We will have the funding mechanism and be able to proceed. In the interim, we're going to continue the work because there's going to be several years before that's completed during which time

we're going to actively consider all kinds of efforts to contract jail space out so that we can lift booking restrictions and start arresting as needed again.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you, Mayor. I think some of the anxiety is also the current best case time path that we're marching down. That best case scenario time frame is pretty long and then leasing out jail space in Snohomish. Our police chief talked about losing two people from the department to transport a person and we're spending, I think it's \$3 million that we're spending with the Snohomish jail? And utilizing our police staff inefficiently as well. Anyway, we're all doing the best we can, and that's exactly why we are so pleased to hear from other communities that maybe have marched down the path towards more modern design and facilities that move towards rehabilitation and work more efficiently.

Ryan Allsop: I just think it behooves us to run both concurrent paths. And I think in life, if we go down a single path every time, it's setting up for a point of failure versus if you're on concurrent paths, we should at least know what our options are as a community. So that would be my parting words on that. Let's explore both, because if it doesn't pass and things don't pass here a lot, not everything goes through as we know. I think it would be good to have a backup plan.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Anyone have more questions for Jeff Dunn? Otherwise we should let him sign off.

Clark Campbell: Yeah, question-comment, really. I think what I heard from Jeff's presentation was that when you talk about these assessments, the first stage is really scoping, not design and moving straight to construction. I think the advantage that we actually have this time, and where I would agree with Satpal is if we can get consensus with the business community on what the vision of what that jail's mission is to be, and that's part of the scoping, then that informs the design phase. We'll have a little more consensus in the community. This is what this group I think has a role and talking about how the current facility is not safe, is not sufficient, is not meeting the needs of the current residents of that facility.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: And employees.

Clark Campbell: And employees and the community. I think we have with any campaign where you're asking people to give money, you've got to put your campaign together in a clear and concise way. I think we haven't done that as a community in the past.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: That's why we're bringing other voices in..

Clark Campbell: That's the piece I heard from representative from Alabama, was get your story dialed in, get your vision of what you're trying to do. Really clear before you start doing here's how much it's going to cost. It's kind of just the same as what you had before.

Ken Bell: So can we let him go? We have two other speakers, right?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes. Did you have anything else, Jeff?

Jeff Dunn: No, I just I would concur with the last speaker. I think there's a holistic effort that has to be undertaken. From my perspective, it starts with a very thorough assessment process. Thank you all again and again. I think Mr. Sorensen has my contact information. I'm happy to be available to continue this discussion, and I wish you all the best of luck in building a 21st century institution that's focused on rehabilitation and reentry. Thank you all.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you for your time. We're going to break here and move to Executive Satpal. He has another engagement coming up. So about 15 minutes...

Don Goldberg: Are we going to come back to this?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes. We'll circle right back to this. Thank you so much to our other speakers for your patience.

Satpal Sidhu: Thank you, everybody. Thank you, Sarah, for accommodating my time schedule. Appreciate that. So water issue, water is a complex issue and water is an existential issue for our community, not only for us, for everybody. You know, we are all about water. 70% of our bodies, water, everything we eat, drink, live. It depends on water. So it's really important. This has been one of my goals as County Executive, has been to work on this issue proactively rather than reactive. I want to give you a lay of the land a little bit and then maybe I can answer some questions because there are so many stories and so much misinformation out there. It's very hard. You talk to some people and you talk to another group, you think you're in a different town and different county. You're talking about water. It's that bad. Anyways, I'll try to just lay out the facts here and then you guys ask questions. So the water rights history goes back to late 1800s and there are all kinds of water rights. The state did some big work on it in 1935 or 1937, whereas they said all the water, anything four feet below your feet belongs to the state. Anything 20 feet above your head belongs to the state. So all the rain that falls in your yard or in your farm or on the roads belongs to the state.

All that water which is underneath you belongs to the state. To dig a well, that's why you go get a permit. That's why when you want to capture the rain, you go get a permit for that. And same is for all our creeks, rivers, tributaries. All this is in a legislation and a system to manage that. Of course, then comes on top of that water quality and all that. Now the water rights are complex that. Water rights are some people to give you an idea, have water rights which are like six feet of water on your property means if you own 100 acres and you go six feet high. All 100 acres. That much water rights they have every year. There are people who have no water rights and they're zoned as agriculture. They have no water rights. Then there are shades in between. There are people who have applied for water rights, have never those applications have been sitting there since 1985, have not been resolved by this state. Then there was a Boldt Decision in 1974, because before that all the treaty rights were in doubt for their water rights or habitat rights.

So in 1974, Supreme Court of the United States passed a decision, which reaffirmed all the treaty rights all through United States. That has an impact on the water rights and how the water habitat and water for fish, water for wildlife, water for other things is guaranteed. In Washington State, in 1985, the Department of Ecology passed a rule in stream flow rules throughout the state. It means that there must be so much water flowing through our rivers now that gives technically the river itself has water rights. So if you talk about Nooksack River is now an entity and it has its own water rights. It needs so much water flowing through it all the time. Then there is the Foster decision in 2015 in Washington State that any mitigation to be done to water for water must be. In place in time and in-kind means that you cannot mitigate water in one Watershed and say, oh, we are doing good things 50 miles away, so we should be exempt from this.

These are the some of the complexities of this water. There have been discussions going on for 25 years. In 2015, people remember Jeremy Freeman. He worked for the tribes and farmers and they had an agreement. I was able to locate only two pages of that discussion and one page tells you a five point formula to solve this problem. Everybody agreed to that. Bad luck for our communities, Jeremy passed away before he could call the meeting. Then after, everybody agreed to everything. Everything went quiet. These are the leadership things where somebody has to carry the torch and make it happen. These things don't happen by committee. Anyways, since then, there have been discussions and nothing has happened. The tribes went to the state legislature and to the governor to ask for adjudication. Now, what is adjudication? Adjudication is a simple process. It's a mechanical mathematical process. Whereas they assess the Department of Ecology, who has the most senior water rights, the first in time and first in use is the law of United States. Actually, it is appearing in law all over the world. Who was first to use and first

in time. So all the tribes natives have that most senior water rights. Then comes the other people's water rights. City of Bellingham has huge water rights. Maybe you can compare to if there are 1 million people in Bellingham, City of Bellingham, and they need drinking water. I'm just giving you a comparison. Don't quote me on this exact, I'm just giving you the scale of things. How this is then, PUD, the Public utility district has water rights comparable or maybe more than a rights by the city of Bellingham. Then Ferndale has water rights, Lynden has water rights, and others have some water rights for their population cities by the municipal water law. That's a separate overlay of that water rights also.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Executive Satpal?

Satpal Sidhu: Yes, please go ahead.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I'm sorry. With our time, we went a bit long and with our time constraints. I know you've got that meeting coming up. Perhaps we can pull in some other communities that have dealt with this.

Satpal Sidhu: Let me say for the benefit of everybody, that is also not true, that everybody has to spend \$50,000, \$100,000 and will take 40 years if you fight, you know, Hatfields and McCoys. You can extend that to 50 years to your own peril. You know the word we heard from Yakama Nation, all from the tribe's farmers. They were just at a meeting just recently sent a copy to the committee members. Sarah has a copy of that summary of that meeting. They said they were so desperate that they waged peace instead of war. That sums up everything.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you for bringing that up. I would love it on some of these next meetings if we could have you partake and maybe some representation from Yakima and we can learn from them and bypass some of the war here.

Clark Campbell: Yes. Just so I'm clear, this is not an issue in which county Executive or the county board has any jurisdiction on.

Satpal Sidhu: Yes.

Clark Campbell: It's solely a decision with the governor, legislature and Department of Ecology.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: And it's a big topic for us with Fisheries and Ag.

Clark Campbell: And there's been a lot of ways. But the opinions of our group and the county council and the county exec don't have any jurisdictional basis for the outcome here.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We don't have any jurisdictional basis on anything.

Clark Campbell: (Laughter, then voices talking over each other) I want to make sure that we're clear. This is a topic.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes and we're trying to learn. Are we okay to wrap this topic and so we can have our other speakers come on again?

Satpal Sidhu: Yes, I will be here. Definitely. As many as many times you want me. This is such an important topic. One of the things I want to say, that there is a word out there for last year or so the adjudication will annihilate agriculture. Is not true. I just wanted to say publicly and openly, it's not true that adjudication will annihilate everything and there will be no agriculture left in water.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We're just not interested in that conversation. What we're interested in is collaboration. We need to look forward. Thank you.

Satpal Sidhu: Thank you very much. Thanks for your time.

Ken Bell: I'm gonna push back a little bit. Why are we here if we don't have an impact? (voices talking over), we have to influence our legislators. We have to influence government, we have to have a voice, and we have to speak as a unified body or we're just banging gongs in the background. So as a unified voice, we have power over what is communicated to our legislative bodies and their power.

Clark Campbell: And I think, well, I think that anywhere that it's going to come down to is how is the adjudication going to occur, not whether or not.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: It's on track to occur...

Clark Campbell: It's going to occur, so if we want a voice in how it occurs.

Ken Bell: I don't buy into the idea that...

Clark Campbell: The state regulates it.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: So let's table this now because we've got our other speakers. Clark, excellent input, please, we will circle back to this because it's a critical topic for our community. I would love to acknowledge our other speakers and circle back to our public safety topic. Jude and Buddy are online. Buddy is up. Thank you so much for being here.

Buddy Johns: Well, thank you for having me and thank you for giving me some time to present who we are and what we can do and how we may be able to help you with your justice infrastructure. I've been involved in justice infrastructure for the last 25 years. The tale of the facility that you've been going through in your county in particular is not abnormal. We do work nationwide, and I want to present some of that here briefly, but on county facilities, I try not to call them county jails anymore because they no longer are just jails. That's the good thing that has happened in the last several years where what we're going to show you is some of the things that we can do to help the counties deal with the facilities that they've developed into over the years. You have to have treatment. You have to have rehabilitation services and reentry services. The typical jail that was built 15, 20 years ago and was talked about even up to about five years ago, no longer is an adequate facility to deal with the problems and the issues that you have for public safety purposes. Therefore, in the items that we have, I'd like to share a screen with you and I have a brief PowerPoint that I'd like to go through, and I'm going to go through it very rapidly because it just tells you who we are. To give you some background of as to why we feel that we're experts on this topic and then talk to you about some possible temporary solutions that we could help the county with while you go through all of the steps that Jeff talked about earlier, is that okay? If I go through share a screen with you.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: You bet.

Buddy Johns: I am going to share.

Ryan Allsop: While he does that. U.S. is up 1-0.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes. (laughter)

Buddy Johns: Can you see my screen?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes.

Buddy Johns: Again, I'm the vice president of Coastal Detention Holdings, which is the largest manufacturer of justice and detention products in the country. What I mean by that is the actual physical walls, the physical doors, windows, window frames, hardware locking control functions. We have several facilities around the country and we're very, very well established. Our lock company is out of San Antonio, Texas, where over 130 years old, most of our security hall and metal business we have are in Georgia, in South Dakota. Again, they're 30, 60, 80 years old. We have many, many companies. We actually even have to update this screen here. We have a new manufacturing facility in Alabama, and we also have an office in Nevada at this point as well. We are nationwide. We've done work in every state our products are in approximately 2000 facilities throughout the United States. Actually, we have a very large international footprint as well. Again, I mentioned we're the largest in the industry right now. We probably have anywhere between 50 to 75% of the US market for what we do. What I wanted and again, I'm flipping through this quickly and you can ask me whatever questions you want at any time and slow me down and stop me. I wanted to get specifically to some of the things that are impacting the current build structure.

Typically our company and our input is way down the line from where you are today. Historically, what Jeff talked about with the assessments and the design and all the things that you need to do over the next couple of years, we typically don't get involved until after you're actually going to build. The bill is already there, the financing is in place and we're involved on the build side of that. That has changed in the last couple of years. A couple of the companies that was mentioned by the county executive earlier, DLR, HOK, those are two of the primary designers and criteria documentation companies that assist in designing what our products are and what we would put into the facilities. Over the last several years, we've worked very closely with those companies and a lot of the end users, meaning the counties and the states themselves during their build process, take all our mix of products. And again, I mentioned it earlier, our ceilings, walls, doors, frames, locks. Instead of just delivering all the parts and pieces to a jobsite and letting it be built there, due to a necessary upgrade of quality and a necessary shorter schedules of build and the things that need to be done. The industry has moved into the modular construction world, which what I mean by that and I'm going to skip this, this is just some information on how quickly we talk about.

I want to show you some pictures that, actually this picture that you see right here is a typical modular cell that is created in a factory, just as you see it in this picture. It's completely finished, and if there's windows in it, most of the time for the normative environment right now, we do put windows in them there. It can be normative environment furniture. We put both the plastic bunk in this one and the steel bunk in this one just to show what's available. Typically now with the normative environment, there's a lot of glazing. You see more of almost a dorm room finish to what needs to be done. We complete all of this, including the finished flooring, the finished painting, the light fixture, etc., and all of those parts and pieces. Everything you see in that picture we actually make from raw steel. We fabricate that in all of our facilities and we've made these modular cells to deliver to the market to make things built faster. And again, with a lot of flexibility for what the current justice facility needs in today's market time. We make these in our our different manufacturing facilities. The reason I'm showing you this picture is because I want to quickly get to some potential temporary solutions that we might have for the county.

We start with the cell structure. What's really important to understand when we talk about a softer, normative environment, feel and look to deal with the rehabilitative and treatment services needed and necessary for the offenders that are in the facility at any given time. Meaning you want it to look more like a dorm room or a treatment center room than a jail fixture. We don't compromise the safety and security that your sheriff and or any Department of Corrections people may need to keep the facility safe and secure, to keep the officers working there safe and secure. And quite honestly, keeping the offender safe

and secure from themselves and others. So, again, I'm showing you some of the products that are in there. It's all custom design, custom built to what the demands of the individual facility would be. I'm showing you a few pictures of the hardened type facilities that you have. There's obviously many, many different soft facilities. I'm going to skip by some of this quickly. This is all of our companies, all the various products that we have. I think we set this to you in advance. So you have a print out of it and available. I'll be more than happy to answer some more questions about this later. What's important here and why.

In the last year and a half, we've worked closely with a company called SLS/MODCORR out of Texas. They are a very large disaster recovery company who does a lot of work with FEMA in the world and the armed services as well, delivering quick solutions and generally modular solutions to the various markets for disaster recovery. We've been working with them on a detention quick service delivery item which is being launched currently, which I want to show you some pictures of as well. So it's really a rapid deployment of justice facilities is what you're going to see some photographs of in items as well. And I want to quickly get to that because, I know your schedule is very tight, but I wanted to bring up and show you the prototype model that we're building right now, physically under construction. You saw that earlier in our corrections facility. I showed you a steel module that was being built. And that's one of these individual modules that you see. If you see where my cursor is moving here, we're taking those modules and building them into a skid. And when we refer to a skid, think of a tractor trailer container. So this would be a 12 foot wide by 53 foot long skid. And this pod that we refer to as the vehicle. That steel module that we showed you is one of these individual modules inside of a skid. When we refer to skid, I just want to go through this terminology real quick for you, is we refer to this 12 foot wide skid that looks like a tractor trailer container that's 53 feet long. This pod that you're looking at is actually made up of five skids. One of the skids will have these six cells on the left. Then there'll be two skids that are blank, that basically are make up the dayroom. They come in on a tractor trailer. The fourth skid would be the other side where you have the cells and the shower units. Then obviously the fifth skid is this little control center that we have up front. It's very complicated and I gave a very condensed version. What I'm telling you is that we've gone to the modular world and we can deliver on a very, very quick basis for temporary and long term temporary. When I say temporary, I'm talking with 3 to 5 years during your building cycle. We can build out these modules. We bring them to your site and basically five tractor trailers. We put them together and there's a roof put on top of all of these, and it's a secured facility with all the detention requirements that can be set up on site within one week of time. Period. So it only takes one week. And this is a 21 person modular pod that is expandable.

It can be expanded 20, 40, 60, 80, whatever the temporary usage would be. And if you think about what the looks of this would be similar to you may or may not have seen classrooms on the exterior where you had classroom trailers set up for temporary use for schools. It can be it can be more of a normative environment look, it doesn't have to look like a jail, but it has all the detention requirements of a jail. Long story short, telling you, we have this available.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Are there some communities utilizing this now?

Buddy Johns: Not yet, because it's a brand new product. There is actually we're in negotiations around the country in two states and 12 other counties currently for this product to be delivered in 2023.

Ryan Allsop: What's it cost per bed out of curiosity?

Buddy Johns: The cost per bed is well, we don't break it down by bed because we do it by module, because sometimes, for example, this is designed as a double bunk cell. So there's two bunks in each one of these and this is 21 beds. The one that we're doing for a state up in the northeast right now is more of a normative environment. They don't they only want one bed in the module and an exterior window, etc. So it's only 11 people for this same pod. This pod is approximately \$1.6 million as a pod as it

sits without site cost. We don't know what the site cost would be. So that breaks down about \$80,000 per bed for this facility. Those are very round numbers that can be go up or down from there, depending on what the requirements are. If you notice, these do not have an independent shower in each one of the cells. We have a a group shower over here to the right on the top corner. If you add a shower, it might go up a little bit more. If you had more square footage, you could go up.

If you could reduce the square footage, it could go down. So it really depends on what the demand is. But it's approximately \$80,000 on a double bunked per bed facility is the budget. These, are also leasable. You don't have to buy them. We can lease these over two- or three-year period of time. And in that way, the facility, the county doesn't have to expend all the capital just for their temporary use. They can solve their 20, 40, 60 to 80 bed demand to relieve pressures. That's really where we're seeing the bulk of this being sold right now. It's relieving pressure for the temporary needs of the community while the decisions are being made for what the ultimate long term goal will be met. So these are leasable over time and that could be a there's probably a minimum of two year lease just because it won't make financial sense. Anything less than that, you will have site work conditions that you have to deal with. Obviously, we have plumbing and utility activities that need to be done on site to make sure that you can function with these.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Do you mind standing by while we listen to Jude? And then we could come up with questions after we hear our next speaker.

Buddy Johns: Absolutely.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Jude, are you on there?

Don Goldberg: Buddy can you take your screen down please?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: If you take your screen down, we'll get back to it.

Jude Widemann: Oh, hey, everyone. I'm not actually a speaker. I am a consultant who's been working with Lyle to bring Buddy and Jeff on today. So the only thing that I'd like to contribute to the group is just to emphasize here that the MODCORR temporary jail solution that Buddy just showed you is literally the only solution that I know of on the market that boasts the ability to present detention grade features as well as the normative environment in a rapid deployment module. So this is really it's brand new. It's very, very unique. But I think it's great that you guys would be able to put some eyeballs on it.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Jude, if you are a consultant in this industry, are there any communities that we should reach out to that have have it created an infrastructure where where we're moving away from the just the incarceration focus and more into the rehabilitation focus? Have you seen some communities that are doing this successfully?

Jude Widemann: Well I'm more connected in the state system than I am in the county system. I happen to know that the state of Idaho has made rehabilitation and reentry. A big focus of theirs. They're actually building a women's facility shortly here that is going to have those exact objectives. They're also focusing quite a bit on transitional housing, which may or may not be of interest to Whatcom County. But if you would like me to make an introduction to executive leadership in the state of Idaho, I would be happy to.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Appreciate that.

Ken Bell: Is there any design that you've done that in addition to the upstream from this rather than the facilities necessary to do some of the treatment options? Or are you just focused on the final cell, basically the medical treatment facility to the mental health treatment facility that will be upstream from this and arrive as well? Have you seen any movement in that?

Buddy Johns: No. We actually are designing this specifically for medical treatment as well. So we have a one pod that we're working with right now that is designed specifically just for medical treatment. We see the modular need for that, to be quite frank, more from a treatment facility standpoint than an actual just straight housing. We're looking at various levels of that. Also from the standpoint of other counties around the country, I don't know that we've done any work in the last two or three years nationwide that isn't focused on treatment. I can probably put a whole list of communities together for you that you could talk to around the country because your issues for needing to deal with offender rehabilitation needs is the norm now. I can tell you the last three or four facilities that we've supplied our modules to the permanent construction have all been permanent construction developed around jails that are truly treatment centers more than they are jails. So I would be happy to put a list together and supply them through Jude to you guys as well.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: That would really be appreciated. Thank you.

Buddy Johns: Yeah, no problem.

Ryan Allsop: Especially if they're like minded communities. It relates better for us If you have West Coast or let's just say left leaning communities that have done this instead of always South or although they might be the similar, but it would be great if there was community so we can understand locally. Yeah. Talks of similar lingo I think would be would be beneficial.

Buddy Johns: Yeah we'd be happy to do that, I'll get some of that are in the Northwest, and there's plenty of options. But, very frankly and I don't really see even in the south, southwest, Midwest, all over the country, anybody - it's not a left-right situation. It's a, you've got to deal with these issues, period, because it's not only the right thing to do, but it's the only thing to do nowadays. I mean, there's no way that you can ignore it. And my point to that is, even if you talk to somebody in the Deep South on a jail that's being built in the Deep South right now, the need and absolute determination to deal with the issues and not treat these just as lock up centers, it is truly treatment you have to deal with it. Is absolutely the norm. So what I'll do is I'll put a list together and you can you can look at them and you can choose and pick who you want to talk to. Might be worth the call to a couple of them just to hear the right opinion, right side, I guess, of the industries. It's very similar nowadays from our perspective.

Ryan Allsop: I agree. I just know how when we look at a map in this area and it only shows the south, we tend to distrust, especially if we want to get it. Yeah, we want to be able to show that communities of like minded right people are also doing this. It's not just...

Buddy Johns: Understood.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Anyone that's doing this successfully and with our present day needs, we'd love to hear.

Buddy Johns: Will do.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Wendy Jones. Do you mind if I call you out? We've got a lot of good people that have been working on solutions for our jail for so many years. And I see Wendy on there, and I know I'm totally blindsiding you. I just wondered if you wouldn't mind taking a minute.

Wendy Jones: If there's anything that I can do to help, I'd be more than willing to do so.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Okay, thank you. And maybe in the future you can help us with who else to bring to the table. We know everybody has more in common for what we hope to see for our community than

not. So getting ideas of where this has been successful will be amazing. Anybody else have any questions?

Clark Campbell: Just back to Ryan's comment about alternatives to vote and Seth's comments back. It sounds like there might be sort of a path with if it was not a permanent facility that you're bridging to a permanent facility or some sort of modular option on a lease basis. I did a quick math on that. And if you're talking about five of those pods, plus, you're probably talking about \$2 million per site per pod buying that, that's going to run you...

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Which we're spending transporting inmates to Snohomish.

Clark Campbell: If you eventually do that, they just get you 55 beds if you only have one per but a lease option if you needed to get an extra 55 beds to be able to make to relieve the capacity as opposed to this idea of how do we go and get space and start another. Is that going to be done quickly? That might be worth looking at and should be done with existing funds. Longer term, and it gets back to what is the timing for the next ballot measure is it actually slated for 2023.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: That's what we heard last meeting was best case scenario too. I think Erika...

Erika Lautenbach: I'm going to follow instructions and sit here while speaking. I guess I'm curious on the portable or modular design. I'm all I can think of is staffing intensity in terms of all of these individual buildings and the risk associated with not having appropriate staffing in places that are held off. I'm curious about Wendy's thoughts on that, because we already have staffing shortages at the jail. So it might actually exacerbate a staff issue to add those. And I'm not trying to be contrarian, but just realistic about what's possible. And then the other thing and I'm on the Stakeholder Advisory committee, so that's part of the reason why I'm here in the health department. But also I know that part of the issue with the ballot measure is it's actually paying for the bond. So if there were some other financing mechanism, it's not like the county committee of \$8 million a year to pay off a private firm.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I know we always hear 'well, you can't touch the sin tax'. Well, why can't we? Why can't we revisit that? Just the irony that we can't access the sin tax to support rehabilitation facilities..

Clark Campbell: State level jurisdiction for those.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We shouldn't give up.

Ken Bell: Why are you picking on me with your tax?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Well, because you're a solutions man. (Multiple voices, laughter)

Ken Bell: There's got to be private financing. I mean, a long term contract based on a certain number of individuals that have some kind of private guarantee that would allow the private sector to come in and fund it based on a construction cost, as long as you're guaranteed 100 units and you know that those units are going to cost you X number of dollars for years, simple math is the financing for that and not necessarily include and that would be funded over time and a capital to be paid down over time. Why couldn't we go to that kind of methodology for financing?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: How we do this?

Ken Bell: Just because I want your hands off my sin taxes. (laughter)

Don Goldberg: But how do you pay the debt, I guess. So even if a third party bid and we don't put the money in the fund, we still have the debt to pay off for the private sector. They have to. We have the right to pay.

Ken Bell: It's like an office building. How do you pay for the construction of the office? So it's built into the rent. The mortgage payment is built in. I mean, there is a private model for paying for the construction. You just signed a long term contract.

Don Goldberg: No, I'm saying, how does the public still have to pay that bill?

Ken Bell: They pay for the inmate per unit.

Pete Dawson: I'd be...

Jennifer Noveck: I think we have a question from Zoom from Debbie Ahl.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thanks Jennifer, Pete is asking a question and then Debbie, could you go next after Pete?

Pete Dawson: I'd be curious to hear. From the coastal folks on. What we've seen. In the PPP world is where the operating costs are about the same or maybe less with the new facility. So that pays for the new facility. And then you go to the public afterwards and say, we're paying at lease payment to this private company, or we can pass a bond and buy it outright. So I'm curious about what models have you seen out there?

Buddy Johns: You're breaking up a little bit. I didn't really understand that question specifically. You broke up a little bit.

Pete Dawson: We heard part of your presentation was on the modular versus stick built approach for creating a facility but as far as the financing side, where you do more of a turnkey facility, can you give us a few examples of where do you deliver the turnkey facility and then leased it to a municipality?

Buddy Johns: Well, again, we're the manufacturer of the product and the installer of it. We don't really do the financing ourselves. The lease side of the modular is our partners SLS. So there's two different things we're looking at. The lease function for these modular units is pretty straight forward. Leasing on a short term basis, two or three or four years, the long term leasing that the type of leasing that Jeff was talking about earlier, we don't really get involved with that. Now, we've been supplied product to several projects that are on the private sector side. We've done a lot of work for the companies like Corecivic and/or GO that we've supplied product to and they funded the public infrastructure projects. I'm not an expert, nor do I have the details of the public private financing levels, and I apologize for that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you, Debbie. Do you have a question?

Debbie Ahl: Yes, just actually a comment. I know that we're yet a long ways down the road, and I recognize that we don't have any decision making authority. But I'm really excited to see us bringing new ideas and just having open minds as to the kind of concepts that are being developed here, you know, our community always has to start with what our end results was. We want a safe place for those who are incarcerated and certainly the rehabilitation side and facility, housing for mental health and people that also have to be incarcerated and obviously mental health and preventive services. But the openness of today here and looking at these kind of things and as opposed to a lot of just standard traditional methodology, I'm just very appreciative of this.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Thank you very much Debbie.
Does anyone else have any comments or questions? Just come right up here. State your name.

Hannah Ordos: Yes. Okay. My name is Hannah Ordos I'm a private citizen, and I just want to thank this group here for actually entertaining these different options. The reason why I'm here is that I'm one person and one voice, and public safety is important to me and in fact, as it goes to my friends, family, neighbors. But everybody that sits at this table is representing a different part of an industry in our community. A lot of you have successful businesses in our community and you deal with the public. You're private entities that have relationships and understanding of the public part of this as well. Your your influence, is probably greater than you think. You represent the success of your businesses, right? You want to see things work so that your businesses thrive, but you also represent the people who need support of services you provide and who you employ. You also have a vested interest in public safety from those perspectives. You have a very unique vantage point. While you're sitting here collaborating and talking about these things, each one of you are many. Thank you for looking at this. Thank you for exploring these other paths and not just wanting to rely on the ballot measures. As citizens we're skeptical, right? I feel more comfortable, that you guys on this committee are looking at it and providing opportunity to look at it from a business perspective, from many different ways, as you understand return on investment, you understand long term impacts, you understand unintended consequences. So thank you for looking at these topics.

Ryan Allsop: I think she just wrote our mission statement. (voices and laughter) That's why the county created this committee. I think sometimes we lose sight of that. Thank you for saying it.

Paul Burrill: I want to add to what Hannah just said. I think we're marginalizing ourselves by not saying we don't have a decision in this. We do. We voted for these people in office. They're here to represent us. We absolutely have a say.

Clark Campbell: On this issue. I agree with that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: And we have a question from RB.

RB Tewksbury: Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for holding this meeting. My name is RB Tewksbury. I am also a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the Justice Project and a commissioner on the Civil Service Commission for Whatcom County. There's really two things that I wanted to mention. I shared a link in the chat to the video that was done by the SAC Group, and I would encourage everybody here to share that widely as much as you can. I appreciate this out of the box thinking that you all are doing in this meeting, we have some emergency issues, I think, right now. And that is and you'll see in this video, there are, I believe, health life safety issues with regard to the kitchen area, with the some of the services like apparently there's only one working dryer out of four. I mean, these are things that we need to address, like right now and there are companies that can provide those services. So I think whatever we can do to take the best care of the people that we're responsible for taking care of.

The second thing that I wanted to say is, and I think this goes to I think everybody's fear and I share everybody's frustration about where we are with this, where the community is and how long this has been talked about. I think what's really necessary for this to succeed as a ballot measure is there has to be a coordinated communications effort. Messaging is crucial that everybody is on the same page. I think we all agree we need a new jail. To let us get caught up in the minutia of people's little petty arguments or whatever it might be that have prevented this in the past. We're way past that now. I mean, I don't think that if most people in Whatcom County, in the city of Bellingham and other cities here knew just how bad it was, I think they would vote for what we need. So I think messaging is that's what I want to leave you with is I think messaging is so critically important. And thanks for giving me the opportunity to chat.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you.

Ryan Allsop: Who else was on that committee? Was it you, Erika? Do we have an idea the what's the cost of the jail that we're planning for, just out of curiosity, that new jail, I know there's \$40 million in 1986, then \$80 million and then \$200-and-something million is what I thought I'd heard along the way. But do we know? Do we have a budget in place?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Maybe we have an answer right here.

Peter Frazier: I'm Peter Frazier, Hotel Leo, Heliotrope Hotel. On the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. There is no number associated with anything that we have done yet, but it may be in the \$150-160 million. I would think that's just me talking. Could be more, I don't know. I wanted to say thank you to this group and Lyle for putting this together. When we talk about out-of-the-box thinking in terms of jails, it's a little odd, but it's really appreciated because we have failed twice. I don't want to go down the same road, and I am in agreement with Seth that things look good for passing this time. But it's going to take all of us, this whole community, to work together to make sure 100% that this is going to pass. And I really hope that everybody in this room is going to work hard for that. And as RB said, it requires really good messaging, really good campaign. And we don't want to lose by 100 votes like prop five apparently just did. So I would be very interested in hearing an answer to Erika's question around operations costs for the units that we're looking at today. I think that's really critical, as I understand. Very high costs when it comes to operation. You can build what you want to, Skagit built a (score?) Type facility. And it's just I went into I looked at it while it's much better than what we have and I wish we had it right now. It is also not the best design. And Caleb, who is our head deputy for our jail, can speak to these things and so can Wendy. It doesn't have to happen today, but any out of the box system we're looking at really ought to keep that operations cost in mind.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Absolutely. Thank you.

Peter Frazier: Thank you.

Ken Bell: I can actually envision where we could take care of some of the shortfall on a lease basis, like he discussed until we get the bond measure passed and the full implementation in place where you can do the temporary structure. Have this privately financed or publicly financed for a short period of time, or pay on a per unit basis so we get a bond and the funding passed, that would take care of a lot of issues. I mean, even 50 units.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Can you all hear Ken Bell talking? People on Zoom?

Multiple Voices from Zoom Attendees: Yes. (unintelligible conversation)

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. It's weird to have to ask you to speak louder Mr Bell. (multiple voices, laughter) Do you have anything else?

Ken Bell: Not now. (more laughter, multiple voices)

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Lyle just stepped up to talk. And brief background, It was after last month's meeting, we were meeting our new police chief and Lieutenant Johnson was here, listening to PUD and some of the challenges that we're dealing with in our community. We're enabling our people on the streets, hurting our people on the streets, and we're hurting our people that are working and struggling to

keep our community safe. So Lyle stepped up and said, I've been looking into this and there's other communities doing great things and we should learn from them.

Lyle Sorenson: Thank you very much to this committee for entertaining this. Thank you to Jeff and Buddy and Jude for helping put this together for us. You know, one of the things that we really need to take a look at in terms of our local public safety thing is that. Our 2013 needs assessment said that we needed 649 beds to take us through 2026. The truth is, is we're about 250, 275 beds short of what the professionals recommended in 2013. So you wonder why we have severe booking restrictions and that we have a public safety crisis and we have a falling down jail. It's because we haven't listened to the experts who've been guiding us. For whatever reason, however our process works or whatever. It's really important going forward that we get this right, that we don't sell out and do the cowardly thing that we think will pass, and undersize that facility. That we don't design it in a way that's going to meet the needs of the community going ahead for 20 or 30 years. God forbid that we become expedient in desperation to pass something and totally miss the boat. We do not want to spend five or six years in planning and expenditures and come up with the same booking restrictions that we have now. We don't need that. It's not healthy for the most vulnerable members of our community. Our homeless community is exploited and extorted by criminal, predatory elements in that community and yet we don't have space to provide them with safety.

You know we've got to get a hold of the criminal element. We've got to provide consequences for people's actions. We've been kicking this can for over a quarter of a century. And here we are again in Bellingham looking for consensus. We have to all agree. At some point, we have to do what's right for the community. And public safety is foundational to the government's responsibility to our community. I would say we don't have a deferred maintenance in jail, we've got deferred leadership in our county. And it's time to change that. Sorry for the little stump speech, but this is important. You know, people ask me why I'm doing this. I've got a little four-year-old girl. I just look at it, and think this is not the community I grew up in or what I want for my kids or for parents or for most people in the community. This isn't right. This is really important, we've got to quit playing games. We've got to quit being political. We have to quit being politically expedient, that's going to lead us down the wrong path.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. Thank you Lyle. And we've got 2 minutes left.

(voices from zoom)

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Okay. So we've got two more, two more comments. And then we're at meeting end.

Ellen Baker: Okay, I'm Ellen Baker. I live in the county in the Glacier area, and I've been in government for a long time. One of the big appeals to me in this whole project and this approach is the fact that there's flexibility. And one of the problems with the brick-and-mortar approaches in the past was because it was a big construction. Changes were needed. This is flexible. You know, as technology changes, if there are any failures in systems, I can see that the whole modular approach is a great one because you can bring in more updates. If there's any flaw in the design, you can bring in another modular with a better design and that sort of thing. And it was one of the big setbacks over and over. I used to watch and go to council meetings. People would haggle over the actual physical orientation of the different units and how they'd be joined together and what the score. I can see that this kind of flexible approach is something the community could really back, the flexibility is a sell in its own right. I also think that a special election can be arranged at any time. The idea that you have to stick to a framework, God knows we could you know, there could be a special election if a package can be put together. I think the public is more than ready for it. Thank you.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you very much. We had someone on Zoom? Wendy?

Wendy Jones: Really, I'll just keep it short, because I know that we're done. One of the parts of the discussion I've been listening to is creating a temporary fix until we can figure out what to do for a large facility. I'd ask folks to remember that we're already trying to run two jails. I'm nine people down right now in trying to keep the everything functioning at this point. As of this morning, we had 334 people in custody between the two facilities. If a temporary facility was created to drain off, some of the pressure on the downtown jail would then be trying to run three facilities with the same number of staff or if I could find staff to fill it. Although that seems like a really good temporary fix for us on our end, all the stuff that would go with providing services to all of those offenders would be problematic. What we're hoping to do is be able to maximize the number of people we can put at the work center. That goes back to the discussion I heard about booking restrictions and the fact that you really have to offend at a very high level now in order to get into jail. That really speaks to the fact that the minimum-security temporary facility was never really designed for that. What has been very interesting to me is that there were a lot of concepts that we looked at back in the 20-teens. Part of that was flexibility, the ability to expand or not. If we needed to be able to use the land for other things, depending on where it went and kind of a modular concept. We're still looking at all of that kind of stuff. I appreciate the creativity and the ideas that I heard today and some of the suggestions as far as some ways of constructing the jail, because when this one, the downtown jail, it was two foot wide concrete blocks with rebar and cement and now there's concrete filled steel walls that make the walls themselves much smaller, but are every bit of secure. There's a lot of new technology that have come out. And I think this kind of thinking is going to be very helpful when hopefully the time comes in the relatively near future, we can actually start looking at what it may look like. Thank you very much for everybody's questions and everybody's ideas. And if anybody has any specific questions for me, you can always get a hold of me at the sheriff's office. If you just look it up. It's online and I try to get right back to people as soon as I get an email from them. Thank you very much

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Wendy. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here. Guy, did you want to do give us a final comment?

Guy Occhiogrosso: Sure. I think I've done that before. I think I speak loud enough and the camera's been looking at me anyway all meeting. (laughter) Guy Occhiogrosso.

Ryan Allsop: It's the rustling of the coat.

Guy Occhiogrosso: It is. I unfortunately didn't wear my matching Ken Bell sweater. So next time. (laughter) President CEO of the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, we want to thank the SAC Committee members who are online and also in the room. For those of us that have attended some of those meetings, they are a slug to get through. Appreciation of those volunteers and of course, the people that are paid. One of the comments that was made today that I think really important for the voting members of this committee to understand is you do have a voice. You are appointed by the county council and you can speak to the county council. Yes. Unfortunately, the County Council has ignored much of the dialog over the years. I don't think that that is a reason to not use that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We wouldn't keep showing up and putting all the hours in, in between the meetings if we didn't know that. (Voices, laughter)

Guy Occhiogrosso: Good, the point that I want to make as we wrap it up, is what I would love to see is statements from this committee to county council. I think that would be a wonderful thing.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: And that's why we're trying to learn from some other communities that may have worked faster to guide them into modern day facilities.

Guy Occhiogrosso: And I think some of those statements could be to the county council, Lyle's point, please expedite this process. Please build a facility that incorporates public health and health care of the inmates as well as the criminal aspect.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you. And the voiced concern of lack of staffing is valid. All of the concerns about staffing. But we also know that if there aren't safe up to date facilities, it's going to be even harder to recruit and hire people.

Guy Occhiogrosso: And then we're back to housing too.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes.

Guy Occhiogrosso: We need places for employees to live. Reiterating those statements to council, I think are really, really important. And I think when I look over the next 12 months as we're exiting an election, this is probably the topic.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you Guy.
Are we good to wrap it up?

Jude Widemann: Hey, guys, I have I have one more thing for you. So I think Buddy had to step off, but we are constructing the very first temporary pod in Galveston, and I request that stakeholders from this meeting and anybody else that you guys would like to see it join us in Galveston end of February early March and take a look at it, poke the holes in it. You know, tell us what you like. Tell us what you don't like. And it's always important to see these types of options in real life. It's a very tactile process. I will work with Lyle, but consider yourselves all invited.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you Jude. Clark, motion?

Clark Campbell: Motion to close the meeting.

Ryan Allsop: Second.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you everyone for being here.

Meeting Closed

Next meeting: Monday, December 12, 2022, 11am ****Note Rescheduled Time****

Hybrid Meeting- In-person encouraged and Zoom option available!