

**Thurston County Treatment Sales Tax
Community Review Committee
March 23, 2009**

REVISED MINUTES, May 29, 2009

9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Area Agency on Aging Board Room, 3604 Mud Bay Road, Suite A

Attendance:

Community Review Committee Members:

Scott Ahlf	Rev. Javier Lopez	Theresa Slusher
Jim Anderson	Joan Machlis	Becky Smith
Mary Barrett	Dennis Mahar	Sue Smith
Sue Beall	Michael Manning	Kristen West
Sarah Benson	Neil McClanahan	Cathy Wolfe
Jim Cooper	Gary Michel	
Gregory Hammond	Jared Miller	
Mary Heitzman	Graeme Sackrison	
Judi Hoefling	Tom Saltrup	
Ed Holm	Tom Schumacher	
Aurora Lopez	Charles Shelan	

Work Group Staff:

Zena Edwards	Gail Gosney	Don Krupp
Mark Freedman	Lois Kim	Jon Tunheim

Welcome/Introductions – Dennis Mahar

Chairman Dennis Mahar welcomed the group and explained the purpose of today’s meeting. One goal is to be able to make initial funding recommendations to the Commissioners. The next goal is to think about a long-term strategic plan, as this tax will continue to be collected, long after the current budget crisis is resolved.

Overview of the Thurston County budget, 2009 – Don Krupp

Don Krupp gave an overview of the current state of the Thurston County budget and the reductions the County has made and will be making in the near future to balance the budget. Currently, the Board of County Commissioners is working to cut another \$5.7 million out of the County’s general budget and will that those cuts determined by mid-April. Don encouraged the group to think about the opportunities this tax can provide to the community in the long-run.

County Staff Work Group Strategic Planning – Gail Gosney / Mark Freedman

Gail Gosney gave an overview of the planning efforts that the County Staff Workgroup has done. She explained that with the worsening budget crisis, the focus has become more concentrated on preserving critical infrastructure, rather than creating new programs. The staff workgroups have discussed and are aware of many gaps in services, but were unable to recommend expansion in certain areas of the system that are lacking (i.e. Veterans Court, Domestic Violence Court).

The Community Group reviewed the Gaps Analysis Charts to see if the Staff Workgroups missed any significant programs or areas. Gail emphasized that these were created before the last State Revenue forecast was announced, which increased the State budget deficit by \$500 million. Further gaps could be created as further state budget reductions are announced.

The following are suggestions regarding these Gaps Analysis Charts:

- Evidence-Based Programs, such as Multi-Systemic Therapy, are expensive and proprietary. Has the County explored other cheaper, non-proprietary modalities, such as Solution-Focused Therapy?
- Post-release (aftercare) programs, such as Housing for released offenders, are missing. Gail will work with Theresa Slusher from HATC to get these added.
- The group wanted to know if there had been any changes in sentencing standards for the courts to cut costs, but this has not been a focus yet of the TST Planning group. (*Note: the Thurston County Prosecutor is revising standards for diversion of specific criminal charges both pre-charging and post-charging*)
- Mary Heitzman stated that Treatment Sales Tax funds should be considered as a source of funding for the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for law enforcement personnel as law enforcement personnel are first responders and need to have this training to be effective in diverting mentally ill persons from the jail. There is a need to provide money to police departments for back-up time while officers are in training and perhaps some funding for training over the next couple of years. Some people felt that the CIT training should be included in the priority list for funding for 2009.

The group acknowledged that these programs are not compartmentalized. They do not exist singularly, but are intertwined. If whole programs are cut out completely, the risk is disrupting the integrity of the system. Are there any programs that are completely stand-alone? Gail answered that some prevention programs may be, but everything else is interlinked.

Presentation of County Staff Work Group Priorities: Gail Gosney

The Staff Workgroups initially started look at all the gaps in the system, but as the budget crisis worsened, workgroups started focusing on maintaining critical infrastructure. Currently, the estimated revenue generated from the tax annually is \$3.3 million. For July-December 2009, the estimated revenue is \$1.65 million. Gail reviewed the priorities for 2009 and the priorities for 2010 and beyond. The group had the following feedback:

- A suggestion was made to have each priority directly compared to each of the Commissioner's priorities from the TST Ordinance. Also, include the budget numbers to compare the relative cost/benefit savings of each program as a way to prioritize. The programs with the biggest cost-savings should be considered for funding.
- Instead of totally eliminating a program, is it possible to partially fund portions of these programs to ensure that all the programs get saved, rather than eliminating programs completely. Some programs have start-up costs that are prohibitive.
- It was requested that all Commissioners be present at the next community meeting.
- Combine Jail Mental Health Services with Psychiatric Medication Management in the Jail. These are directly related in the delivery of mental health services. (The staff will look at this

recommendation though there are some regulatory and administrative barriers that will need to be addressed).

- There was also a suggestion that Mental Health Court and Drug Court be combined to provide more efficient operations and increase the effectiveness of treatment and support for people with co-occurring mental illness and chemical dependency. *NOTE: These issues have been discussed by the judges in District and Superior Court, but there are a lot of legal and jurisdictional issues that need to be addressed before this recommendation could be considered.*

The 2009 priorities will be submitted to the Board for consideration by the end of March.

Next Steps:

At the May Community Review Meeting, the 2010 and beyond priorities and budget numbers will be discussed. The group will come up with the priorities that they feel need to be focused on for 2010 and the future. The Staff Workgroup priorities may be revised as further budget cuts eliminate more programs and services.

Parking Lot:

- Moral Recognition Therapy: What is this? Are we telling people what morality is?
 - MRT is an evidence-based program for high risk youth that helps them develop judgment skills and behavior choices which minimize harmful impacts to others; the program was explained to the committee member who raised the question
- Brief Strategic Family Therapy: Why would there be a program for “non-white” families?
 - This program is NOT available in Thurston County, but was developed to provide culturally appropriate therapy for black and Hispanic families
- The TST planning group was asked to track legislation that may adjust sentencing standards as these legislative changes may impact the number and types of offenders who are sentenced to jail and/or prison and may also impact the demand for treatment services and/or therapeutic courts. The TST planning group will do so.
- The TST work should focus on increasing assessment, counseling/treatment services to support Therapeutic Courts as well as examine the unfilled need for Therapeutic Courts that could divert individuals from the criminal justice system
- The TST team was asked to pay attention to grants that could address gaps in services identified in the TST planning process. The TST team is doing that work and will continue to do so through grants are most often time limited and have restrictions on use of funds.

NEXT MEETING:

May 4, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Area Agency on Aging Board Room
3603 Mud Bay Road NW, Olympia**