

Today's Show:

Whatcom County Jail: Discussion with Sheriff Bill Elfo on the proposed new WC Jail tax. What does the new tax cover? The size, scope, and timeline to get this done if it passes? What is at stake if it fails?

The existing Whatcom County Jail was built in 1983 and ran over the permitted "Average Daily Population," in 1989. It's been an [issue in Whatcom County](#) for twenty-eight years and we are no closer to fixing the problem now, than we were then. Why? Learn about the [history and time-line of this issue](#), the need to [fix-it or build a new county jail](#), and who-what-and why it is taking so long to do the right thing. Or, is it ["If We Build It - They Will Come,"](#) as some local, legal council would have us believe?

LIBERTY ALERTS:

[Primary Election ballots](#) deadline to lawfully submit your ballot by Aug. 1st, 2017. Did you receive your ballot? Important races in the primary:

District 2: Todd Donovan (current County Councilmember), Amy Glasser, [Daniel Collick](#)

District 3: [Cliff Langley](#), [Tyler Byrd](#), Rebecca Boonstra
Port of Bellingham, District 1: [Dan Robbins](#), Michael Alvarez Shepard, Nicholas Kunkel

Port of Bellingham, District 2: [Ken Bell](#), Doug Karlberg, Barry Wenger

City of Bellingham, Ward 6: Michael Lilliquist, Quenby Peterson

City of Bellingham, At-large: Roxanne Murphy, Jean Layton, Eric Bostrom

Too many races that are only one or two candidates, so they're virtually unopposed yet have a lot of influence on our everyday lives.

[City Club Port of Bellingham Forum:](#)

July 26th, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
3240 Northwest AVE (Northwood Hall)
Bellingham, WA 98225

COMMON CENTS:

What is the role of a government agency like law enforcement?

The role of public education has been mish-mashed to the point that public school teachers have become part

educator, part psychiatrist, part social service worker, part law enforcer. Is it any wonder that the public schools have become so expensive and are failing to do the most important task expected of them; to educate our children?

Isn't that what's happening here in the discussion of construction for a new Whatcom County Jail? The jail is no longer expected to be a jail. It is expected to be a mish-mash of a holding center, a psychiatric clinic, a medical clinic, a social services center, a law enforcement office used as a central hub for all WC law enforcement, and a jail. How does a community afford to build something that can effectively address all of those needs and not expect that they will fail to do the most important job on that list? Arrest, detain, and house criminal arrests for the safety of our community.

Does Whatcom County want nor need a facility that is a Taj Mahal built for all these purposes? Or, should we focus on the most important function that it is required of our jail, to provide a place to detain and process for criminal arrests while ensuring the safety of the people who work there and the criminal population that are held there.? Do we try to be all things beyond our abilities and set ourselves up for failure? Or, do we focus on the need which is to construct a safe and long-term facility to service the purpose of a jail; leaving the rest to be addressed within the public and private sectors who are professionally trained to address the needs of mental and medical facilities, lawyers and court appointed services?

The problem is here. The problem has been identified. There is an immediate need to build a new jail that will serve the community for decades in a more centralized location to the entire County. The voters will be given the opportunity to vote on this in November. Will they pass a new tax on themselves to build a new jail, or will they kick this problem down the road?

I hate taxes...but the sole purpose of taxes is to pay for public safety and the WC Jail is not serving that purpose in its present state.

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[VALLEY PLUMBING AND ELECTRIC](#); HAVE A PROBLEM WITH YOUR PLUMBING OR ELECTRICAL CALL VALLEY PLUMBING AND ELECTRIC, locally owned and operated since 1965...[ACCURATE LOCK AND SECURITY](#); Located on PROSPECT STREET across from the WHATCOM MUSEUM or ONLINE at [AccurateLock.net](#)

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Introduction Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo.

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Where will the proposed new jail be built?

What is the total estimated costs of the revised proposed new jail construction? The 2015 cost estimate was \$95 million for a 521-bed facility. Where are the costs today?

Dec. 2016 Bellingham Herald Article: Build and operate a new jail, to be paid for with a 0.2 percent sales tax increase (20 cents per \$100 purchase)

How large of a prison population will it be capable of housing?

What services beyond jail holding services have been designed into this facility? Why?

On a percentage basis, how much of this new facility will be dedicated to: jail holding cells, medical facility, mental evaluation, law officers, office and operational staffing?

If this tax fails to get voter approval, what next?

On average how many arrests are released that should have been detained due to a lack of holding capacity?

If you are releasing a lot of arrests that would otherwise be held, have you noted any increases in local crime? What types of crime have increased or decreased?

If anyone wants to see the revised proposed facility, where can they go to find more information?

- [Whatcom County Adult Correction Facilities & Sheriff Headquarters](#)
- [Building Assessment Studies & Cost Est. for Capital Imp at the Jail \(Public Safety Building\) and Work Center](#)
- [Jail Stakeholder Workgroup votes to put a sales tax on the November 2017 ballot](#)
- [New Jail Facility Financing and Use Agreement](#)