

MINUTES
Planning Committee of the Victim Notification System Project
March 5, 2008

The Planning Committee of the Victim Notification System Project met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room 424 on Wednesday, March 5, 2008, from 2:10 p.m. to 3:16 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Linda J. Cimino, Chair, The Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, Faith Arkin, Jack Brooks, Jessica Bullard, Nick Cimmino, Joseph D'Alesio, Rick Dunion, John Duffey, Mitch Forman, John Lahda, Dean Myshrall, Suzanne Niedzielska, Maureen Reeves, Terry Schnure, Celia Siefert and Terry Walker

Members Excused or Absent:

Carl Testo

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Judge Carroll, Deputy Chief Court Administrator, welcomed members. Members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Public Act 08-01, Section 31

Linda J. Cimino read Section 31 of Public Act 08-01. Linda stated that the *Establishment and Implementation of a State-wide Automated Victim Information and Notification System* ("SAVIN") report to the Judiciary Committee stands as a foundation for this project. Linda added that the victim notification system project is expected to be operational by July 1, 2009, and that Section 32 of the act requires notification of plea agreements.

3. Review of the January 2007 Department of Criminal Justice/Judicial Branch report and findings

Linda provided a review of the SAVIN report that was distributed to members and remarked that several areas were identified as outstanding issues:

1. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) requires identification of and commitment to matching funds

Mitch Forman remarked that Appriss, Inc. (provider of the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system) estimated the cost for VINE would be approximately \$300,000. Suzanne Niedzielska added that software, training, and staff costs would bring the amount nearer to \$1.5 million.

2. A concern of the lack of vendor competition and a long-standing relationship between BJA and the dominant vendor

Linda said that at the time the report was written Appriss was the only vendor available. However, Linda said, according to Terry Schnure, other vendors might exist.

3. Technical capacity and needs

Linda stated that a grave concern is “failover” systems; BJA mandates redundancy/back-up measures.

4. Definition of Crime Victim

Linda stated that Connecticut does not have a uniformed definition of crime victims. The primary definition for the state is found in Connecticut General Statutes § 1-1k. However, the Office of Victims and the Department of Correction’s statutory definitions differ.

Members then discussed who would have access to the notification system (victim and/or public), if the system should allow different levels of access, the criminal justice information that would be available, developing a project plan, and the importance of maintaining “human contact” notification procedures. Jack Brooks also announced that legislative Bill 1700 includes \$750,000 to the Judicial Branch for improvement to the victim notification system.

Linda encouraged members to visit the VINE website at www.vinelink.com and to read the first thirteen pages of the “SAVIN” report.

4. Proposed Presentations (to be scheduled)

Members agreed to the following presentations at the next meeting:

1. Linda and Rick Dunion are attending the 2008 SAVIN Conference, April 8-9, 2008, and will provide a report on the conference.
2. Suzanne, Celia Siefert, and Terry Walker will develop/propose a project plan.
3. At the subsequent meeting, an overview of the Offender-based Tracking System (OBTS) will be presented.

5. Discussion on which agencies should have representatives serve on the Committee

Judge Carroll directed members to email recommended committee members by next week to Linda Cimino at Linda.Cimino@jud.ct.gov.

6. Meeting Schedule

Members agreed to meet April 21, 2008, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., at 225 Spring Street, Fourth Floor Conference Room, Wethersfield, and May 19, 2008, from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m., at the Judicial Branch Learning Center, East Hartford.

Brenda Jordan, administrative support to the Committee, will email a contact list to Committee members.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:16 p.m.

Recorder: Brenda Jordan, Administrative Assistant, Office of Victim Services