

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
February 4, 2020

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met at 655 Winding Brook Drive, Fourth Floor, Suite 4050, Glastonbury, from 2:05 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Co-Chair Judge Danaher, Co-Chair Susan Omilian, Brian Austin Jr., Elise Delacruz on behalf of Beth Hamilton, Melissa Farley, Bob Garguilo, Irene Mikol, Jessica Pizzano, Gerrie Wild, Deborah Witkin

Members Excused or Absent:

Melissa Conway, Mikayla Green, Kristan Mangiafico, Andrew Woods, Yvette Young

OVS Staff in Attendance:

Valina Carpenter, James Morgan, Jean M. Weisbrod

Guest:

Daniel Healy, Esq.

Agenda:

1. Welcome
Judge Danaher called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Members introduced themselves. New Council Member, Irene Mikol, provided a brief description of her professional background within the Judicial Branch. Irene is replacing Joseph Bibisi as the new Chief Victim Compensation Commissioner.
2. Approval of Minutes
Due to a lack of quorum the approval of the November 12, 2019, meeting minutes were deferred to the April meeting.
3. Overview of the CT Safe Connect Program
Dylan Figueiredo, Safe Connect Program Manager, distributed and reviewed a presentation, *Safe Connect Statewide Response to Victims of Domestic Violence*. Dylan described the victim centered counseling and support offered by the Program.

Dylan provided information on the following:

- o Connecticut member organizations service statistics
- o Different options for victims to communicate with domestic violence counselors through live chat, text, email, and phone
- o Bi-cultural and bi-lingual advocates provide support in 13 languages
- o What someone can expect when they contact the Program
- o Statistic from the first 3 months

- Outreach efforts
- Male identifying survivors
- Most important to find out what the victim feels is best for them and offer help to make that happen
- New rapid re-housing program

Council members provided positive feedback and congratulated Dylan on the success of the Program.

4. Office of Victim Services (OVS) Report

a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund Report

James Morgan distributed and reviewed the *Office of Victim Services Criminal Injuries Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 01/31/2020, FY 07/01/2019 – 06/30/2020*. Jim reported the total disbursements to date are \$1.46 million. Jim stated that the expenditures are 2% higher than this time last year and there is sufficient state and federal funding to cover the increase. Jim also stated that the number of claimants that received payment between 07/01/2019 – 01/31/2020 is 7% higher than this time last year.

Jim distributed and reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2019 – 2020*. Jim reported that court contributions are 6% higher than the first 6 months of FY 2018-2019.

Brian Austin reported that OVS provided training on the Compensation Program and Victim Services Program to new prosecutors with the intent to increase the amount of court contributions.

Jim reported that the United States Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, audit results were returned with no findings and only 1 recommendation for improvement.

b) OVS Update

Valina Carpenter reported on the following:

Staffing:

- An office clerk position, which is new to the OVS structure, has been filled and the new employee will begin on February 28, 2020
- A request has been submitted to fill a vacant claims examiner position
- Interviews have been conducted for the second victim services advocate position for the Help Line

Compensation Unit:

- The total number of applications received in 2019 was 1,534 in comparison to 1,695 received in 2018
- In January 2020 OVS received 147 applications which is 15 more than January 2019
- The total number of applications received in 2017 was 955

Other:

- Post Training Academy and police re-certification training at Bloomfield and West Hartford police departments
- *Crime Victims' Guide to the Adult Criminal Court* has been finalized and will be printed in the near future
- A copy of the *Office of Victim Services Biennial Activities Report (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019)* was distributed
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5. New Business

The April 14, 2020, meeting was cancelled because the co-chairs are unable to attend. The next meeting is June 9, 2020.

Susan congratulated Judge Danaher on his upcoming retirement effective April 1, 2020. She praised and thanked him for his years of service to the Council.

Melissa Farley reported on An Act Concerning Court Operations:

- Section 2. Amends section 46b-16a to mirror the temporary restraining order language in section 46b-15, such that if service has not been effectuated in a timely fashion for a civil protection order, the ex parte order can now be extended another fourteen days to allow more time for service
- Section 4. Amends section 46b-127 to allow victims access to the private proceedings of juveniles being tried on the adult criminal docket
- Section 12. Amends section 54-209 (d) to add additional professionals to whom a victim can disclose and incorporates the language that was in subsection (e) to allow victims of family violence crimes to have more opportunities to whom they can make a disclosure
- Section 14. Amends section 54-228 to allow for a victim to designate an immediate family member, in addition to or in lieu of the victim, to receive certain notifications from the OVS and Department of Correction

Elise Delacruz reported on:

- Public Act No. 19-16, An Act Combatting Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment and additional proposed legislation related specifically to civil cases

6. Adjournment

Judge Danaher adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Council members were given a guided tour of the CT Safe Connect Program headquarters following the meeting.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder