

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
May 20, 2008

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, from 2:36 p.m. to 3:41 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Co-chairs Deputy Chief Court Administrator the Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, and Steve Eppler-Epstein, Fernando Betancourt, Joseph Bibisi, Larry Bostrom, Cheryl Burack, Janice Heggie Margolis, Paul Gaetano for Kevin Lawlor, Nancy Kushins, Agnes Maldonado, Jo-Ann Miller, Neil O'Leary, and Jan VanTassel

Members Excused or Absent:

Chester Brodnicki and John Duffey

OVS Staff Present:

Linda J. Cimino, James Morgan, Valina Carpenter, Joanna Buikus, Tina Bouchard, and Brenda Jordan

Guest:

Gerri O'Neil-Wild

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions

Steve Eppler-Epstein welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m. Members introduced themselves. Linda announced that Jo-Ann Miller has been assigned as the Court Operations' representative, replacing Larry D'Orsi.

2. Review and Approval of the January 15, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Steve asked for a motion to accept the minutes of January 15, 2008. The motion was moved and seconded, and the minutes were accepted as presented.

3. Update 2008 Legislative Initiatives

Nancy Kushins reported that the main legislative initiative for Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, the establishment of a statewide sexual assault forensic examiners program, did not pass the Senate.

Gerri O'Neil-Wild reported that the Connecticut Coalition of Domestic Violence supported a bill to increase funding for twenty-four hour shelter operation that also did not pass.

Janice Heggie Margolis reported that Mothers Against Drunk Driving supported legislation for mandatory ignition interlock devices in certain offenses and the prohibition of open alcohol containers in motor vehicles. The open container bill passed the Senate unopposed but did not pass the House of Representatives.

Cheryl Burack stated that legislation supporting a twelve-percent increase in funding for profit and non-profit agencies did not pass.

Steve mentioned that there was notable success with legislation relating to foreclosure statutes that would improve the public's understanding of the foreclosure process. Judge Carroll added that the foreclosure mediation program assigns fifteen foreclosure mediators to the courts with a July 1, 2008 implementation date.

4. Public Act 08-01, Section 31

Linda reported that Public Act 08-01, Section 31, provides the Judicial Branch with the responsibility to design and implement an automated victim notification system. A planning committee established to meet this initiative held its third planning meeting on May 20, 2008. Linda stated that \$750,000 was appropriated to implement this system, but at this time, the Committee is uncertain if the appropriation has been included in the state budget.

Linda stated that the act requires the system to be operational July 1, 2009, or thirty days after federal funds are received, whichever is earlier. The solicitation for federal funding occurs in October and awards are announced in the spring. The state appropriation balance would be used as a match. Linda added that the Committee interviewed three candidates for a project manager position to oversee the project and within the next few months, the Committee is organizing a companion committee with stakeholder membership to assist in the interface planning.

Section 32 of the Act, requires the Division of Criminal Justice to develop a system to interact with the automated notification system to provide plea agreement information.

5. Update - OVS Compensation Program Issues

Jim Morgan distributed a report entitled *Criminal Injuries Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending FY 07/01/07 – 6/30/08*. Jim stated that as of April 30, 2008, even with the one time infusion of funds, the program is over-budget. The federal funds might not be available October 1, considering the grants have not yet been released. Jim stated the second page of the report contains the revenues collected and shows a steady increase through court-ordered donations. Jim added that a final update would be provided at the next meeting.

Jim also distributed a homicide benefit performance report, which consisted of three separate pages that compared Connecticut homicide claims' payments with other states.

Steve thanked Jim for compiling the data and suggested that the Council designate the next meeting to discuss rebalancing expenditures. A conversation was held on which members would review the data as an interim step to sort out the issues. Members agreed that Steve would meet with OVS staff to draft questions, which would be circulated to Council members to assist in moving the conversation forward. Members would email additional questions to Brenda Jordan.

6. OVS Update

Jim reported that the federal assistance grant has not been finalized. All agencies

received a five percent reduction from the current award amount, which has led some agencies to close satellite offices, lay off staff, and not fill vacant positions. Jim stated that he would provide a summary of what various agencies had to do to absorb the reduction. Janice requested that Jim provide this information to her prior to a meeting she is scheduled to have with Representative Rosa DeLauro in July.

One agency, Bridgeport Police Department, did not re-apply for funding because of staffing issues but will continue the program in house. Another agency did not pass the evaluation committee and was not re-funded.

Jim reported on the following requests for proposals:

- The Supervision of Sex Offenders – one response was received from the current provider; an evaluation meeting will be held May 20, 2008.
- Homicide counseling – two responses received: one from a current provider in Hartford and the second an agency in New Haven. This contract is fee-based, meaning that the agency receives payment only for the services provided.

Tina Bouchard reported that OVS co-sponsored the Melanie Ilene Rieger Memorial Conference that was held April 23-24, 2008. During the conference, Linda Cimino was one of three recipients of a gratitude award, which is presented to individuals for their support of the conference. Tina added that two OVS victim services advocates (VSA) were recognized: Barbara Jean Quinn received the crime victim assistance award for her exemplary services to crime victims in the Waterbury court and Kitt Tierney, who was also nominated for this award, received an honorable mention.

Tina reported that OVS hosted the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards' Eastern Regional Conference on May 6-8, 2008, at the Mystic Hilton. Forty-five compensation staff from fifteen states attended the conference to discuss key compensation issues.

Joanna Buikus announced that Sandra Lappert was hired in May as an office clerk to assist the Compensation Unit. Joanna added that as of May 20, 2008, 356 compensation applications were received.

Linda thanked Chief O'Leary for providing valuable feedback on an outreach poster OVS developed to promote distribution by police officers of crime victim information and resources. The posters were mailed to Connecticut police departments, state police troops, and police departments within Post-certified universities and colleges.

Linda added that two victim compensation commissioners Beth Critton and Daniel Dilzer have resigned and two new commissioners: Louis Spadaccini and Lisa MacDonald were appointed by the Governor.

Valina Carpenter provided a staffing update for the Victim Services Unit: On March 11, 2008, Karen Lucid joined staff as the central office VSA; effective May 23, 2008, Effie Cotto will be assigned to the Manchester court and Pam O'Leary will assist victims in the Stamford court, effective June 6, 2008. Interviews for a VSA vacancy assigned to the Boards of Pardons and Paroles will be held May 21, 2008, and another vacancy in the New Britain court will be held May 22, 2008. The Meriden vacancy was posted externally and closed May 19, 2008.

Valina added that two VSAs were nominated for the Judicial Branch Diversity Award;

a ceremony will be held June 26, 2008.

Linda announced that Jim Morgan was promoted to program manager and that staff development officer Diane Langlan-Wortz transferred to the Court Support Services Division. Brenda Jordan added that another office clerk Ann Marie Bonnanzio also joined staff in May to assist with administrative functions.

7. New Business

No new business was introduced.

8. Adjournment

Steve called for a motion to adjourn the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Brenda Jordan, Recorder