

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
January 27, 2009

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room on Tuesday, January 27, 2009, from 2:11 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Co-chair Steve Eppler-Epstein, Joseph Bibisi, Larry Bostrom, John Duffey, Linda Blozie for Agnes Maldonado, Janice Heggie Margolis, Joanne Zannoni for Nancy Kushins, Jo-Ann Miller, and Jan VanTassel

Members Excused or Absent:

Deputy Chief Court Administrator the Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, Fernando Betancourt, Chester Brodnicki, Cheryl Burack, Kevin Lawlor, and Neil O'Leary

OVS Staff Present:

Linda J. Cimino, James Morgan, Valina Carpenter, Brenda Jordan, and Susanne Pakele

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
Steve Eppler-Epstein welcomed members and called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m. Members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of the November 18, 2008 Meeting Minutes
Steve asked for a motion to accept the minutes of November 18, 2008. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented.
3. Discussion – OVS Victim Satisfaction Survey
OVS Victim Services Supervisor Valina Carpenter distributed a final draft of a victim services survey developed by a focus group comprised of eight OVS victim services advocates for Council feedback. Members discussed the survey process and provided the following suggestions:
 - To include a question about the level of trust established, such as *I trust or felt that the victim services advocate cared about me.*
 - To have an area where the responder could include contact information for follow-up, such as *I would like to talk with someone about my case. My name is _____ and my telephone number is _____.*
 - To include a question on how to improve services
 - Consider using a mechanism, such as SurveyMonkey, to compile data

- Include a fax number on the survey in an effort to minimize cost

Larry Bostrom stated that he would provide the survey to Survivors of Homicide for comment. Valina thanked members for the discussion and stated that she will continue to report out on the survey.

4. Discussion – OVS 30th Anniversary

Linda Cimino reported that an op-ed piece announcing the OVS's 30th anniversary is expected to be submitted for newspaper print within the next few weeks. In addition, OVS plans to print additional news articles and appear on talk shows.

Linda stated that OVS will compile a historical report on the agency based upon the agency's biennial reports, some of which were obtained through the Connecticut State Library. Linda announced that since the inception of the Compensation Program, 26,658 victim compensation applications were received and approximately \$53 million awards issued.

Linda distributed a notepad acknowledging the anniversary and added that the quarterly OVS public service announcements have been changed to reflect the anniversary.

Linda stated she will invite Advisory co-chairs to serve as the opening speakers at an event to be held on September 15, 2009, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. At the event, OVS will recognize individuals who were instrumental in the development of the programs offered by OVS.

5. OVS Update

Jim Morgan distributed and reviewed a report entitled *Criminal Injuries Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 12/31/08*. Jim stated that 88.26 percent of the budget is expended or committed as of December 31, 2008 and is anticipating a deficit by the end of January. Obligations incurred after February 1, 2009, may not be paid until after July 1, 2009.

Steve asked if there is a projected amount of obligations that will not be paid as of July. Jim responded that he would have a better idea after the January budget report.

Jim distributed and reviewed a copy of the OVS Performance Report that was submitted to the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) for funds received under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Jim reported that all states receiving funds under VOCA are required to submit an annual performance report. These reports are available for public viewing at the OVC website at <http://www.ovc.gov/fund/state.htm>.

Jim reported that the Office of Justice Programs' financial auditor would review two victim assistance grants and one compensation grant in February.

Steve asked if a response was received on the letter from the Council supporting OVS legislative initiatives to increase funding. Linda replied that she did follow-up following the November Council meeting and the matter was still under consideration and that in December she inquired again but has not yet received a response. Steve requested that a response be provided at the March Council meeting.

Linda reported on the following:

- There has not been a significant increase in sexual assault victims applying for victim compensation following the statute change to allow sexual assault victims to submit to a sexual assault examination in lieu of filing a police report.
- One Request for Proposal was received from a vendor for the implementation of a statewide-automated victim notification program. The federal grant was submitted.
- The Connecticut sexual assault brochure is scheduled for printing by the end of February/March.
- Linda will conduct fifteen-minute meetings with each OVS staff.
- OVS was invited to present at a Family Violence and Child Trauma Conference in February.

Brenda Jordan reported that the Letter Review Committee is currently reviewing victim services correspondence, in addition to compensation and recovery letters. Brenda thanked Larry and Shirley Bostrom for their invaluable assistance in reviewing OVS correspondence from a victim's perspective.

6. 2009 Legislative Initiatives

Steve reported that Connecticut Legal Services (CLS) is facing a financial crisis as a result of losing one-third of its primary funding from Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts. CLS staff has agreed to reduce hours by twenty percent and salary cuts. CLS will seek assistance from the legislature to enhance revenues.

Jan Van Tassel stated that the Connecticut Legal Rights Project legislative proposal is funding focused.

Joanna Zannoni distributed a flyer entitled *Connecticut Needs A State Funded Rapid Response SANE/SAFE Program*, which provided information on a SANE/SAFE Program that Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services is supporting.

Linda Blozie reported that the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is seeking funding for twenty-four hour domestic violence shelters and supporting Connecticut Legal Services' funding initiatives. Linda Blozie announced that Erika Tindill would serve as the executive director of CCADV, effective February 9, 2009. CCADV will host a reception welcoming Ms. Tindill.

Janice Heggie Margolis reported that Mothers Against Drunk Driving will continue to advocate for open container and ignition lock device legislation.

Linda reported that OVS is proposing legislation that will allow OVS to award compensation to residents of Connecticut who were victimized by a crime in a country that does not have a compensation program, and the Judicial Branch is exploring providing notification to crime victims on appellate court decisions.

Linda informed members that the Office of the Victim Advocate is proposing legislation to fund state and community-based victim advocates through additional fines and fees assessed by the court. Members discussed this initiative.

7. New Business

No new business was introduced.

8. Adjournment

Steve called for a motion to adjourn the meeting; the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Brenda Jordan, Recorder