

**MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING  
MINUTES  
Wednesday, May 5, 2010  
Anne Arundel County Police Department Headquarters**

**ATTENDEES**

**Board Members:** Ellen Alexander, Barbara Bond, Jessica Dickerson, Cortney Fisher, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, Steve Kelly on behalf of Sandy Roberts, Laura Martin, Kristen Mahoney, Margery Patten, Roberta Roper, Deborah Unitus, Virginia Wolf and Jeanne Yeager

**Staff:** Shirley Haas, Anne Litecky and Nakita Long

**Guests:** Elizabeth Bartholomew, Michaele Cohen, Jane Henderson, Lisae Jordon, Kimberly Garrett, Dina Recor, Bonita Spikes, Michelle Thompson and Morgan Weibel

**Welcome and Introduction:** Roberta Roper began the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m. Roberta welcomed the presenter for today's meeting, Morgan Weibel, Esquire. Roberta then asked each person in attendance to introduce themselves to Morgan.

**Review of Minutes:** The minutes from the March 3, 2010 Board meeting were disseminated and Nakita Long was advised by the State Board to make some recommended changes before the minutes could be approved.

**PRESENTATION**

**Tahirih Justice Center**

Morgan Weibel, Esq., Tahirih Justice Center, thanked the Board for allowing her to share with them and she presented an overview of the services Tahirih Justice Center provides to immigrant women, girls and their children who are fleeing gender-based violence. Tahirih Justice Center's base office is located in Falls Church, Virginia and they have satellite offices in Baltimore, Maryland and Houston, Texas. Morgan explained that Tahirih Justice Center provides holistic services for immigrant women and girls that come to her Center with domestic violence issues which are often accompanied with other issues such as divorce, restraining orders, food banks, clothes, shelter, etc.

Tahirih Justice Center is comprised of two basic components; legislation and education and has a public policy team that works with legislation and all of the legislation is formed based on client's needs. The types of relief for cases that are handled by the immigration department are (1) Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions and Battered Spouse Waivers for battered immigrant women, (2) U Visa applications for female victims of violent crime, and (3) T Visa applications for female survivors of human trafficking.

To get a broad overview of each of the different types of relief provided by the Tahirih Justice Center, Morgan encouraged everyone to log on to their website to view the 12 minute video of former clients talking about their stories.

Kristin Mahoney, GOCCP, extended an invitation to Board members and members of Tahirih Justice Center via Morgan Weibel to attend the Chief of Police' meeting June 16, 2010 in Queenstown to discuss issues they have encountered with law enforcement signing T Visa Certifications. Kristen also mentioned that MCASA, IUDA, Women's Law Center are some other agencies that assist in obtaining relief for immigrant victims.

## **REPORTS**

### **Legislation**

Roberta Roper, in an effort not to impede the good progress the Board has made, the Board's relationship with GOCCP and the relationship Board members have with one another, addressed some concerns that arose from the Board's legislative experience this year. Particularly the issue that arose regarding Child Advocacy Centers when a bill was proposed that would require GOCCP and the MVOC fund to develop and sustain Child Advocacy Centers in every jurisdiction throughout the state. She stated that the Board vigorously engaged in a plan and a lot of members invested a lot of time and effort to be prepared and respond to legislation. In the March Board meeting there was a lively discussion clarifying that everyone supported CACs but there was a problem with the process in which the CACs would be funded. At the March meeting, a motion was made and seconded and the Board unanimously voted to oppose SB 796, HB 1043. The Board asked that Roberta Roper and Barbara Bond, Chair of the Legislative Committee, draft a letter to be hand delivered to Chairman Conway expressing the Board's position. The Board agreed that Jeanne Yeager and Frank Weathersbee, Chair of the MVOC Grant Review Committee, would represent the Board's interest in this issue. Roberta was asked to and did make an appointment for Jeanne and Frank to meet with Chairman Conway since Roberta would be out of town and unavailable. It was conveyed to Roberta by Frank, that not only was the purpose of the meeting undermined in the Board's view, but another person who was a lobbyist for CACs was invited and attended the meeting as well as had the time of the meeting changed. Roberta expressed that this placed the Board in a very uncomfortable position and made the Board appear to be adversaries of CACs. Roberta said that all of this could have been avoided if the proponent of this CACs bill had approached the Board in advance to determine how common goals could be achieved. She expressed dismay that all of the work that the Board invested in trying to develop a legislative process was futile. As a consequence, in the last minute, many Board members were involved in trying to mitigate the consequences of the bill which would have depleted MVOC funds. Roberta commented that that it does not matter what issue arises but what matters is how the issue is addressed. She stated that if we are to be productive as a Board, we have to be honest, transparent and forthright as well as communicate with one another.

Roberta explained her vested interest in and the history of MVOC. When she was the director of the Stephanie Roper Committee, the Committee created the MVOC fund prior to the Board's existence. The MVOC Fund was created as a funding resource to help struggling, fledging programs to provide services to victims. It was not until 1991 where the funding mechanism through court costs and assessments was achieved. Roberta expressed that the main point is that this Board cares about the MVOC fund and CACs but as equal partners. She articulated that it is really bad public policy to benefit one population of victims or victim service providers at the expense of another. She asserted that members of the Board need to be better communicators and if there is an issue that any members want the Board to support, they should come to the Board so that we may be partners in better serving all victims of crime. If the Legislative Committee is going to be effective, we have to determine and resolve now to not have this problem arise again.

Jeanne Yeager expressed disagreement with Roberta's impression of the meeting with Chairman Conway. She felt the meeting was very productive, nor believes it was detrimental to have those with different opinions about the bill in the same meeting with Delegate Conway. Jeanne also explained that the time of the meeting had to be rearranged to accommodate everyone; that the Chairman's office called her and she in turn called Frank to advise him that the meeting time had changed. Jeanne also advised that she stayed and testified before the Committee on behalf of the Board. Roberta expressed she can see the benefit of both sides (having the opponents meet separately with Delegate Conway and having the opponents and proponents of the bill meet

together with Delegate Conway), but took issue with the overall way the issue was handled and not presented to the Board for support. Roberta stated that it is in the best interest of advocates to communicate and work together. To prevent suspicion about their motives, they should not be at the meeting arranged by the Board to convey the Board's position. Instead, they should communicate here at the Board meeting which is a public meeting where those discussions should occur so that the Board could be prepared and advised and maybe come to some agreement in advance of that meeting with Delegate Conway.

Kristen Mahoney emphasized that SB 796, HB 1043 is the Chairman's bill, drafted in response to the Sarah Foxwell tragedy. The Chairman worked with the legislative advocacy group to draft the bill; it was not the Governor's or GOCCP's bill. Kristen also advised that Chairman Conway made the decision to invite the opposition to the meeting with Board members. Roberta responded that Kristen testified on behalf of the Governor. Kristen explained that she firmly stated, in her written and verbal remarks, that as a member of the Board, the Board opposes this bill and as a member of the O'Malley/Brown Administration, the Administration supports Child Advocacy Centers.

Roberta thought it was very interesting how little understanding the key legislators had of the consequences of their proposal. Barbara Bond stated that as Chair of the Legislative Committee, it is her concern that all of this was a surprise. The Board had several meetings as they were establishing the priorities and process for bill evaluation and response, and asked if anyone had any knowledge of bills that the Board should respond to, to please alert the Committee. Kristen responded that she did not have any prior knowledge of this bill. Kristen advised that we can not ask lobbyist, other individuals or the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee to come and brief the Board on legislation that they may or may not be proposing. Deborah Unitus also agreed that the Board should have been alerted to this bill and said that during the March 3, 2010, meeting when this issue arose, Kristen knew enough about this bill to present underlying facts to the Board. Kristen countered that she had knowledge of this bill then only because Russell Butler, MCVRC, emailed her with respect to the bill and that she assumed Russell's email was also sent to the rest of the Board.

Kristen announced that GOCCP is having a Victims Listening Session July 15, 2010 on the Eastern Shore inviting victim advocacy groups and victims to attend and provide feedback about victim advocacy and laws. Kristen suggested that the Board can use the listening session as an opportunity to do some outreach to advocacy groups to let them know that the Board is a resource for legislative ideas and if they want to bring legislation forward, we would be happy to talk to them in advance.

Deborah Unitus commented "it is wonderful to listen to what people have to say to the Board, but the situation that occurred is at a much higher level. At this high level, these discussions about this legislation were being had about these child advocacy centers and the importance it was for everybody involved and the Governor to know that there is a process." Deborah stated that the Board has developed a grant application process for the MVOC funding which should have been made known before any of this happened. She asserted that the Board's listening to advocates at these listening events is not going to help the present problem. Kristen advised that Chairman Conway will be the host of the Listening Session so the Board can speak to him about our issues then. Roberta suggested that Chairman Conway should have come and met with the Board. Jeanne Yeager disagreed and stated that everything got to this level because of the Sarah Foxwell incident and maintained that Chairman Conway did not just come up with the idea of SB 796, HB1043, but that it was in response to a major event that happened in his district. Roberta added that there is a CAC in Conway's district, and unfortunately it did not prevent that tragedy from happening.

### **Amendments to HB 1043**

Asked about the final version of the bill, Roberta noted grants awarded by the Board shall be equitably distributed among all purposes of the fund and implementation of the Constitutional Amendment does not affect any grants awarded by the State Board of Victim Services for fiscal year 2011. This bill also requires GOCCP to report annually on feasibility and how it is working.

### **VOCA**

Barbara Bond provided the Board with a list of bills of interest for 2010. She also asked Kristen for more information regarding the transfer of the administration of VOCA from DHR to GOCCP. Kristen commented that during the Death Penalty Commission hearings, a victim subcommittee group was established by the Commission to evaluate services generally available to victims. Prior to the Commission meeting Kristen was approached and asked to take over VOCA, sexual assault funding and the domestic violence funding which coincided with the Commission's report and the Capital Punishment Commission's bill which effectuates the transfer of these federal funds to Maryland. In that bill, the United States Code was improperly cited and it transferred the part of VOCA that goes to CICB to GOCCP. GOCCP consulted with their attorneys and the Attorney General's Office advised Kristen that the intent of the bill was to transfer the Victim's Advocacy Program Fund to GOCCP. Kristen indicated that GOCCP could have transferred the Fund last year or they change the Code from 42 U.S.C 106(a) to 42 U.S.C. 106(b) and make that effective this year; however, Secretary Donald's preference was to put it in the 2010 Annual Corrective Bill that becomes effective October 1. Kristen advised that she has been in contact with the Department of Justice to effectuate the transfer. The non-profit and government programs will all have end dates of September 30, 2010 with DHR. GOCCP will re-award them on October 1, 2010 so there will be no gap in services. GOCCP will conduct a Training and Technical Assistance Session, which Secretary Donald and Kristen sent out letters late last week to all of the applicants on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of May. The trainings will be divided by prior customers of GOCCP and new customers of GOCCP. Approximately 18% of the VOCA applicants are new to GOCCP and that group will receive special hands-on attention. The grants will be one year grants on a regular one year cycle. GOCCP will ask people to come in with quarterly reimbursements; however if they request monthly reimbursements, we will be able to request monthly reimbursements. The grants will, as they have in the past in the Administration prior to the O'Malley/Brown Administration, require jurisdictions to apply by county. The grants will be streamlined and have one grant per applicant and performance can be tracked using GOCCP's Grants Management System (GMS). GOCCP will be transferring PINS or staff from DHR. Kim Herndon will be in charge of the VOCA project with Justice Schisler and Erin Newton. GOCCP staff will be diligently working on VOCA so that "no one will even know VOCA has changed agencies."

Kristen's goal for the first year is to have less paper work and an easier application process and next year, start talking about other funding areas and priorities that need to happen in strategy sessions with everyone at the table. All calls regarding VOCA should be directed to Kim Herndon. DV and Sexual Assault money is not available this year and will only come if all goes well with VOCA in 2010. GOCCP will have a "ghost DHR front until the transition."

### **Maryland Network Legislative Agenda**

Michaele Cohen offered handouts regarding the Maryland Network Legislative Agenda. Kristen noted that she is speaking at Michaele's Board Meeting and Provider Meeting in a couple of weeks prior to the training and TA session on VOCA and will be happy to come and talk to other groups prior to the TA session Kristen would be happy to do that.

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

### **Committee Vacancies**

Anne Litecky provided the Board with a MSBVS Membership Chart. Cortney Fisher is the new Designee for the Secretary of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The Maryland Sheriff's Association has been vacant for a few years now. Anne is open to suggestions on how to fill that position. There are two open public member seats. One application for Kathleen O'Brien was submitted this week to the Governor's Appointment Office. There is still another open public members seat. Discussion followed concerning the status of Committee Chairs, including the now vacant Chair of the Nominations Committee, formerly held by Robin Woolford. Roberta asked Cortney if she would be willing to serve in the position and Cortney advised that she is willing to do it and will step in to whatever role(s) the Secretary's Designee before her was playing.

Roberta also asked Board members and guests if they know of anyone who may have an interest in serving as a public member, to please encourage them to do so. Bonita Spikes inquired about how to become a member and was advised to submit a letter to Kristen along with her resume and Kristen would submit it to the Governor's Appointment Office. Kristen added that she again emailed the Sheriff's Association as that position has been vacant for some time.

Ellen Alexander expressed an interest in serving as Chair of the Compliance Committee. Walter Coryell will relinquish his position as Chair because he is running for public office but he would like to continue to serve on the Compliance Committee. Frank Weathersbee remains Chair of the Grants Committee. Roberta asked all Board members to advise her if they wanted to switch their positions.

### **CICB Update**

As of March 29, 2010, Cortney Fisher is the new Executive Director for Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. She advised that CICB recently went through a very intense process Kaizen process in which participants looked at CICB to determine what things are going right and wrong. Cortney has been tasked by the Secretary to implement the 17 recommendations made by the Kaizen team. There are four major components to the Kaizen which include a complete overhaul of CICB's policies and procedures including the way CICB handles a claim from the onset to completion; changing the way examiners write their notes in the system, who they speak with and how many business days to turn around certain things. Courtney advised that they have been collaborating with CIC Offices in Pennsylvania, Vermont and Texas and will look to revising Maryland's Policies and Procedures manual modeled after those States. She advised that the goal is to make CICB a very victim centered process that will best serve the victim/claimant.

Courtney has submitted a training proposal to the Kaizen team and to the DPSCS Deputy Secretary and CICB staff will be required to undergo 40 hours of training before the end of the calendar year. The training will consist of diversity and competency, victimization and trauma and legal issues related to CICB. Courtney also advised that CICB is working with GOCCP staff to identify funding for a Coordinator of Victim Services Program which will be responsible for the continuing education of the staff. After December 31, CICB staff will be required to get 15 hours of continuing education training every year. Courtney also asked the Board to inform her if anyone knows of and feels there are any other trainings CICB should undergo.

Courtney further advised that she intends to meet with child advocacy, sexual assault, domestic violence, drunk driving and elder abuse communities to find out what they feel CICB could do better. Another goal is to get the examiners out into the public and report out in teams rather than individually.

Steve Kelly commended Courtney for a job well done. He advised that the CIC Board intends to be a lot more transparent than previously and intend to rotate their meetings throughout different areas of the state. There has been some discussion about video conferencing for victims. They also would like to invite Board members in to see what the CICB hearings are like. He stated that CICB is changing from an agency centered program to a victim centered program and the Board is very supportive of the changes Courtney is implementing.

Jeanne Yeager stated that there have been a lot of issues with CICB and now it is time for some positive feedback. She suggested the Board send a letter to Secretary Maynard thanking Courtney for her hard work in such a short period of time and for the new approach of becoming a victim centered agency. Roberta agreed that she would be happy to write a letter on behalf of the Board. Ellen Alexander commented that one of the good things that came about from the Kaizen group is making the hearing process more transparent and efficient.

### **MVOC Update**

Anne Litecky noted that Debra Tall was unable to attend today's meeting and report out on the Memorial Services and Governor's Luncheon, but reports that everything went very well. Memorial Services and Governor's Luncheon budgets will be addressed at the next Board meeting. Anne advised that we are processing more memorial service registration forms which will be updated and distributed to everyone soon.

MVOC grant award packets for the first year awards are being processed and should be mailed within the next week. Those grants run July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. MVOC Continuation Grant Applications are due tomorrow. There are 14 year two and 12 year three applications. This includes MVOC and LSCV.

VINE brochures, posters and tear offs for law enforcement are on order and we should be receiving those shortly. The new material will include Parole and Probation notification linked in with custody and court notification. The protective order notification will be a separate Appriss system. We had a problem where we realized that unsealed cases that are under indictment were posted on VINELINK and we had to manually remove cases. There are still some problems but as we move forward we are getting it under control.

The VINE contract which is a five year contract, one year renewable, is ending this year. We are in the process of transferring the contract from GOCCP over to the Department of Public Safety to cover Parole and Probation, Protective Order and the Sexual Offender Alert line which is also Appriss based. The maintenance will still be under GOCCP, however the IT portion of the VINE contract will be under the IT Department of DPP.

Anne advised that VINE also has another program, the CHOICE System, under which CVNRFs would be processed electronically. A federal SAVIN grant was submitted to get funding for two years to implement the Choice program in Maryland. We are waiting to hear from the federal government to see if we have been awarded.

The Listening Event (that Kristen mentioned earlier) is scheduled for July 15, 2010 from 5:00 PM until 7:00 PM at Salisbury State University. There will be a panel consisting of State Agencies. Anne will send out an email advising Board members of all the particulars. Anne asked Board members to provide her with suggested event locations for the Western and Central region Listening Events.

The Roper Victim Assistance Academy of Maryland (RVAAM) will be having their 8<sup>th</sup> Academy on June 7 – 11, 2010. RVAAM is a 40 hour curriculum basic training modeled after the National Victim Assistance Academy.

Anne provided Board members with a Fiscal report. MVOC expenditures were over \$1.1 million; income \$1.6 million and the balance is approximately \$527,000. An Administrative report will be provided to Board members at the end of the year. Roberta advised that the Board is concerned with controlling the administrative cost and finding other ways to cover administrative costs in an effort to have most of the funds allocated toward victim services. Anne advised that any shift in line items over \$500 requires permission from the Board's Executive Committee.

### **Compliance Update**

Shirley Haas reported that over the past couple of months she has found no compliance violations. As far as the training component of the Compliance Initiative, Shirley is working with the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC) on training for law enforcement. They have received approval from MPCTC's Assistant Attorney General to go to production after a minor modification to include prosecution is done.

Shirley is still conducting trainings at Baltimore City Police Department which will conclude in June. Baltimore City Police Department has a "diamond standard" training comprised of a group of detectives who are responsible for making sure their officers are in compliance. In addition to regular in-service training class, a "diamond standard" training is held once a month. Baltimore City Police Department has also agreed to collaborate with PCTC to develop their own Victim Services Compliance DVD to be used in their academy.

### **Sexual Offender Registry/Supervision**

Elizabeth Bartholomew, Maryland Sexual Offender Registry, answered questions regarding the Maryland Sex Offender Registry specifically in light of 2010 changes to Maryland law and the Federal Adam Walsh Act Elizabeth advised that failure to go into compliance with the federal law would result in a loss of funding for Maryland's Sexual Offender Registry.

### **Reminders**

Compliance Committee is meeting following the Board meeting today. Also on Friday the Maryland Association on Service Providers is having an important meeting and they have invited all services providers to attend and discuss their future.

**The next Board meeting will be held at Anne Arundel Police Department Headquarters  
on  
Wednesday, July 7, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.**