

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

Anne Arundel County Police Department Headquarters

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Barbara Bond, Walter T. Coryell, Carolyn F. Edmonds, Cortney Fisher, Rea Goldfinger, Ed Parker on behalf Kristen Mahoney, Patricia Marshall, Laura Martin, Kathleen O'Brien, Margery Patten, Cindy Pease on behalf of Sandy Roberts, Roberta Roper, Bonnita Spikes, Debra Tall, Deborah A. Unitus, Frank R. Weathersbee, Virginia Wolf, and Jeanne Yeager.

STAFF: Shirley Haas, Anne Litecky, and Nakita Long.

GUESTS: Lisae C. Jordan, Steven Kroll, and Candace Parrot.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION: Roberta Roper began the meeting at approximately 10:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ❖ Motion: To approve Minutes of April 6, 2011 Board Meeting.
- ❖ Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

❖ Executive Committee

- The Executive Committee met this morning to review and make recommendations to the State Board regarding the proposed budget for fiscal year 2012.
 - The budget reflects all of the MVOC Administrative Costs expenses within the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) and the State Board including the Annual Statewide Memorial Services, the Governor's Luncheon, printing of brochures, rent, and other housekeeping costs.
 - The proposed budget is slightly lower than it has been in the past due to a reduction in the salary of one employee, administrative assistant, taking an early retirement.
 - It was noted that the budget line item for the retreat in the amount of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000) for fiscal year 2011 should be carried over to fiscal year 2012 retreat because no retreat was held in fiscal year 2011.
 - There was some discussion to attempt to reduce the costs for printing.
 - A possible suggestion included supplying agencies with pdf and having them print brochures at their own expense. Although it was determined that this would meet the statutory requirements, it was noted that police officers would be more inclined to give out the required brochures if they were already on hand as shifting the burden of printing and folding brochures to the police would not be a practical solution.
 - In an effort to make sure law enforcement complies with distributing brochures as mandated, it was suggested that the Board discuss the procedure with the Police Training Commission to make it apart of the recruit training requirements in the State of Maryland for all law enforcement officers and that it becomes a part of the in-service program that is conducted each year.
- Motion: To approve Fiscal Year 2012 Budget.
- Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved.

❖ 2012 Governor's Luncheon

- The 2011 Governor's Victim Assistance Awards Luncheon was a success. The food, different award categories, short biographies and the keynote speakers were all well received.

- A suggestion was made to explore possible ways to reduce the time of the luncheon for calendar year 2012 from three hours to two hours.

❖ **Memorial Services**

- The Annual Statewide Memorial Services were held on April 10, 2011 in four regions.
 - The Northern Region was hosted by the Baltimore County State's Attorney's Office and had approximately 250 people in attendance. State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger was the master of ceremony. The keynote speaker was Carrie Freitag, author of "Aftermath: In the Wake of Murder." Bracelets, pencils and battery powered candles that read "Something Beautiful Remains" were given out to those in attendance. Victims' names were displayed on the wall during a power point presentation.
 - The Western Region was hosted by Carroll County State's Attorney's Office and had approximately 125 people in attendance.
 - The Eastern Region was hosted by the Queen Anne's County State's Attorney's Office and approximately 85 people were in attendance.
 - The Southern Region was hosted by the Saint Mary's County State's Attorney's Office and there were approximately 200 people in attendance. The victims' names were displayed on the wall as their names were read.

❖ **Nominations Committee**

- Four memberships are due to expire on June 30, 2011.
 - Two of the four memberships have already been renewed.
 - Debra Tall, Victim Service Provider, and Jeanne Yeager, Service Provider memberships have been renewed for another term ending on June 30, 2015.
 - Two of the four memberships are pending renewal.
 - Sheriff Hoffman, Representative for the Sherriff's Association is pending his renewal.
 - Laura Martin, Esquire, Representative for the State's Attorney's Association is pending her renewal
 - The State's Attorney's Association submitted a letter to the Attorney General recommending Laura's renewal and the Board is awaiting the Attorney General's supporting recommendation.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

❖ **State's Attorney's Association**

- Steven Kroll, State's Attorney's Coordinator for the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (SAA) provided the Board with an update on the SAA.
 - The SAA is sponsoring a conference this summer focusing on victim/witness advocates. Candace Parrott, Witness Security Resource Coordinator has been to six to eight State's Attorneys' Offices over the past month in order to coordinate funds for victims' and witnesses' needs.
 - There are never adequate funds for victims/witnesses, housing and transportation are major factors.
 - Funds are allocated to each county on a as needed basis.
 - Emerging issues to be addressed in calendar year 2012 are gang issues and domestic violence issues.

❖ **Court Cost Collection and Determining Indigency**

- On November 2010, David Soule of the State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policies presented to the Board. During the presentation, discussion was held about the term “indigence”, as contained in the Sentencing Guidesheet that is used in some Circuit Courts.
- In a coordinated effort, several Board members then scheduled visits with Administrative judges in District and Circuit Courts across Maryland to better understand the reasoning behind a judge considering whether or not a defendant should be determined “indigent. It was also noted if judges were using court forms during sentencing that provided a checklist to document whether the defendant was “indigent” and if a court ordered fine was to be charged.
- The Board requested that Judge Wilner, chair Rules committee explore the definition and assessment of “indigency” and the current failure to hold more defendants accountable for crime victim fines at sentencing. It was also requested that there be an assessment on current generated crime victim fines, which include Maryland Victims of Crime fund, Maryland Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund and the Victim Witness Relocation Fund.
- On May 16, a meeting was held and the rules committee proposed a change to the existing Rules. Rather than defining “indigency”, Judge Wilner suggests that these court costs not be waived at all.
 - A memo that Judge Wilner wrote to the Criminal Rules Subcommittee was read to the Board wherein he proposed a change to the Rules.
 - With the approval of Judge Wilner, a copy of the memo will be shared with members of the Board.

❖ **Town Hall Stakeholders Meeting on May 23rd**

- During 2010, a series of Crime Victims’ Listening Events were held regionally throughout the State. Crime victims were invited to come speak in an open format and present problems and challenges that they encountered as crime victims throughout the criminal justice system.
 - As a result of the Listening Events, a stakeholder’s event was held on May 23rd in Annapolis that involved crime victim service providers and professionals that deal with crime victims.
 - Victim Service Providers were divided into four workgroups to discuss a variety of issues that were brought up as a result of the Listening Event. Some of the issues and possible solutions that were discussed include the following:
 - Issue #1- Adults in the criminal justice system don’t believe child victims
 - Need more focused, trained staff to interview child victims. Make wider use of Child Advocacy Centers and Sexual Assault Response Teams to interview children. State’s Attorney’s Offices make wider use of expert witnesses in certain cases to try to explain to juries why child victims may present the way they do.
 - Issue #2 – Child victims are required to testify in court and face their victimizers.
 - Seek to use closed circuit testimony on a wider scale. Make wider use of out-of-court statements that may be an exception the hearsay rule. Look at legislation to expand the circumstances under which out-of-court statements could be presented for the truthfulness of the statement as opposed to other reasons
 - Issue #3 – There is an inadequate or insensitive response from law enforcement and first responders in sexual assault cases.
 - Need for more training and more effective interviewing skills.
 - Issue # 4 – Human Trafficking
 - Need to better understand scope of the problem. Train first responders to understand things that may be indicative of trafficking. Track cases

- Issue # 5 – Failure to enforce violation of protective orders.
 - Ongoing training for law enforcement officers.
- Issue #6 – Domestic abusers are granted bail
 - Make sure there is a No-Contact Order and if it is violated, go back to court and ask that bail be revoked.
- Issue #7 – GPS and electronic monitoring
 - Need to increase electronic monitoring for defendants who have been released prior to protective order hearings.
- Issue # 8 – Batterers are able to get joint custody of children
 - Judicial education. There is a law currently on the books and judges should be educated to apply the law that is on the books right now. Make wider use of Safe Havens for handoff of children when there is a domestic violence issue.
- Issue # 9 – Insufficient protection for victims of cyber stalking
- Issue # 10 – Vehicular homicide
 - No bail. Don't issue tickets that can be paid in order to avoid a double jeopardy issue
- Issue # 11 – Restitution
- Issue # 12 – Slayer statute
- Issue # 13 – First degree murders given the possibility of parole
- State Board members were encouraged to provide GOCCP with any other issues and/or suggestions that should be included in the document to be generated as a result of this event.

❖ **MVOC Fiscal Report**

- See Executive Committee Meeting

❖ **State Board Meeting Presentations: Ideas Welcome**

- Board members were asked to present ideas for the State Board Retreat and Board meeting presentations.

REMINDERS

MVOC Grant Review Committee Meeting immediately following today's State Board Meeting.



VINE Committee Meeting following Grant Review Committee Meeting today at Hella's Restaurant.

THE NEXT MEETING
The Maryland State Board of Victim Services Retreat
Thursday, October 6, 2011
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
SURRAT HOUSE MUSEUM
9118 Brandywine Road
Clinton, MD 20735