

VVAN 3rd Quarter Business Member Meeting

Date: August 21, 2020 at 2pm

Meeting took place via ZOOM/On-line

Minutes submitted by Sharron Saunders

Members in attendance: Cristi Lawton-VVAN Executive Director; Robin Bostic-VVAN President (King William and King & Queen V/WAP); Lindsay Cassada-VVAN 1st Vice President (Chesterfield DV Resource Center); Mary Anne Freshwater- VVAN 2nd Vice President (Appomattox V/WP); Mindy Stell-VVAN Treasurer (Dinwiddie V/WAP); Laurie Crawford-VVAN Board Member at Large (VDSS); Paul Davis-VVAN Board Member at Large (Albemarle Sheriff's Office); Joyce Walsh (retired from Chesapeake V/WAP); Sharron Saunders-VVAN Secretary (City of Richmond V/WS); Vivian Henderson (VA Beach V/W); Kyanna Perkins (Office of Attorney General); Sharon Reed (Washington County V/WAP); Anne Jessee (Goochland V/W); Lesia Wheeler (Alleghany V/W); Latasha Powell-Mason (Hampton V/W); Nina Beaman; Amber Leake (DOC Victim Services Unit); Carrie Comer (Choices of Page County); Susan Overton (Chesapeake V/W); Megan Smith (Franklin County V/W); Alethia Brown (Newport News V/W); Anika Virgin (York County V/W); Susan Dennard (Portsmouth, V/W); Karen Thomas: Chrissy Smith (DCJS); Anne Jones (Roanoke County V/W); Vivian Robles (Latinos en Virginia Empowerment Center); Kristan Crummett (Waynesboro V/W); Shamelle Hamlin (Surry V/W); Sabrina Porter (Montgomery County V/W); Shannon Freeman (OAG); Judy Holl (Alexandria V/W); Mary Sharpe (OAG); Elizabeth Wilson; Morgan Abbate (OAG)

Meeting Called to Order at 2:05pm by Robin Bostic President (King William County and King & Queen V/WAP)

Announcements:

Vivian Henderson (VA Beach V/W) announced the ZETA Centennial Challenge is accepting donations in the amount of \$20.20 to help purchase basic necessities for domestic violence organizations.

Approval of Minutes: Secretary's Report (submitted by Sharron Saunders Richmond City V/WS)

* Motion made to approve the 2nd Quarter VVAN Business Member minutes as written; a second motion was received; no comments or concerns; all voted in favor; the minutes were approved and adopted by the Business Members.

Treasurer's Report by Mindy Stell ((Dinwiddie V/WAP)

As of July 31, 2020 the grant account balance totaled: \$23,837.98 and the main account balance total: \$44,654.42.

Executive Director's Report: submitted by Cristi Lawton

FINANCIALS:

VVAN's first audit was conducted by Barcalow, CPA and is now complete with recommendations to be reviewed by Cristi and Mindy.

The Board approved the FY21 budget of \$1,058,019 in revenue and \$987,036 in projected expenses.

The Board agreed to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program Loan (PPP) to support payroll and office expenses.

Due to the sudden passing of the Finance and Office Manager the position is vacant. An advertisement promoting the vacant position will be submitted. Mindy and Cristi will continue to assist with the financial and administrative tasks.

VOCA Grants Summaries:

The FY21 VOCA/Federal Grant is \$724,209. DCJS reduced the amount allowed to pay consultants to \$81.50 per hour and denied the use of funds for promotional items.

The FY22 VOCA/Federal Grant award and funding will decrease in the next fiscal year. VVAN will need to consider reducing some of the programs.

PROGRAM UPDATES:

The Legal Services Program

Since its launched in May 2020, the program has assisted approximately 40 clients with 12 clients receiving legal assistance for matters related to victimization.

The Legal Services Program coordinated two virtual round tables concerning victims' rights during COVID19. Future training topics will be developed with the Victims' Rights Committee.

Homicide Survivor Support Groups (Dina Blythe, Coordinator)

All active HSG are meeting virtually via ZOOM. A statewide virtual HSG has been suggested. A statewide HSG would allow survivors to attend from anywhere in the Virginia. North Carolina has an active successful virtual statewide HSG.

Regional Crisis Response Teams (Cindy Yadav, Coordinator)

VVAN and DCJS met to discuss new ideas to increase regional responses to local criminal events. In person trainings have been cancelled due to COVID19.

Victim Assist Helpline & Human Trafficking Info-Line (Kate Hanger, Coordinator)

The Helpline received one human trafficking call. Most calls have been referred to Victim/Witness Services programs.

OVC Grant (Kim DiJoseph, Coordinator)

A Basic Intensive Advocacy Training (BIAT) will be available virtually on October 26-27, 2020. The Basic Victim Assistance Academy will also be offered on-line this fall.

On August 12, 2020 The Spark Mill coordinated a four hour virtual training focused on Victim Witness Services coalition building. The training was title: "We Are In This Together: Connecting with Peers to Increase Coalition Impact + Strengthen Victim Services". Approximately, 38-42 logged participated.

Plans are pending due to COVID19 for continued in-person training during the spring of 2021 at the Hotel Roanoke.

Improving Criminal Justice Response Grant (ICJR) (Robyn Sordelett, Coordinator)

This grant involves a partnership with the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, the Office of the Attorney General, Action Alliance, the VA Poverty Law Center, and DCJS. The program coordinator has been assisting with technical support, informational material, and training activities regarding the Lethality Assessment Programs (LAP), Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART), and legal services.

MARKETING/PUBLIC RELATIONS:

The 2019 annual report will be available soon.

VVAN advertised Human Trafficking Awareness month and CRT services on Facebook. An E-newsletter titled, “The Circuit” was distributed in July. The next E-newsletter will be distributed in October.

Stories about some of the HSGs appeared in the Henrico Citizen and Appomattox newspaper.

FUND DEVELOPMENT:

The Board approved funding from a family foundation concerning a grant donation to assist with legislative advocacy.

The VA Law Foundation declined our application request for funding. We have several grants pending to support the HSGs.

MEMBERSHIP:

Our membership renewal is at approximately 69% with 78 Victim/Witness Services Programs and other allied partners. We currently have 93 members.

MISCELLANEOUS/OPERATIONS:

VVAN hosted a summer intern. A new intern will start in August. The new website has increased the requests we receive regarding our internship program.

Due to COVID19 the VVAN staff continues to telework allowing only two people in the office at a time.

GOVERNANCE/STRATEGIC PLANNING:

The Board approved online training to discuss Strategic Planning. The Spark Mill will coordinate the training.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance & Fundraising Committee: Cristi Lawton and Morgan Abbate (OAG)

A virtual meeting has been scheduled for the fall. Morgan Abbate (OAG) is the new chairperson.

Legislative Committee: Robin Bostic President (King William County, King & Queen V/WAP)

The General Assembly Special Session is started this week. Several Senate and House bill that could impact crime victims were discussed. All of the bills discussed will be retroactive. Please continue to send Robin names of victims who are willing to testify or provide e-mails concerning their opposition to the proposed bills. The following bills were identified for informational purposes:

HB 5100 Summary

Parole; investigation prior to release. Provides that the Parole Board shall contact the victim prior to making any decision to release any inmate on discretionary parole. The bill provides that the term "victim" includes a spouse, parent, sibling, or legal guardian of a person who was the victim of a homicide.

SB5007 Summary

Criminal cases; sentencing reform. Provides that in a criminal case the court shall ascertain the extent of the punishment unless the accused has requested that the jury ascertain punishment or was found guilty of capital murder. The bill also provides that if a jury cannot agree on a punishment, the court shall fix punishment. The bill has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2021.

HB 5084 Summary

Sentencing in a criminal case; jury trial. Provides that in a criminal case the court shall ascertain the extent of the punishment, unless the accused has requested that the jury ascertain punishment or was found guilty of capital murder.

SB 5034 Summary

Release of prisoners. Provides that any person serving a sentence imposed upon a conviction for a felony offense other than those enumerated in the bill as exceptions to eligibility and who is terminally ill as defined in the bill is eligible for consideration by the Parole Board for conditional release.

HB 5034 Summary

Mandatory reporting of all offenders released from a local correctional facility or state correctional facility before the completion of the offender's sentence. Requires the Department of Corrections and all local correctional facilities to provide the Virginia State Crime Commission with the name, last known address, criminal history information, length of sentence for which the offender was incarcerated, reason for early release, and remaining time on such length of sentence for each offender in the custody of the Department of Corrections or such local correctional facility. The bill requires the Virginia State Crime Commission to publish the names of such offenders along with the reason for early release on its website and provide an annual report concerning the release of such offenders and any future criminal charges and convictions for such offenders to the General Assembly by November 15 of every year.

SB 5016 Summary

Application of parole statutes for juveniles and persons committed upon felony offenses committed on or after January 1, 1995. Repeals the abolition of parole. The bill also provides that the Virginia Parole Board shall establish procedures for consideration of parole for persons

who were previously ineligible for parole, because parole was abolished, to allow for an extension of time for reasonable cause.

SB 5046 Summary

Limitation on mandatory minimum punishment. Provides that mandatory minimum punishments shall not apply to any sentence imposed for an offense committed on or after January 1, 2021.

SB 5103 Summary

Eligibility for parole; murder. Provides that any person convicted of murder where the location of the body of the victim is unknown and the Parole Board has probable cause to believe that such person convicted has information concerning the location of the body is not eligible for parole. The bill contains technical amendments.

PROGRAM COMMITTEES:

Victims' Rights Committee (Judy Holl Alexandria V/W and Kyanna Perkins OAG)

This committee met via ZOOM on August 12, 2020 along with Sarika Rueben, the VVAN Victim Services Attorney and Sarah Okolita, the VVAN Legal Services Coordinator. Sarika provided an update of the Legal Services Program. She explained that there has been an increase in referrals regarding divorce, custody, housing, Workers Compensation claims, protective orders, and victims' rights. Sarika identified a need to seek more attorneys throughout the state to increase the pro bono assistance program and to provide assistance in areas out of her expertise.

Sarah discussed COVID19 court room trends limiting the number of people allowed in the courtroom. These limitations are affecting victims' rights to be present in the courtroom, juvenile victims' rights to be present in the courtroom with a support person, and victim advocates' abilities to support victims. The committee plans to develop a survey to identify these type of courtroom experiences throughout the state.

The new felony discovery rule of providing a witness list to defense was discussed. The committee encourages victim advocates to inform victims of their right to confidentiality via VA Code Sections 11.1-92 and 11.2. Witnesses are also included in the confidentiality code sections.

Future training topics include topics on exculpatory evidence and the implication on advocates, a representative from the National Crime Victim Law Institute to discuss strengthening the VA Victim Rights Act, training for new Commonwealth Attorneys and judges, uniformity of client forms for all V/WS Programs to access, training for new program directors, and the development of a victim's right ombudsman under the OAG. The committee plans to meet again next quarter.

Program Committee (Lindsay Cassada-Chesterfield DV Resource Center)

Due to COVID19 the November conference was cancelled. An in-person conference has been rescheduled for March, 2021 at The Hilton at VA Beach. All of the previously scheduled keynote speakers and workshop presenters are available to present in March.

This committee is sponsoring a virtual training in November to be coordinated by Justice 3D with former Commonwealth Attorney Nancy Oglesby. The training will focus on new laws affecting advocacy.

Virginia Victims' Fund Committee (Mary Anne Freshwater-Appomattox V/WP)

No report and no future meeting scheduled.

* Motion made to adjourn the Business Meeting; a second motion was received; all voted in favor; the Business Meeting was adjourned at 3pm.