

**Center for Crime Victim Services  
Board Meeting Minutes  
February 13, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Bob Paolini, Susie Carr, Alycia Post.

**Absent:** Susan Ide, Richard Katzman. **Staff Members Present:** Jennifer Poehlmann, Carol Morgan, Jodie Bacon, Abby Gladstone-Strobel, Michelle Pelletier, Carol Brochu, Melinda Meyer.

**Absent:** Maria Gibbs.

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM.

**REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of January 9, 2023, and unanimously approved them as presented, with the following correction to the December Compensation Claims Report: the last sentence of the first paragraph was corrected to read: “Year-to-date, regular claims had increased 15.20% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, while year-to-date SA claims had decreased by 21.31%.

**COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT**

Abby Gladstone-Strobel presented Compensation reports for January 2023. A total of 30 regular claims were received this January, compared to 34 the previous January. A total of 18 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 15 the previous January. Year-to-date, regular claims had increased 11.34% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, while year-to-date SA claims had decreased by 16.79%.

Compensation expenses in January 2023 were highest for claims related to Domestic Assault and Homicide. Compared to the same point in the previous fiscal year, expenses related to homicide showed a huge increase of \$75K in the current fiscal year (FY23). Abby noted that homicide claims had generated high expenses for funeral costs, lost wages, and travel costs of survivors. In contrast, expenses related to sexual assault had declined and were \$8K less than at the same point in the prior fiscal year. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

**COMPENSATION REVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGE TO EMERGENCY HOUSING POLICY**

Carol Morgan presented proposed changes to the Compensation Program’s Emergency Housing Policy, explaining that nightly costs for hotels have increased, making it difficult for crime victims to find a safe hotel at the current policy’s rate. After discussion, the Board voted unanimously to approve increasing the payment rate from \$100 per night to \$200 per night, for not more than seven nights; and to make the effective date of the policy change retroactive to cover requests received for dates of service beginning January 1, 2023 forward.

**RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT**

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) report for January 2023. This January, the RU’s Case Managers brought in \$39.6K and another \$187 came in via tax offsets. A total of 81 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, with the largest amount

(22) coming from Washington County, followed closely by Chittenden County (20). Michelle noted that this was the highest number of monthly RJOs received by the RU since the pandemic began, indicating that court processes seemed to be returning to pre-pandemic levels. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report through January 2023. She noted a new page in her monthly reports, called “SFY23 Budget,” which condensed the fundamental budget information to help clarify CCVS’s funding streams. She advised that the federal funds shown on that page indicate federal funds that CCVS has already received, and shows where CCVS is routing those funds. She remarked that the budget is built on expected revenues and expenses. Currently, FY23 revenues were 13.77% lower than projected, however in January revenues had ticked upward, which was a hopeful sign. Looking back historically, CCVS’s revenues have been trending down, without an increase in almost a decade. CCVS was using much of its FY23 one-time General Fund appropriation to cover expenses for the Compensation Program, thus preserving the other funds normally used for that. The Financial Report was accepted as presented.

## **CENTER UPDATE**

Jennifer Poehlmann informed the Board that the legislative session was off to a very hot start and there had been a lot of activity on issues impacting victims/survivors and the Center. Policy bills that had been taken up included:

- a bill that would allow for referrals in Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence cases to be accepted by Community Justice Centers.
- Prohibiting the act of stealthing;
- Expansion of sexual exploitation laws to criminalize grooming;
- Prohibiting cases that are referred to diversion from being eligible for expungement if restitution has not been paid;
- Moving the responsibility for maintaining the Victim Advocate Program to the Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs;
- Expansion of the “Big 12” offenses for purposes of determining juvenile jurisdiction; and
- Elimination of cash bail for misdemeanors

Carol Brochu and Jennifer Poehlmann had been working on the budget with both House Appropriations and the Administration. Three of the Center’s four “asks” for FY24 were included by the Administration in the Governor’s recommend, those being: moving the \$7.25 from the surcharge established in 13 VSA 7282 that goes to the General Fund and splitting that between the Comp Special Fund and DV/SV Fund; moving the funding for the domestic violence trainer for the Criminal Justice Training Council from the DV/SV Fund to the General Fund; and picking up one of the two Vermont State Police Victim Advocate (VSP VA) positions with General Fund dollars. Jenn was continuing to work hard to have the Legislature pick up the other VSP VA position, and also to secure a 3% increase in CCVS’s General Fund base that was inadvertently missed by the Administration.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.  
Adjourned at 2:20 PM.

**Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:**

**Monday,**

**March 20, 2023**

**1:30 PM**

**In the conference room at  
60 South Main Street, Waterbury.**