

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2025**

Board Members Present: Bob Paolini, Susan Carr, Richard Katzman, Alycia Post, Susan Ide.

Staff Members Present: Jennifer Poehlmann, Jodie Bacon, Maria Gibbs, Anna Harrington, Michelle Pelletier, Carol Brochu, Gene Nelson, Megan Kinlock, Melinda Meyer. **Absent:** Diane Gagnon

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 PM.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of February 10, 2025, and unanimously approved them as presented.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Anna Harrington presented Compensation reports for February 2025. A total of 22 regular claims were received this February, compared to 38 the previous February, and a total of 18 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 14 the previous February. Year-to-date, regular claims had decreased by 13.52% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, while SA claims had decreased by 1.13%. The largest compensation expenses for February 2025 were related to Aggravated Assault, Simple Assault, Domestic Assault, and Homicide, in that order. Overall, year-to-date expenses for regular claims were \$48K less in the current fiscal year than at the same point in the previous fiscal year, and year-to-date SA expenses were \$10.7K less. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports for February 2025. For the first time in the current fiscal year, the RU fell a bit short of its collections goal for the month, but still expected to meet their annual goal within the next few months. In February, a total of 86 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, with the largest number (19) coming from Rutland County, followed by Chittenden County with 16 RJOs, and Orleans County with 10 RJOs. February collections by the RU's Case Managers totaled \$44,717, and another \$60,024 came in via tax offsets. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report through February 2025. Since January C CVS has been using the federal VOCA Compensation grant award to pay for victim compensation claims. C CVS may continue to use federal funds through June to help maintain the Compensation Special fund balance until we know if we'll receive any additional funds in the next fiscal year (SFY26) to help support declining revenues. Carol will be submitting a Request to expend "Excess Receipts" for the Restitution Fund. She explained that C CVS's current spending authority is only enough to cover about two months' worth of restitution expenditures, based on current spending levels. She cautioned that the balance in the Restitution Fund was now below \$1M and based on the current spending Carol believed the fund balance would be around \$700K at the end of the current fiscal year (FY25). C CVS is asking the legislature for a one-time deposit to alleviate

the projected deficit in funding in FY25. Carol advised that such one-time deposit would merely make up for lost revenues for FY25, and would not solve the problem for the next fiscal year (FY26). Without increased revenues or a new revenue source, the problem will persist into the future. With four remaining months in FY25, C CVS will continue monitoring both its special funds, and discussing concerns over declining revenues in budget conversations with legislative committees.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on legislative issues. She remarked that practically every day she speaks to the statehouse about victim services, and continues to educate state representatives on legislative impacts on victims. Some legislative changes have not proven as effective as hoped. Regarding funding for C CVS, the state has provided some one-time funding in the past, which has been helpful but is not a long term solution to C CVS's continued budget shortfalls. In recent years C CVS has made some changes and advocated for state funding to support state victim advocate positions versus using federal funds, grant funds, or state special funds for those positions. This has been successful and has taken some of the pressures off of the Center's federal and state special funds, but is not sufficient. Jenn noted that C CVS is a pass-through agency for administering a significant portion of grant funding of victim-services organizations in Vermont, and currently gets no funding to cover its own costs for the duties of grant administration, oversight, and other grant-related work for these programs.

Jenn noted that the Department of Corrections has a very large commitment by the state, of over \$220 million. In contrast, C CVS receives \$1.6 million, the majority of which is "straight pass-through" for other programs, resulting in a state commitment of less than \$200,000 for C CVS. She added that the Secretary of State or the state auditor had done a review of all Vermont state agencies, in light of recent presidential Executive Orders and federal funding issues, and determined that C CVS fell into the high-risk category because the majority of its funding comes from federal dollars.

Board member Richard Katzman suggested that an Op Ed piece regarding funding concerns might be helpful and offered to write one with input from C CVS's Grants Manager Gene Nelson. The Board as a group liked that idea, and Bob Paolini suggested the Op Ed piece be sent to state policy-makers first, then the media. Jenn thanked the Board for their assistance.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.
Adjourned at 2:22 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

Monday, April 7, 2025

1:30PM

**Virtual by Zoom and in the
conference room at**

60 South Main Street, Waterbury.