

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2024**

Board Members Present: Bob Paolini, Susan Carr, Susan Ide, Richard Katzman. **Absent:** Alycia Post.
Staff Members Present: Jennifer Poehlmann, Carol Morgan, Jodie Bacon, Maria Gibbs, Anna Harrington, Michelle Pelletier, Carol Brochu, Julie Frailey, Melinda Meyer.

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of August 12, 2024, and unanimously approved them as presented.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Maria Gibbs presented Compensation reports for August 2024. A total of 33 regular claims were received this August compared to 45 the previous August. A total of 12 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 32 the previous August. With August being only the second month of the new fiscal year (FY'25), there was a Year-to-Date decrease of 6.85% in the number of regular claims and a decrease of 36.17% for SA claims received, compared to the same two-month period in the previous fiscal year. The largest compensation expenses for August 2024 were related to Aggravated Assault, followed by Homicide, then Domestic Assault. Year-to-Date compensation expenses for regular claims were about \$3K more than at the same point in the previous fiscal year (FY24). Year-to-date SA expenses were almost \$7K less than at the same point in FY'24. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports for August 2024. This August, a total of 97 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, with the largest number (52) coming from Chittenden County. Michelle noted that several counties had offenders with multiple RJOs. In one case 16 RJOs were issued for one offender. Regarding August payments to victims, a bunch of home-improvement fraud cases each paid out \$5K. In August the RU Case Managers brought in a little over \$50K and another \$17K was received via tax offsets. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report for August 2024. At only two months into the new fiscal year, she was hopeful that revenues would improve, noting that July's revenues had been higher than in July 2023. Unfortunately, the increase of \$7.00 to CCVS's surcharge had not yet generated as much revenue into CCVS's Compensation Fund and DV/SV Fund as the Joint Fiscal Office had projected. In mid-September auditors from the federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) spent a week onsite reviewing CCVS's financial information related to federal VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) grant funding processes, which resulted in a lot of extra work for Carol Brochu and other CCVS staff as they provided

information and answered questions. The Financial Report was accepted as presented.

REVIEW PROPOSED UPDATES TO CCVS EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Julie Frailey went over three proposed updates to the CCVS Employee Handbook regarding: 1) Guidance for grant recipients on handling personal identifiable information; 2) the Drug and Alcohol Policy; and 3) staff use of and/or payout of Combined Time Off (CTO) upon termination of employment. After review, board member Susan Carr motioned to approve the three proposed updates, Susan Ide seconded the motion, and the Board voted unanimously to approve the Handbook updates.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on several issues. She thanked CCVS's Financial Manager, Carol Brochu, and Compensation Program Manager, Carol Morgan, for all the extra work they put in to answer questions and provide information to the federal OVC auditors who were recently on-site.

Jenn noted that Carol Brochu was currently building the CCVS budget for the next fiscal year (FY'26), which was challenging due to a projected 40% reduction in federal VOCA funding. A Vermont state budget analyst was working with CCVS to assist in planning the FY'26 budget, and Jenn was hopeful that the state would provide CCVS with a commitment of General Fund dollars to help.

Regarding new legislation, Jenn explained that CCVS would be testifying in mid-October on the issues of "earned/learned time" for offenders, and on a constitutional amendment to add a Victims' Bill of Rights to the state's constitution. Jenn was also excited about a "towing bill" she's working on with representative Barbara Richardson to address the problem of "predatory" towing that effects victims of Domestic Violence and other crimes when victims cannot afford to recover their towed cars. They hope to carve out a small exception for such crime victims.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.
Adjourned at 2:14 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

**Annual Public Meeting
Monday, October 21, 2024:
1:30PM
Virtual by Zoom and in the
conference room at
60 South Main Street, Waterbury.**