

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2023**

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

Absent: Susan Carr. **Staff Members Present:** Jennifer Poehlmann, Carol Morgan, Jodie Bacon, Maria Gibbs, Anna Harrington, Michelle Pelletier, Melinda Meyer, Gene Nelson. **Absent:** Carol Brochu.

The meeting was called to order at 1:38 PM.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of September 18, 2023, and October 16, 2023, and unanimously approved them as presented. (There was no board meeting in November.)

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Carol Morgan presented Compensation reports for September, October, and November 2023, which were not presented previously due to the annual public meeting held in October and the holiday break in November. For the most recently completed month of November 2023, a total of 38 regular claims were received, compared to 35 the previous November. A total of 10 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 18 the previous November. Year-to-date, regular claims had increased 3.5 % compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, while year-to-date SA claims had increased by 28.4 %.

The largest compensation expenses for November 2023 were related to Homicide claims, followed by claims for Domestic Assault and Aggravated Assault. Year-to-date, compensation expenses for regular claims were slightly lower (about \$500 less) in the current fiscal year (FY24) than at the same point in the previous fiscal year (FY23). Year-to-date SA expenses were approximately \$2,000 higher than at the same point in the prior fiscal year. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier introduced newly-hired RU staff member, Jayden White. Michelle then presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports which were not presented previously due to the annual public meeting held in October and the holiday break in November. For the most recently completed month of November 2023, a total of 45 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, with the largest number (10 RJOs) coming from Lamoille County, followed by 9 RJOs from Chittenden County. Michelle was thrilled to announce that November's collections were the largest she's ever seen since she began working at the RU. Due to an offender's payment of \$150K related to an embezzlement case, November collections by the RU's Case Managers came to a little over \$201K. Another \$2,983 came in via tax offsets. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu was absent due to the day's snow-storm and a power outage at her home, so there was no Financial Report this month.

REVIEW OF IDEA (INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY)

Gene Nelson informed the Board that 111 people had signed up for the Center's online IDEA Institute, and one grantee organization planned to register 4 more of their staff. Gene had learned that nationally, only half of U.S. states were able to actively work on President Biden's IDEA initiative.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on several issues. Following up on the IDEA review, CCVS will be updating its Strategic Plan and will integrate IDEA principles into that. Regarding budget issues, Jenn explained that CCVS's recent budget presentation went well, with only a small increase requested: a 3% increase to our base General Funds (GF) which would be used to support the Child Advocacy Centers and therefore result in some VOCA "savings". We also requested that the state dedicate GF dollars to fully support the Attorney General's Victim Advocate position which has to date been funded at 50% with federal VOCA (Victim of Crime Act) dollars. Because CCVS is looking at a VOCA shortfall of 40% in the next fiscal year, the state's Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) will be reviewing all the ways that victim services are funded by the state and seeking some new approaches.

Jenn updated the board on efforts to secure the rights of victims in cases where offenders have mental health issues, so that victims are better notified with information they need for safety. She noted that CCVS's presentation at a recent Mental Health conference was very well-received. CCVS has also started conversations to see if CCVS can pilot a program whereby the RU would work with two or three counties to create and test a process that might allow the RU to pay victims even when the offender has been found mentally incompetent. The pilot would help determine how sustainable such a project might be.

Jenn also advised that the Center continues to lead in pushing a legislative initiative that would look at ways children suffering from physical abuse could be provided the same legal protection rights as child victims of sexual assault.

SCHEDULE 2024 BOARD MEETING DATES

The Board agreed on the following meeting dates for 2024. All are Mondays. All start at 1:30 PM.

January 8, 2024

February 12

March 11

April 15

May 13

June 10

July 15

August 12

September 16

October 21

December 9, 2024 (there is no meeting in November)

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn. Adjourned at 3:15 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

Monday, January 8, 2024

1:30 PM

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