

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
April 15, 2024**

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

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

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of March 11, 2024, and unanimously approved them as presented.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Maria Gibbs presented the Compensation report for March 2024. A total of 46 regular claims were received compared to 41 the previous March. A total of 18 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 13 the previous March. Year-to-date, regular claims had increased 8.98% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. Year-to-date SA claims had increased 24.44% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year.

The largest compensation expenses for March 2024 were related to Homicide, Domestic Violence, and Aggravated Assault, with related costs for Funeral, Lost Wages and Travel expenses. Year-to-date, compensation expenses for regular claims were almost \$31K less in the current fiscal year (FY24) than at the same point in the previous fiscal year (FY23). Year-to-date SA expenses were \$10K less than at the same point in the prior fiscal year. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports for March 2024. A total of 122 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state. Michelle noted that the unusually high number of 47 RJOs came from Bennington County, of which 44 were related to the same offender who was now incarcerated. Rutland County was next highest with 15 RJOs for March, which Michelle thought was possibly due to that county having a new State's Attorney (SA). Jenn Poehlmann agreed, noting that the new SA in Rutland, as well as the new Victim Advocate there, were taking retail theft crimes very seriously. Michelle remarked that March was a very good month for collections and payments to victims. The RU's Case Managers had collected \$53.6K and another \$47.5K came in via tax offsets. The RU's total collections for fiscal year 2024 (FY24) had now exceeded the goal for the entire fiscal year. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report through March 2024. The increased surcharge CCVS was awarded from marriage licenses and traffic fees had not yet generated the increase in revenues that the Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) had projected. CCVS's surcharge was increased as of July 1, 2024, at the start of the current fiscal year (FY24); however the number of traffic tickets issued had decreased significantly, and an administrative error by the courts had deposited the surcharge increase into the wrong account. The funding error had since been corrected, and the next few months might show improved revenues by the end of June. Carol noted that although fund balances were okay for now, the last few years of revenue have not been adequate to cover all of CCVS's grant obligations. CCVS had done a good job of keeping costs down and had used federal funds as much as possible this fiscal year, since those are lost if not spent down in time. In March, CCVS switched to using state dollars, in order to qualify for the 75% federal reimbursement for state dollars spent.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on a variety of issues. She was happy to report that the legislative bill regarding legal protections for child victims of physical abuse was on the Governor's desk to sign. She noted that a brave young male victim of hazing had testified to change law so that victims of sexual assault are not held responsible for what was termed "negligence" in his own sexual assault case. The victim chose to come forward and share his name and experience in order to get this civil suit issue changed. On April 14th, Jenn had presented at a community meeting in Burlington regarding services and supports for crime victims.

Jenn advised that CCVS got approval from the House to fund a badly needed new Grants Manager position, however the House was only able to fund it as a half-year position. CCVS was looking at other ways to fund the new position if state funding did not come through.

For the past two quarters, Jenn had worked with the Compensation Program and the Restitution Unit to provide each county with data on the number of compensation claims and restitution judgment orders received, to ensure they are aware of what the Victim Advocates are processing and sending to CCVS.

The latest session of the Vermont Victims Assistance Academy had recently wrapped up. On April 26th, CCVS would hold the annual ceremony for National Crime Victims Rights Week at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn. Adjourned at 2:31 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

Monday, May 13, 2024

1:30 PM

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