

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
March 7, 2017

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, Fourth Floor, Conference Room 4B, from 2:05 p.m. to 3:50 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Co-Chair the Honorable John A. Danaher, III, Co-Chair Susan Omilian, Brian Austin Jr., Joseph W. Bibisi, Antonia Cordero, Laura Cordes, Mui Mui Hin-McCormick, Karen M. Jarmoc, David Lawrence-Hawley, David Snyder for Karen Martucci, Thomas J. Wydra

Members Excused or Absent:

Melissa Farley, Janice Heggie Margolis, Steven Hernandez, Deborah Witkin

OVS Staff Present:

Linda J. Cimino, James Morgan, Jean M. Weisbrod

Agenda:

1. Welcome
Judge Danaher called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Council members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of the January 10, 2017 Meeting Minutes
Judge Danaher asked for a motion to accept the minutes of January 10, 2017. The motion was moved and seconded; the minutes were accepted as presented. Judge Danaher abstained, as he was not in attendance at the January meeting.
3. Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Update
James Morgan distributed and reviewed the Office of Victim Services *Criminal Injuries Compensation Program Budget statement for month ending 02/28/17, FY 07/01/16 – 06/30/17*. Jim reported that as of February 28, 2017, payments have been processed related to 555 claimants at an average of \$3,100 per claimant. He reported that as of February 29, 2016, payments related to 524 claimants were processed at an average of \$2,822 per claimant.

Jim distributed and reviewed the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Contributions (P.A. 06-152) FY 2016 – 2017*. Jim reported that court collections declined in December 2016 but there was an increase in January 2017. He stated that court collections are \$125,500 lower than they were through January 31, 2016. Jim reported that 7 courts have collection levels exceeding collection rates from FY 2015 – 2016 and 13 courts have collection levels below rates from FY 2015 – 2016. Jim reported the total revenue is \$202,083 behind the amount of collections at February 2016.

Council members expressed concern regarding the impact the state budget reduction of per diem prosecutors has had on the amount of court collections made to the CICF and the long term effect on the OVS Victim Compensation Program.

4. State Budget Roundtable Discussion

Council members reported on how the projected state budget cuts will impact services to victims and how the agencies that they represent are preparing for the changes.

Mui Mui Hin-McCormick reported that the Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO) is trying to determine the impact to the three populations that it serves which represent 30% of the population in the state of Connecticut. She stated that with less funding there is a direct impact on outreach and educational projects.

Antonia Cordero reported that the UCONN School of Social Work has had an increase in the number of staff members who are retiring with no means to hire replacements. Antonia stated responsibilities have shifted to other staff and community work is a lower priority. She reported that on May 10, 2017, the School of Social Work is moving to Hartford which will increase the school's visibility in the community.

David Lawrence-Hawley reported that there have been significant cuts in state grant funding to the Klingberg Family Center. David stated that the Center is creating a trauma-informed school environment in New Britain and Hartford and will be forced to look for private funding to continue this project.

Karen Jarmoc reported that the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is bracing for state budget cuts with strategic planning and having conversations with other service providers to find ways to meet the needs of the victims. Karen stated that if all the budget reductions happen there will not be resources to support the status quo including continuing 24-hour staffing at shelters throughout the state.

Judge Danaher reported that further cuts to court personnel will make it difficult to do what needs to be done to open and operate the new Torrington Superior Court.

David Snyder reported that due to the state budget reductions the Connecticut Department of Correction has lost top administrative staff, educational programs, and services that will not be replaced. David stated that the state budget reductions will allow the staff to focus only on the core functions of the facilities. He reported that currently he is the only staff member in the Victim Services Unit.

Laura Cordes reported that due to the cuts in the state budget over the past two years the Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence will not be able to meet the demands for prevention and outreach. Laura stated that the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE) program will not be expanded, due to the reduction in 2016.

Joseph Bibisi reported that as a member of the private sector the state budget cuts have not had a direct impact on the law firm that he represents. However, Joe stated he finds fixed operational costs are rising which creates challenges.

Brian Austin Jr. reported on behalf of the office of the State of Connecticut Division of Criminal Justice that the number of arrests has decreased yet the amount of time necessary to dispose of a case has increased. He stated that one reason for the lapse of time is because it now takes longer to finish the discovery phase with fewer staff members.

Thomas J. Wydra, Chief of the Hamden Police Department, reported that state budget cuts have had an impact on the Office of Chief Medical Examiner's Office workload creating a longer wait time for forensic lab results. This will delay investigations by the police and extend the time that crime victims can get information on the status of their cases.

Council members agreed that it would be helpful to communicate with victims to discuss what their needs are from the service providers. Susan reported that the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV) distributed a survey to victims and created a report, the *Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence Survivor Listening Project Report June, 2009*. Susan requested Jean Weisbrod to email a copy of the report to council members.

5. Discussion of Issues in Current Legislative Session

Laura Cordes reported on Raised Bill No. 7198, An Act Concerning Court Operations and Victim Services, which proposes to expand the definition of stalking and to allow the applicant to request that their location not be disclosed regarding civil protection orders. These two issues were identified and discussed at previous Advisory Council meetings this year.

Laura reported on Proposed Bill No. 6653, An Act Concerning Statutes of Limitations for Sexual Assault Cases, that the state statutes be amended to remove the statute of limitations in all criminal and civil sexual assault cases. This change would put Connecticut in line with the federal sexual assault statutes which currently have no limitations.

6. Update on Judges' Institute Class Proposal and CT State Police Academy Training Opportunity

Judge Danaher reported that the Office of Victim Services will now be providing presentations at the CT State Police Training Academy during recertification courses.

Judge Danaher reported that he is developing a class for the Judges' Institute on the neuroscience of trauma and how to better relate to crime victims and defendants with the effects of trauma. For the class, he will be using the informational video, *Trauma and the Brain*, produced in Scotland which Susan discovered on YouTube a few months ago. Upon request at the meeting, Jean Weisbrod will email the video link to the council members.

7. OVS Update

Linda Cimino reported that OVS hosted a Crisis Planning meeting to formulate crisis response with members of the Judicial Branch Emergency Preparedness, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the New Haven FBI.

Linda reported that OVS hosted a discussion meeting with members of the Judicial Branch, non-profit agencies, and Middlesex Community College Corporate Media Center to produce educational and instructional videos with VOCA Discretionary Grant funds. Linda stated that the videos will be posted on the Judicial Branch's YouTube website.

Linda reported that OVS is offering two full-day training sessions funded by the Discretionary Grant to victim service providers in February and March.

8. New Business

Council members had no new business items to discuss.

May meeting topics include the state budget and legislative updates, a discussion about victims' needs, a presentation on the Second Chances program, and an update on the Judges' Institute.

9. Adjournment

Susan adjourned the meeting at 3:50 p.m.

Jean M. Weisbrod, Recorder