

MINUTES
Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime
March 20, 2013

The Connecticut Advisory Council for Victims of Crime met at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the fourth floor conference room from 2:39 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Co-Chair Steve Eppler-Epstein, Antonia Cordero, Laura Cordes, Michelle Lettieri for Janice Heggie Margolis, Brian Moore, and Susan Omilian

Members Excused or Absent:

Co-Chair Deputy Chief Court Administrator the Honorable Patrick L. Carroll, III, Joseph Bibisi, Chester Brodnicki, Karen Jarmoc, Kevin Lawlor, Robin Montgomery, Rocco Tricarico, and Jan VanTassel

OVS Staff Present:

Linda J. Cimino, James Morgan, Tina Bouchard, and Katie Nesta

Agenda:

1. Welcome
Steve Eppler-Epstein called the meeting to order at 2:39 p.m. and welcomed members. Members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of the November 13, 2012, and January 23, 2013, Meeting Minutes
Steve noted that without a quorum the minutes from November 13, 2012, and January 23, 2013, cannot be approved. Council members had no questions regarding the minutes.
3. 2013 Legislative Update
Laura Cordes reported on Raised Bill No. 6641, An Act Concerning the Sexual Assault of Persons Whose Ability to Communicate Lack of Consent is Substantially Impaired. Laura explained that the bill expands the definition of a victim being "physically helpless" to include victims that have physical and/or mental disabilities.

Michelle Lettieri reported that Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) will hold their 2nd Annual "Hear Our Voice" MADD Lobby Day and Survivor Tribute on May 22, 2013, at the Legislative Office building and the State Capitol building in Hartford.
4. Sandy Hook School Shooting Response
Linda Cimino reported that the Office of Victim Services (OVS) has partnered with the United Way of Western Connecticut and The Newtown Rotary Club Foundation to administer immediate financial assistance to

the families affected by the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. The funds are available to families who have children in the school, personnel who work at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, and first responders who were called to the school the day of the shooting. Expenses that are expected to be covered are mortgage or rent payments, household bills such as groceries and utilities, and mental health counseling. Linda explained that to date, there have been a total of 65 requests for assistance submitted, totaling \$98,000.

Linda reported on the impact as well as resulting work load that the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting has had on the OVS staff. Linda also explained that victim compensation agencies within other states such as Colorado and Ohio have been helpful with providing OVS tips and strategies that worked within their agencies when they experienced similar mass tragedies.

Tina Bouchard reported on training requests from OVS staff.

Linda also reported on Special Act 13-1, An Act Establishing the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program and Fund, Clarifying the Calculation of Survivor Benefits, and Authorizing a Waiver of the State-Wide Mastery Examination Requirement for Certain Newtown Students. Linda explained the steps OVS is taking to prepare for the new act that becomes effective on April 1, 2013. Applications for the Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program must be in by June 30, 2014, with all reimbursements disbursed by August 31, 2015.

Linda reported on seeking additional funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime under the Antiterrorism and Emergency Assistance Program for Terrorism and Mass Violence Crimes grant.

Members discussed the funds as well as the staffing needs of OVS.

5. CICF Update

Jim Morgan distributed and reviewed the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (CICF) Program Budget statement for month ending February 28, 2013. Jim reported that total disbursements are \$1.8 million, with \$1.4 million remaining for current obligations. Jim reported that there is \$809,000 in total obligations with \$600,000 left of total appropriations as of February 28, 2013. Jim estimated that the remaining appropriations will be fully committed by the end of April and attributed the higher percentage of obligations this year to the rise in homicide related compensation claims in which loss of support was awarded.

Steve inquired as to whether a separate report for the new Sandy Hook Workers Assistance Program will be compiled. Jim explained that there will be a separate report e-mailed quarterly to the Legislature. Steve requested that the report be e-mailed to members as well.

Members discussed funding for the CICF and the SAFE Program.

6. OVS Update

Jim also reported that grant funding for the SAFE Program ended on February 28, 2013. Jim explained a budget pick-up request for state appropriations for March – June 2013 was awarded in the amount of \$125,000. Jim explained that funding has been requested in the Governor's budget to continue the program for fiscal year 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

Jim also reported that there will be a minimum of a 5% decrease to the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) award. In addition to the decrease, the U.S. Attorney General reserved the right to take an additional 5% decrease, which will lead to a decrease in the award anywhere from \$300,000 to \$500,000.

7. New Business

This agenda item was not discussed.

8. Adjournment

Steve adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Katie Nesta, Recorder