

Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room

Tuesday, March 26, 2019

10:30am – 12:30pm

FINAL MINUTES

Members Present

Kathy Anderson, Empowerhouse

Teresa Berry, Sexual Assault Response and Awareness (SARA), Inc. - Roanoke

Heather Board, Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

The Honorable Barbara Favola, Senate of Virginia

Thomas Fitzpatrick, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)

Nancy Fowler, Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS)

Kristen Howard, Virginia State Crime Commission (VSCC)

Autumn Jones, Arlington County Victim Witness Program

Melissa McMenemy, Office of the Attorney General (OAG)

Kathy Robertson, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

The Honorable Roxann Robinson, Virginia House of Delegates

Warren Rodgers, Southside Survivor Response Center

Kristi VanAudenhove, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

Mindy Stell, Virginia Victim Assistance Network

Members Absent

Chana Ramsey, James House

Welcome & Remarks

- Vice Chair Teresa Berry called meeting to order at 10:32 am with a quorum present.
- Introductions were made.
- The Honorable Roxann Robinson made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2018 meeting. Melissa McMenemy seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

State Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Plan Update

- Heather Board, VDH, provided an update of the development of the State Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention Plan. The group has created an initial draft. Their next meeting is April 2, 2019 at the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Heather will share a draft of the plan with the Committee once it is more refined.

2019 Legislative Session Update

- Senator Favola introduced Delegate Roxann Robinson. Delegate Robinson summarized a bill that was introduced by Delegate Mark Levine. The bill provided for increased penalty for those who abuse pets. The bill made a connection between pet abuse and family abuse. The bill was incorporated into another bill, and it lost its domestic violence connection, although it could still result in a useful tool for law enforcement and prosecutors in handling domestic violence cases.
- Senator Favola described two other bills that she and other Committee members worked on during the session:
 - The first was a piece of legislation that would require that the protective order be continued on the same date as the criminal hearing. This bill did not leave Courts of Justice Committee.
 - The second bill was to add all Class 1 misdemeanors, such as violation of protection order, into the crime victims' bill of rights Code section. A concern noted by some legislators was that broadening the definition of "victim" and adding more misdemeanor crimes could overwhelm the Virginia Victims Fund (compensation).
 - Discussion turned to a concern that some localities are not prosecuting misdemeanors due to funding issues and it becomes problematic for victim/witness to provide services as required by law when the case is not being prosecuted. Senator Favola asked for a draft letter requesting that Crime Commission study this issue and have a draft ready for the June meeting.

Sexual and Domestic Violence Program Professional Standards Committee Update & Appointment

- Senator Favola introduced Cathy Easter, Executive Director of Safe Harbor, who provided an update of the work done by the Professional Standards Committee (PSC). Cathy reported that the PSC received over twenty pages of comments/suggestions from the field to help inform their work. Many of the suggestions have been incorporated into their draft documents. The PSC will soon complete a final version of standards and measures. The PSC is on track to complete and roll out the standards by the fall of 2019.
- Kristina Vadas, DCJS, reported that due to the resignation of PSC member Regina Eller, there is a vacancy. DCJS has a name of interest, Laura Beth Weaver, Assistant Director at the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley.
- Tom Fitzpatrick made motion to appoint Ms. Weaver. Warren Rodgers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Batterer Intervention Programs in Virginia

- Senator Favola introduced Nancy Fowler, VDSS, to speak on batterer intervention programs in Virginia. Nancy introduced Sam Bachman, a community member present representing the Fairfax County Human Services Department. Nancy, Mr. Bachman, and Gretchen Soto, also from Fairfax County Human Services, provided some information about batterer intervention to the Committee. The following concerns were discussed:

- Virginia Code (9.1-977.1) concerning batterer intervention services information-sharing is broad and allows for varying interpretation. As a result, information sharing is often very limited and providers are often left with having to depend on the client for disclosure of important information. Without better information sharing, risk assessment and treatment is compromised.
- Batterer intervention programs are certified by the Batterer Intervention Board. The Board is not currently active, and there is now limited funding and oversight for batterer intervention. The Committee discussed developing a subcommittee, which could work to propose recommendations for batterer intervention programs.
- Senator Favola asked that Tom and Nancy come back to the Committee in June with a proposed framework and process for a subcommittee to start work on these issues.

Unfinished Business:

1. Crime Commission Needs Assessment Survey

- Kristen Howard, VSCC, distributed a draft of the needs assessment. A previous large matrix that included survey questions was replaced by a smaller matrix concerning the over-all grant process. Kristin asked members what they would like to see added and whether terminology used in the survey was clear. One suggestion was to include an inquiry into unmet needs. Members should send feedback and edits to Kristen by April 15, 2019.
- Tom Fitzpatrick made a motion to approve the Survey to go out pending the Committee's edits. Teresa Berry second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. DCJS VOCA Victims Services Grant Program Application Process

- Senator Favola introduced Kristina Vadas from DCJS. Kristina provided an update to the Victims Services Grant Program (VSGP). The VSGP guidelines were released mid-January 2019. The applications were due March 4, 2019. The VSGP guidelines allowed for both existing and new programs to apply for funds. DCJS staff and external review partners are currently reviewing applications using a comprehensive grading process. They will have funding recommendations completed by mid-April, which will be provided to the Criminal Justice Services Board for their May 9, 2019 meeting. The Board will vote on recommended awards and agencies will then be notified of awards.
- DCJS is looking at a new grant management system that will have an on-line upload capacity that will address the issues some applicants had in uploading documents for the VSGP application process.

New Business:

1. Committee Member Terms.

- There are six members who are appointed by the Governor whose term ends in July. These members are eligible to serve a second term, but they will need to apply for reappointment.
- The six members should let Kristina Vadas know whether or not they will reapply. Kristina will provide them the information needed to reapply. If these members choose not to

reapply, the Committee will have to find interested individuals. Members should bring a list interested individuals to the June meeting, recognizing racial, cultural and geographic diversity.

2. Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair.

- The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected for one-year terms. The next term will begin in July. Chairs are selected by the Committee. Selection of the next Chair and Vice-Chair will occur at the June meeting. It was suggested that state agency representatives not serve as Chair or Vice-Chair. Senator Favola asked that Tom Fitzpatrick, Nancy Fowler, and Kristi VanAudenhove work as a nominating committee and come to the June meeting with names of Chair and Vice-Chair candidates.

3. Threat/Risk Assessments.

- Senator Favola stated that she became aware of a threat assessment tool that law enforcement uses on domestic violence calls. It was suggested that this tool may be the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) tool. LAP is a protocol involving a survey that is used to connect victims to services. A team comprised of the Action Alliance, DCJS, and the OAG provides LAP training and coordination.
- Discussion turned to concerns about a gap in Virginia law concerning the surrender of guns pursuant to permanent protective orders. Currently there is no accountability or monitoring of compliance with this provision.
- Senator Favola asked for a briefing on LAP at the June meeting.

Senator Favola confirmed the following plans for the June Committee meeting:

1. Recommendations for potential new members, if all six Committee members do not reapply.
2. Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair positions.
3. A suggested process for a batterer intervention subcommittee.
4. A letter drafted requesting that the Crime Commission study non-prosecution of misdemeanors.
5. A presentation about the Lethality Assessment Program.

Public Comment: Senator Favola invited public comment. None was received.

Next Meeting Location: It was suggested that the next meeting be at a place more easily accessed by members. This will likely be a Greater Richmond-area library.

A motion to adjourn was made by Autumn Jones, with a second by Kristen Howard. Senator Favola adjourned the meeting at 12:15pm.

Next Meeting: June 26, 2019, 10:30am-12:30pm