

VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (VSAB)

September 24, 2020

Attendance: Neda Bolourian, Quintaria Brunson, Ronald Cohen, Amos Hicks III, Brian Koosed, Jessica J. Leslie, Rebecca Marcolini, April Marrone, Kathryn Pontzer, Juanita Rogers, Leah Schwartz, , Robin Stimson.

Members Absent: Iraina (Liz) Bringanty-Vidal, Reem Sharaf.

Ex-Officio Members absent: Ellen Alexander.

Guest: Councilmember Evan Glass.

Support Staff: Maria Carzon and Rafiah Prince.

I. Additions to Agenda

No additions

II. Virtual Meeting Procedures – Juanita Rogers

- The rules for a virtual Board meeting are as follows:
 - The chair will call the roll to establish a quorum.
 - Members need to identify themselves when they are talking.
 - Members may be asked to identify anyone who is present with them during the call.
 - The public may be asked to mute the call on their end to avoid interruptions.
 - The public may be muted by the chair.
 - Public bodies might wish to consider including any ground rules in the meeting notice.

III. Approval of minutes from July 2020 meeting

- The July 23, 2020 minutes were approved.

IV. Guest Speaker, Councilmember Evan Glass

- Councilman Evan Glass serves on the Health and Human Services (HHS) subcommittee and the Commission on Homelessness.
- He introduced the LGBTQ bill of rights, it would explicitly ban LGBTQ discrimination in healthcare facilities, nursing homes and personal care facilities, as well as expand current protections to include gender expression and HIV status.
- He also expanding the kids ride free on buses under 18 due to being an equity issue with transportation. Ridership increased 54 % after the program got started.

V. Introduction of priorities and Boards recommendations -Kathryn

- Kathryn reported that Covid 19 has impacted the victims of domestic violence. There is an increase in domestic violence, robbery and stalking. In the past 3 years one of the big priorities in addition to housing is increasing the staff. The advantages of working with Victim Assistants through Health & Human Services is that they are allowed in District courts to help the victims, were as the Family Justice Center Victim Assistants are not, and not dependent from law enforcement. The Board advocates for the need to have both sets of Victim Assistants. HHS Victim Assistants not only are present in the court room, they process compensation cases and work with domestic violence offenders.
- There is an increase in referrals from Child Welfare Services and the number of homicides have increased. There is a 91% increase in protective orders due to more severe strangulation cases between January and June 2020.
- Councilman Evan Glass stated that due to COVID, the financial situation may have a possible 1 billion shortage, He suggests that personal stories of victims should be shared during presentations to the Council.

VI. Executive Subcommittee Updates – Juanita Rogers/Kathryn Pontzer

- One priority is for the Board to have a meeting to Nadja Cabello, Manager of Trauma Services.
- There will be a public announcement promoting the Betty Ann Khranke Shelter (BAK) and making it a safe place for victims to seek help. There is a grant available for PR to let people know that it is safe to go to the hospital and seek services because there is a lot of escalated cases due to COVID and having more people staying home.
- Victims who stay at the BAK at the end of their stay, maybe unemployed and have nowhere to live. At this point transitional or bridge housing would be useful that has DV specific case management.
- Budget meetings are being set up now. Board members should attend.
Action Item: Rafiah will get the dates and notify Board members so they can attend.
- Kathryn attended the HHS Director's Quarterly Leadership Meeting with Boards Committees and Commissions (BCC) on August 17, 2020. She spoke about the priorities of the Board.
- Judge Mitchell and Judge Greenberg have to responded about the letter of support from County Judges.
ACTION ITEM: Neda and Amos will keep trying to reach them.
- Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee (CJCC) meetings are now held monthly. Robin reported that they gave eviction and court updates. Many inmates are doing work release.

VII. Legislative Subcommittee updates - Kathryn Pontzer

- In preparation for the 2021 General Assembly & Outreach to Legislative Offices Kathryn sent an email to all members. Only a few members responded to take the lead to reach out to one or more Senator and/or Delegate. This must be done within the next two weeks.

Action item: Board members should let Kathryn know which Senator and/or Delegate they can reach out to.

- Juanita presented a PowerPoint presentation to learn and know the timing and reading of the Bills. MCASA should present to the Board speak about their legislative priorities.

Action Item: Rafiah will set up a presentation from MCASA for next month's Board meeting.

VIII. Public Affairs/Events Subcommittee updates – Leah Schwartz

- Leah presented the Upcoming Awareness month calendar. She would like to share victims' stories to post to further engage spread awareness and educate.

Action item: Domestic Violence Awareness month color is purple. Members should send a photo wearing purple to Leah so she can make a montage.

- Rafiah will be attending a meeting with MCPS on Facebook Live on October 13 from 6-7:15 pm.

Action item: Rafiah will send the information to Leah to do a viewing party.

- Robin and Leah will attach the calendar to the monthly agenda.

Action item: Robin and Leah will send it to Maria to save it in the Boards electronic files.

IX. Update on Board vacancies/interviews – Rafiah Prince

- Board members and Rafiah conducted 6 interviews. Four were recommended to be on the Board. Rafiah thanked Board members for helping with the interviews. After December, there will be another round of interviews.

X. Update on RFP for APP offender groups – Rafiah Prince

- APP is continuing to receive many referrals for dv offenders. The contract is still in negotiation.

Adjournment 8:30 PM

Next Meeting:

October 22, 2020, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

