

(VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING (VSAB))

April 22, 2021

Attendance: Neda Bolourian, Larry Center, Amos Hicks III, Brian Koosed, Jessica J. Leslie, Kathryn Pontzer, Juanita Rogers, Leah Schwartz, Reem Sharaf and David Young.

Members Absent: Quintaria Brunson, Jill Pargamount and Robin Stimson,

Ex-Officio Members: Ellen Alexander and Dolores Briceno

Support Staff: Dr. Rafiah Prince and Maria V. Solis

I. Additions to Agenda

- Vote for ZOOM vs. TEAMS for the next Board Meeting.
- Identify priorities to go in the report and follow up with subcommittee regarding bridge housing and staffing increase.
- Funding increase is needed for domestic violence groups and funding victim's services (250 Bill)
- Kathryn suggested to make a separate section for other Bills and to expand the priorities on other bills.

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

- The March 25, 2020 minutes were approved.

IV. Board Member spotlight Leah Schwartz

- Neda is an attorney contract lawyer with expertise in privacy who works for the Federal government and who did some advocacy work in the past before joining the Board.
- Neda shared how her parents came to United States because of the Iranian revolution.
- Neda advocates for people who cannot speak for themselves.
- Neda became a victim of violent crime and shared that she did not receive the treatment and help that she needed at that time.
- Neda shared that the County has improved its services doing a great work by giving survivors the help they need.
- Neda Volunteers at Holy Cross crisis in the mental health unit which she feels is rewarding when helping vulnerable people.
- Montgomery County officers need to be more trauma informed when interviewing victims.

V. Executive Subcommittee updates– Juanita Rogers/Kathryn Pontzer

- In the last council member meeting oral testimony was given but not written one. Testimony was shared, was heard and received in the county council meeting.
- Kathryn requested a meeting with Raymond L. Crowel (Director of the Department of Health and Human Services). He will likely be available on early May. It will be helpful to have him in a board meeting to share the Board's concerns and priorities.
- Letter was sent to Governor Larry Hogan's office stating the demand for help due to an increase in cases of victims of violence in Montgomery County.
- Nadja met with a former privacy officer for the County. NexGen is not an option.
- The department is working on getting a database that is compliant with privacy.
- MCASA expressed that electronic medical records (EMR) is also an issue for them and for most facilities.
- There are issues with electronic medical records Statewide. Dorne Hill is in the loop of the situation of the electronic medical record situation.
- Rafiah and Nadja met Dorne Hill to get the electronic medical records situation squared away.
- Rafiah will find out who is the leader at MCASA and meet with Dorne to see if there is an update for electronic medical records.
- The importance of knowing how to speak as a victim advocate, knowing the services and to be more effective as a board member were shared.
- Recordings after meetings should be available for educational purposes to advocate victims.

ACTION ITEM: Rafiah will have a conversation with Ellen Alexander and Dolores Briceno to be able to target those who can provide educational information for victim advocates and then share the information gathered with the Board members.

ACTION ITEM: Prepare a Zoom educational meeting with different victims services providers (targeting the right people who can provide the information on how to educate victims advocates) including the Family Juvenile Crisis center (FJCC), the crime line, the police attorneys office, etc.

VI. Legislative Subcommittee updates– Kathryn Pontzer

- Some bills failed. Kathryn can provide more feedback through email.
- Bill for Increasing level service corporation funding did pass, there is more money going to places that need the funding for victims
- Drunk driving ignition interlock failed; senate was where the problem was.
- Regulating ghost gun both sides did not move from commodity.
- Protection for victim's legislation did pass.
- Kathryn will share the bills and why they have failed.

ACTION ITEM: for the upcoming sessions the Board will look at a priority list and reach agencies to be more active next year.

Kathryn will share the bills and why they have failed.

VII. Public Affairs/Events Subcommittee updates – Leah Schwartz

- April was a busy month for crime victim, sexual assault, and child abuse prevention month awareness.
- Several posts for awareness and shares of the resources were posted.
- Leah asked for collaboration and to keep sharing the resources

- May is the mental health, trauma awareness month, and national police week May 9-May 15. Virtual events will be available
- In person events by October to ensure safety by then and it will be a good opportunity to showcase great resources within the county.
- Sharing internal photos if members agree, and videos to show the community what the Board is working on.
- Leah will share the email for the member spotlight updates.
- There has been increase in suicide.
- Jessica helped to draft a few points for the proclamation for the councilmember.

VIII. Update on Upcoming Annual Report - Rafiah/Chairs

- On July the goal is to have a draft for the annual report before the following meeting.

IX. Announcements/Comments/New Business

- Next meeting via ZOOM due to voting.
- Dolores shared the elaboration of an online site for rape crime and she is preparing information, pamphlets and possibly will have them in various languages following the state and federal law for crime.
- Dolores will give and update to the board once the online site is done.

Adjournment 8:30 PM

Next Meeting:

May 27, 2021, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM