



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Thursday, March 14, 2019

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Family Justice Center 5th Floor Conference Room
600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500, Rockville, Maryland 20852

Minutes

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); Assistant Chief Marcus Jones (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable Sidney Katz, (Montgomery County Council); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Lilah Katz (Student Member); Cheryl Kravitz (Community Member); Eshigo Okasili (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Resa Levy (Community Member); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education);

Guests: The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Lisa Mandel Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Mike Subin (Montgomery County Criminal Justice Commission); Captain Sean Gagen (Montgomery County Department of Police); Steve Neff (Montgomery County Public Schools) Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); Juanita Murkey (House of Ruth); Tovah Kasdin (ElderSAFE); Laura Branna and Nicole Walter (DVCC Interns); Lauren Brown (Member of the Public);

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Debbie Feinstein welcomed all members and guests to the meeting. Everyone introduced themselves.

II. Approval of January Minutes

The January 10, 2019 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Councilmember Sidney Katz proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Assistant Chief Marcus Jones and passed.

III. Announcements

Spencer Cantrell from JCADA announced that they have a new Executive Director. Amanda Katz started in February.

IV. Guest Presentation: ElderSAFE, Tovah Kasdin

Tovah Kasdin, the Director of ElderSAFE gave a presentation on the what elder abuse is and the services ElderSAFE provides. The presentation included information on the difference between domestic violence and elder abuse, the types of abuse, and barriers to reporting.

V. New Working Group with DVFRT and Child Fatality

The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) reviews domestic violence-related fatalities and near-fatalities and develops findings and recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future. They have been discussing the nexus between domestic violence, children witnessing domestic violence and child abuse. They would like to form a working group on how these cases are being addressed within the court system. Smita Varia sent a message to members of the DVCC, DVFRT and the Child Fatality Review Team asking who would be interested in being a part of the working group. The group will be chaired by Donna Rismiller, an attorney and member of DVFRT. The group will start by looking at how family law cases and protective order cases overlap.

Teresa Bennett said that HHS is trying to bring the Safe and Together Model training to Child Welfare staff and the Abused Persons Program. The Safe & Together Model is an internationally recognized suite of tools and interventions designed to help child welfare professionals become domestic violence-informed.

Mike Subin said that there is a report the Office of Legislative Oversight wrote for the County Council, in conjunction with establishing Safe Start. He will send the report to Tom Manion.

There was a discussion about whether children witnessing domestic violence are being reported to Child Welfare Services. It was found that processes vary by agency and by Judge. This new working group will address this issue so that everyone involved will be following the same guidelines.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach Committee - Debbie Feinstein, Chair

The Choose Respect Conference is on Sunday, April 7th at Richard Montgomery High School. This free conference is for students in 6th – 12th grades, parents and youth serving providers. The committee received 78 entries for the PSA contest, and half of the entries were from middle schools.

The Expect Respect presentations on teen dating violence are going well. The program is also being facilitated for the youthful offenders ages 18-21 at the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The committee is also working with the Department of Juvenile Services to offer Expect Respect to youth in detention. The program continues to grow every year, with this year reaching over 6,500 young people. In 2017-2018, the program reached 4,200 students and in years before, the program averaged reaching 2,000 students.

B. Victim Services Committee update - Tom Manion, Chair

Tom Manion updated the Council on victim services. He said that the Family Justice Center will have a 10 year celebration on May 15th. They will be honoring Cathy Wolf and the Town of Chevy Chase for their yearly donations. They will also be dedicating an interview room for Mary Paull, a 10 year volunteer who recently passed away.

The Family Justice Center Foundation received \$1,000 from the Rotary Club, which was used to buy 300 books for the center for children of all ages and in English and Spanish.

Two new client assistants started in February. Tom thanked all the partner organizations for meeting with them and giving tours. They have been trained and are now taking clients.

Staff at the FJC are continuing to receive professional continuing education. There was a training today, in conjunction with Pre-Trial and Probation Officers on stalking and technology. Tom and FJC Program Manager Ngozi Obineme will be attending the annual Alliance for Hope International Conference held for Family Justice Centers. A Client Assistant will also be attending the End Violence Against Women International Conference in April.

The newly formed Victim Services Committee had their first meeting last week. They discussed the upcoming Safe Start Camp Program. This initiative will fund 20 youth to attend Bar-T camp in the summer and integrating Safe Start Therapy during the camp day. Other initiatives discussed were the pet safety program, housing issues, and expanding legal services.

Tom also said that he would like the FJC to move towards serving polyvictims, people who are victims of more than one type of violence, i.e. child abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence. He stated that the FJC won't be able to address the polyvictim, until it can address those types of victimization separately. Many new Family Justice Centers are moving towards this holistic view of family violence

C. Offender Program and Policy Committee – Tina Michaels, Chair

Tina reported on the Offender Program and Policy Committee. The Conditions of Release Bill has not been used yet. Tina asked the group if Pre-Trial could file for a violation if the respondent refuses to put the GPS tracker on, or do they have to wait until they have violated the order. Debbie suggested Tina contact the County Attorney for Corrections.

Another initiative the committee is discussing is creating an Abuser Intervention Program for juveniles. Currently, juveniles 16 and older can attend the adult AIP program, and anyone under the age of 16 can do individual therapy with APP with parental consent. Tina Michaels will reach out to the Department of Juvenile Services.

Tina also discussed trying to bring the Abuser Intervention Program into the jails. Offenders are able to go through the program if they are on pre-trial or probation, but the worst offenders in jail are not able to.

D. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – Assistant Chief Marcus Jones, Chair

Assistant Chief Jones updated the group that the Legislative Committee had their first formal meeting in February and will meet quarterly. They discussed the legislation being proposed to change the Protective Order language to include sexual assault. They will also be looking at proposing new legislation for the session in 2020. He asked the members to bring any legislative ideas relating to domestic violence forward for the committee to work on.

There was a question if the DVCC itself and submit testimony. Mike Subin said that the group cannot, however individuals on the Council can as a member of the public, or in their work capacity.

VII. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 7:04 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on May 9, 2019, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center



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