



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Thursday, May 9, 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); Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); 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 Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Lilah Katz (Student Member); Eshigo Okasili (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Absent: The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Cheryl Kravitz (Community Member); Resa Levy (Community Member);

Guests: Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz) Sean Gagen and Rich Reynolds (Montgomery County Department of Police); Mike Subin (Montgomery County Criminal Justice Commission); (Donna Rismiller and Amy Palumbo (DVS Legal Services); Alia El Radi (House of Ruth); Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); Laura Branna (DVCC Intern); Lauren Brown (Member of the Public); Amy Edwards (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 March Minutes

The March 14, 2019 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Judge Karen Ferretti proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Lilah Katz and passed.

III. Announcements

Debbie Feinstein announced that the newly formed Judicial Working Group with members from the DVCC, the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team and the Child Fatality Review Team will be co-chaired by Donna Rismiller of DVS Legal Services and Corrine Millette of

Child Welfare Services. If anyone is interested in being a member, please notify Smita Varia.

Debbie Feinstein announced that applications are open for one public member, one student member and 2 new non-profit seats on the Council. Resa Levy's term is ending at the end of June. Debbie Feinstein asked who would be interested in being a part of the interview panels. Rebecca Smondrowski, Mindy Thiel, Judge Ferretti, and Ron Whalen volunteered to interview the public member candidates. Debbie Feinstein, Tom Manion, Sidney Katz, Rebecca Smondrowski, and Eshigo Okasili volunteered to interview the non-profit candidates.

Debbie Feinstein reminded everyone that DVCC meetings are open to the public for observation. If any guests would like to speak at a meeting, the Chair will ask that they provide the information to the Chair and Vice-Chair in advance.

Debbie Feinstein announced that the DVCC Choose Respect Initiative will be receiving the Partners in Education Award from the Montgomery County Council of PTAs.

Eshigo Okasili announced that the Family Justice Center Foundation Annual Benefit will be on October 13, 2019 and they are looking for sponsorships for the event.

IV. Guest Presentation: *DVS Legal Services, Donna Rismiller and Amy Palumbo*

Donna Rismiller is the Founder of DVS Legal Services, and Amy Palumbo is the Project Manager onsite at the Family Justice Center (FJC). DVS Legal Services exists to connect clients with existing legal resources and then to fill in any gaps. If existing resources cannot meet the needs of the client, then DVS coordinates to ensure that any victim who needs legal representation is provided an attorney at no cost. DVS primarily works on protective order cases, but also family law cases and other issues that arise as a result of the domestic violence. DVS works with the FJC, House of Ruth, and the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse to make sure they receive protective order petitions from clients who need representation. If other legal services partner agencies are not available to take a case, DVS works with a network of private attorneys who are able to take cases pro bono or low bono.

Tom Manion asked how the DVCC can help with the mission of DVS. Amy said that funding is always helpful, but also helping DVS find attorneys who are willing to take pro bono and low bono cases. Mindy Thiel suggested using law students to represent clients and Debbie Feinstein said that they would have to be supervised by an attorney and get certification from the Court of Appeals. Eshigo Okasili suggested contacting the New Practitioners Section of the Bar Association through David Goldberg's Law Firm listserv.

Amy Edwards, a member of the public, said that she knows many women who are domestic violence survivors and they are scared to come forward. She said that when they file for protective orders, the respondent uses the order to accuse the petitioner of parental alienation. Debbie Feinstein encouraged her to let the group know about the services at the Family Justice Center, and that the Education and Outreach Committee can also arrange to go to the group to do an educational program.

V. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach Committee - *Debbie Feinstein, Chair*

Debbie Feinstein reported that the Choose Respect Conference was on April 7th and was successful. Hundreds of people attended, and many County representatives and

elected officials were in attendance as well. The winners of the annual Choose Respect Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Contest were also announced at the Conference. Smita Varia showed the winning PSA from Wootton High School to DVCC members. She also shared that 17,000 students across the county participated in voting for the Fan Favorite PSA, which received an additional award.

Debbie Feinstein also said that over 7,000 students received the Expect Respect workshop this school year, an increase from 4,000 students last year. The presentations are also being done with youthful offenders at the jail and will begin at the Noyes Detention Center and the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) in the near future. Smita Varia is also creating a version of Expect Respect for Youth Serving Providers.

Coaching Boys Into Men is continuing to expand. Donna Rismiller recently participated in an interview with the MoCo Show to promote the program.

Debbie Feinstein mentioned that the Education and Outreach Committee is developing a high risk card for FJC Client Assistants and other service providers to give to victims. These cards inform victims that if they have been strangled, threatened with death, or if their abuser has access to guns, they are at an elevated risk of being killed, and should seek help immediately.

FJC information is printed on 48,000 pharmacy bags from Kensington Pharmacy and the Clarksburg Harris Teeter. In addition, Smita Varia is working with the Department of Transportation to get information about the FJC on the electronic boards that are on the RIDE ON extRa buses. Lastly, the committee is working on contacting hospitals and medical providers in the county to ensure they have FJC information.

B. Victim Services Committee update - Tom Manion, Chair

Tom Manion reported out on updates with the Family Justice Center and the Victim Services Committee. There will be a 10th Anniversary reception of the opening of the FJC on May 15, 2019. There will be a dedication of one of the interview rooms to the Town of Chevy Chase who have generously donated thousands of dollars to the FJC Foundation every year. In addition, Tom Manion and Cheryl Kravitz will be interviewed on the Montgomery Talks podcast about domestic violence and resources available in the County. In July, a delegation of forensic nurses from Brazil will take a tour of the FJC and learn how the FJC operates.

The Victim Services Committee met in April, and members identified three initiatives: improving safe housing options for victims of domestic violence, creating a safe pet program, and holding a Safe Start Camp. Tom Manion is also working with the committee to address advancing the mission of the Family Justice Center to address victims of not only of intimate partner violence, but also child abuse, sexual assault and elder abuse, and therefore be able to work with polyvictims.

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

Tina Michaels announced that staff from Pre-Trial, Probation and the FJC all participated in training by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on elements of stalking in March. The next Offender Program and Policy Committee meeting will be in July.

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

At the last DVCC meeting, there was a question as to whether the DVCC could advocate for domestic violence issues with the legislature. Assistant Chief Jones did get clarification that the DVCC can advocate if the Office of Intergovernmental Relations approves. Mike Subin further clarified that anyone can individually advocate for a bill and can say that they are a member of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council. Debbie Feinstein added that the bills are being written and will go into circulation in the Fall and that is when the Council can come together to advocate. She also added that she will want to advocate for strangulation to be included in the first-degree assault statute.

VI. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

The next DVCC meeting will be on July 11, 2019, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center



Domestic Violence Coordinating Council