

South Carolina Victim Services Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes

May 4, 2009

10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Edgar Brown Building, Room 364, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia South Carolina

Present: Nancy Barton, William Bilton, Hope Blackley, Marvin Bryant, Leigh Caldwell, Barbara Grissom, Dean Kilpatrick, Larry Barker, Nataki Brown, Thomas Lucas, Jeffrey Moore, BJ Nelson, Surleaner Lakin - Smith, Carol Woodard, Sandi Wofford

Absent: Mark Fallaw, Veronica Swain – Kunz (Vacation), Vicki Bourus (prior engagement), Joanna Katz (prior engagement)

The meeting was called to order and the facilitator read a statement regarding VSCC operation in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

William motioned to approve that the Council is in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act; this was seconded by Sandi Wofford and approved by the Council

Dean Kilpatrick motioned to approve minutes as distributed, and BJ Nelson seconded, with minutes being approved unanimously.

The new Council Members, Larry Barker – SOVA Director and Nataki Brown – Solicitor Advocate forum were introduced.

In response to the LAC recommendation, grant presentations were presented by Burke FitzPatrick and BJ Nelson (SCDPS), Michelle Washington and Ann Weston (DSS), and Jane Key (DHEC). The representatives presented their procedure for processing grants. William Bilton inquired about the amount of funding being provided by State funds. All entities stated that their funding as it related to State provisions were very limited. It was also noted that the grants administered have specific populations designated for the allocation of the funds. Nancy Barton voiced great apprehension in there being one governing body who administers the grants.

It was motioned by William Bilton followed by discussion and seconded by Marvin Bryant that the recommendation from the Council be that of opposing the consolidation of housing the grants and that they remain as they currently are in our State. Through the discussion, Dean Kilpatrick voiced his concerns and reluctance with the data and how it is kept ensuring that there is not a duplication of services by the three entities. There are no formal procedural guidelines in place among the three cooperating agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of funds. Currently, this is done informally among the three

grant administrators. Dean Kilpatrick also would like to continue to look at how victim services are provided for in a comprehensive fashion in our state while still supporting the Council's motion to oppose the consolidation of grant housing. Barbara Grissom also commented that she felt that it was not just about funding, and that there should be an inquiry on common reporting requirements. She felt that there should be continued communication and that the procedures should be to maintain the communication among the three agencies. Jeff Moore motioned for an amendment and it was seconded to the motion made by William Bilton that the staff prepares a written statement to the LAC stating the reason for why the Council does not support the consolidation of the grant housing agencies. The motion with the amendment was approved.

An update was provided to the Council regarding the State Automated Victim Information & Notification System (SAVIN) by Stephanie Cassavaugh. As of 5/4/09, there are 23 Agencies on board at the County level, 21 in process of coming on board with the program and only 8 counties that have not fully committed to the program. She has been in communication with them regarding the SAVIN program. There have been 1,300 calls into the 866 information line and over 27,000 hits. Over 1,900 victims have requested to be notified through this system. There are 930 victims that have been successfully notified through phone calls and 430 victims have successfully been notified through emails. These numbers are not based on Department of Corrections; however, these are county level facilities. Barbara Grissom encouraged the Council to assist in maintaining the momentum of the SAVIN Program across the State in whatever way they can.

It is also noted in the minutes that William Bilton has suggested that the Council meets more than the legislatively mandated four times a year in order to effectuate substantial change. He also suggested that there be a little more freedom as it relates to the agenda. The facilitator informed the Council that she did agree with members of the Council in the desire to add more flexibility.

Lenora Moody from Mental Health was introduced to the Council as the personnel that conducted the notification from the Mental Health Agency.

Hope Blackley introduced the survey that the work group has developed relating with breaking down Article 15. The Council was encouraged to take the survey and review it and forward any questions or possible changes to her via email. The survey will be administered by the Director of the individual agencies to assess who is providing these services within that particular agency. It was recommended that there is a carefully drafted letter to accompany the letter by William Bilton. Hope Blackley also mentioned that there has been discussion regarding the training of Summary Court Judges.

Hope Blackley introduced the concern of carrying forward credits. She also introduced the instructors obtaining credits for teaching as well as being students in particular trainings. She also voiced that Juvenile Arbitrator directors have shown interest in wanting to become certified.

It was motioned by Hope Blackley and seconded by Leigh Caldwell for instructors to obtain a total of 6 hours for classroom presentation and 6 hours as classroom time. Dean inquired if prep time would be considered within the 6 hours. It was the consensus of the Council that prep time would not be considered because it could not be verified. The motioned passed with approval of the Council. The time will be backdated for presenters that have conducted trainings and it is hour by hour.

It was also motioned through discussion by William Bilton and seconded that only 12 hours of training can be carried over to the following year. OVSEC will create a form if a VSP wishes to do that. William Bilton also said that he would provide some of the reporting forms that the Solicitors use for their training.

Another concern made to Hope Blackley by a classroom attendee on what is the percentage of the time that a participant should spend in the class before they are given credit for attending. Jeff Moore said it should be based on their classroom contact hours. However, Hope Blackley felt that it should also be left to the discretion of who is sponsoring the training. There is also a total of 823 certified VSP's at this time.

The motion was presented by Hope Blackley and seconded by William Bilton to survey all Victim Services Agencies based on ACT 141 duties to see if they are indeed providing these service. This motioned was approved by the Council.

Jeff Moore provided an update on the Provisos which are currently before the House and/or Senate. After discussion, it was motioned by Sandi Wofford and seconded by Leigh Caldwell that the Senate version with the penalty being \$1,500.00 be supported by the VSCC. The motion was approved.

Jeff Moore also introduced the Proviso 72.25 that was introduced at the request of the Prosecution Commission. This Proviso establishes a Victim Witness Assessment Surcharge Study Committee. It will look at the previous five years of collections and see exactly where the funds are going and if they are being properly allocated to the proper entities. A motion was made by Dean Kilpatrick and seconded by Hope Blackley for the VSCC to support this Proviso, the motion was approved.

Jeff Moore informed the Council that South Carolina was not in compliance with the 2005 VAWA amendments that had a compliance date of Jan 5, 2009. Legislation has been introduced in both the House and Senate to bring SC in compliance with the VAWA Act. Bill 36 -77 is the one that is currently being pushed to be placed on the Senate Calendar for reading. BJ Nelson expressed her gratitude for the work that Jeff Moore did regarding this legislation.

The facilitator asked the Council to review the guidelines for expenditures regarding ACT 141 monies regarding the Tier One and Tier Two. If there are any items that are of great concern that they would recommend to be changed or modified, they are asked to note them and email their concerns and the Council can begin an email discussion on them before coming back to the next meeting.

The facilitator LAC follow –up report was acknowledged.

Larry Barker introduced the two suggested appointments for the Council. Lori Gonzalez to represent the University and Susan Walk – up for the Children’s Advocacy representation.

Jeff is assisting in getting representation from the Jailer’s Administration

Motion was moved for adjournment of meeting by Jeff Moore.