

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2023**

Board Members Present: Bob Paolini, Susie Carr, Richard Katzman.

Absent: Susan Ide, Alycia Post. **Staff Members Present:** Jennifer Poehlmann, Carol Morgan, Jodie Bacon, Abby Gladstone-Strobel, Maria Gibbs, Michelle Pelletier, Carol Brochu, Melinda Meyer.

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of February 13, 2023, and unanimously approved them as presented.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Abby Gladstone-Strobel presented Compensation reports for February 2023. A total of 28 regular claims were received this February, compared to 24 the previous February. A total of 13 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 16 the previous February. Comparing the current fiscal year (FY23) to the previous fiscal year (FY22), regular claims had increased 11.83% year-to-date, compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year; while year-to-date SA claims had decreased by 15.69%. Year-to-date FY23 expenses related to Homicide claims showed a huge increase compared to the same period in FY22. Expenses related to Aggravated Assault, Domestic Assault, and Simple Assault were also significantly higher than at the same point in FY22. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) report for February 2023. This February, the RU's Case Managers brought in \$55K and another \$67K came in via tax offsets. A total of 80 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state; with the largest amount (18) coming from Lamoille County, of which, 14 were for the same offender. Traditionally, prior to COVID, Chittenden County produced the highest number of monthly RJOs, but Michelle has learned that Chittenden County court clerks are very backed-up. More new RJOs are expected from Chittenden County as their processing returns to pre-pandemic levels. This February, the RU received two large offender payments, as well as money from two lottery winnings. Michelle noted that each month the RU sends a list of people who owe restitution to the Vermont lottery office. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report through February 2023. She advised that revenues for February were some of the highest received this fiscal year, and negative accrued balances weren't as bad as they have been, although we're still looking at possible deficits. Since most of CCVS's income from fines and fees gets distributed across various funds, those fund balances tend to all rise or fall at the same time. CCVS continued to use much of its FY23 one-time General Fund appropriation to cover expenses for the Compensation Program, thus preserving other funds normally

used for that. Since General Fund dollars are state dollars, those compensation payments will still qualify for the federal reimbursement of 75%. The Financial Report was accepted as presented.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on a number of topics and legislative issues. She advised that CCVS's new Crime Victim Advisory Group was recruiting survivors/crime victims to serve in the group. CCVS will utilize the group for survivor-informed input on internal CCVS processes and will train them on ways they can serve in external capacities such as speaking at public events, etc.

The last week of April is national Crime Victim Rights Week. On Friday, April 28, CCVS and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Vermont will host an in-person event with at least 50 people registered to attend. National speaker Jennifer Storm will provide a keynote speech and two-hour workshop. The workshop, "Best Practices for Compassionately Engaging Survivor Voices", will focus on topics such as: how to be victim-centered when elevating survivor stories; to what end do we want survivors to tell their stories; unique ways to engage survivors, and more.

The current legislative session has been keeping the Center very busy, as CCVS has been asked to testify on at least fifteen different issues, not including the budget. Some of these issues include: the elimination of cash bail for misdemeanors; restoration of competency; defining "grooming" as a crime; a bill that would provide free "standby" service by sheriffs for victims with Relief From Abuse orders; allowing DV/SV cases to be referred to Community Justice Centers; and a proposal to ensure that restitution is paid in full before a criminal case can be sent to court diversion. There are many new legislators at the statehouse, but Jenn advised that the group was finding commonality.

So far, the budget seemed to be trending in a good direction, with the majority of the Center's requests having been picked up by the Administration – but there is still quite a way to go.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn. Adjourned at 2:46 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

**Monday,
April 17, 2023
1:30 PM**

**In the conference room at
60 South Main Street, Waterbury.**