

**Center for Crime Victim Services  
Board Meeting Minutes  
August 12, 2024**

**Board Members Present:** Bob Paolini, Susan Carr, Susan Ide, Richard Katzman, Alycia Post.  
**Staff Members Present:** Jennifer Poehlmann, Carol Morgan, Jodie Bacon, Maria Gibbs, Anna Harrington, Michelle Pelletier, Melinda Meyer. **Absent:** Carol Brochu.

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 PM.

**REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of June 10, 2024, and unanimously approved them as presented.

**COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT**

Due to flooding around the state, the July board meeting had been cancelled, so two months of data were reviewed in August. Maria Gibbs presented Compensation reports for June and July 2024. A total of 38 regular claims were received in June compared to 42 the previous June. A total of 17 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 23 the previous June. The month of June was the last month of fiscal year 2024 (FY'24) and Year-to-Date data showed that in FY'24 regular claims had decreased 9.52% compared to the previous fiscal year. Year-to-date SA claims for FY'24 had decreased 26.09% compared to the previous fiscal year. The largest compensation expenses for June 2024 were related to Domestic Assault, followed by Arson. At the end of FY'24 compensation expenses for regular claims were almost \$63K less than in the previous fiscal year (FY23). Year-to-date SA expenses were almost \$5K more than in FY'23.

July 2024 was the first month of the new fiscal year (FY'25) and this July a total of 35 regular claims were received compared to 28 the previous July, while a total of 18 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 15 the previous July. This represented a Year-to-Date increase of 25% for regular claims and a 20% increase for SA claims compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. The largest compensation expenses for July 2024 were related to Homicide, followed by Domestic Assault. At one month into FY'25, Year-to-Date compensation expenses for regular claims were about \$9K less than at the same point in the previous fiscal year (FY24). Year-to-date SA expenses were \$1.5K higher than at the same point in FY'24. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

**COMPENSATION REVIEW OF PROPOSED INCREASE TO MENTAL HEALTH PAYMENT CAP**

Carol Morgan advised the Board that advocates had informed staff of the Victims Compensation Program that the counseling payment rate used per the program's Mental Health Policy was not in keeping with the rate used by Medicaid. She added that since the COVID pandemic there seemed to be a lack of available mental health providers for victims/survivors; and if they were available, many providers were not willing to accept the Compensation program's current rate of \$85.00 as payment in full. The Compensation Program proposed raising the payment rate to \$100 for a one-hour individual or family session. Sessions would be pro-rated according to the length of the session. Alycia Post

indicated that the proposed increase seemed accurate and motioned to approve the increase. Susan Ide seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed rate. Carol Morgan will present the revised Mental Health Policy at the next board meeting.

## **RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT**

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports for June and July 2024. In June, a total of 73 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, with the largest number (34) coming from Chittenden County. In June the RU Case Managers brought in almost \$41K and another \$12K was received via tax offsets. With June marking the end of FY'24, the RU had exceeded that fiscal year's collection goal by more than \$132K, thanks in part to payments made on an embezzlement case.

In July 2024 a total of 98 RJOs were received, with the most (38) coming again from Chittenden County, the traditional leader; indicating a return to that county's pre-pandemic processing levels. In July, the RU's Case Managers brought in almost \$52K and tax offsets were almost \$22.5K. Michelle advised that, related to the state's new laws around Animal Welfare, in July the RU staff began tracking how many payments and how much was being paid out on such cases. She noted that, so far, most Animal Welfare cases involved large animals on farms, rather than cases related to Domestic Violence. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

In Carol Brochu's absence, Jennifer Poehlmann gave a brief Financial Report for July 2024. For the new fiscal year of FY'25, CCVS would receive some one-time funding from the state. The increase to the surcharge that CCVS receives had generated a small increase to both the Compensation Special Fund and the DV/SV Special Fund, although the increase was less than the Joint Fiscal Office had projected. CCVS staff would be meeting soon with staff of the courts to make sure the courts rectified an error that had deposited the increase into the General Fund instead of the Special Funds. Regarding federal VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) funding, Jenn advised that all states would see cuts to their VOCA funding, and CCVS was waiting to see how much its VOCA funding would be. CCVS had received full funding for a new position in the Grants Department, and planned to advertise the job at the end of August. The Financial Report was accepted as presented.

## **CENTER UPDATE**

Jennifer Poehlmann had been on vacation and the state legislature was out of session, so Jenn gave a brief update this month. The recent legislative session had been very busy and since CCVS has no lobbyists or contracted workers to monitor legislation, Jennifer handled it all. Although the busy session had felt stressful at the time, in retrospect a lot was achieved by CCVS. Jenn was now focused on working with a coalition of stakeholders on recommendations to correct problems with the Department of Corrections' post-conviction notification to victims regarding their offenders.

**MEETING ADJOURNED:** Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.  
Adjourned at 2:28 PM.

**Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:**  
**Monday, Sept. 23, 2024: 1:30 PM**  
**In the conference room at**  
**60 South Main Street, Waterbury.**