

# VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

January 25, 2024

**Attendance:** Wendy Ayala, Neda Bolourian, Larry Center, Brian Koosed, Kathryn Pontzer, Leah Schwartz, Heather Thompson, Jasmin Whitfield.

**Members Absent:** Shanquenetta Anderson, Dolores Briceno, Alan Schulman.

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Ellen Alexander, Dolores Briceno.

**Support Staff:** Linda Lochner and Carla Bradley.

## I. Additions to Agenda

No additions to Agenda.

## II. Roll Call & Virtual Meeting Procedures – Neda Bolourian

- The rules for a virtual Board meeting are as follows:  
The chair will call the roll to establish a quorum.  
Members need to identify themselves when they are talking.  
Members may be asked to identify anyone who is present with them during the call.  
The public may be asked to mute the call on their end to avoid interruptions.  
The public may be muted by the chair.  
Public bodies might wish to consider including any ground rules in the meeting notice.

## III. Approval of Minutes from October 26, 2023, meeting.

- The December Minutes were approved.

## IV. Name Change Update– Brian

- Brian updated the board member about the potential changes to the name.
- He said that because they could not reach a consensus for the new name before January 1st, they will have to keep the name of Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB).

## V. Membership/Vacancies– Brian

- Brian announced the resignations of two board members.
- David and Reem submitted their resignations over the holidays.
- There are still a few vacancies in the Victim Services Advisory Board.
- Brian asked the board members if they knew anyone who would be a suitable candidate for the advisory board and if they could connect the candidate to him or Neda.

## VI. Executive Subcommittee Update (35 Minutes) – Brian, Neda, others

### a. Update on County Council Meetings – Brian, Neda, Kathryn, others

- The board members are able to meet with five council members.
- Update on the County Council Meetings with Mink, Gonzales, Sayles, Balcombe
- Next week by the end of January the board members have a meeting with council member Luedtke and County Executive Mark Elrich.
- They are scheduled to have a meeting with council member Albornoz, Jawando, Glass and Friedson.
- Leah attended an event where council vice president Kate Stewart attended, who was excited to hear more about how the board members work together.
- Neda received a message from Councilman Glass's office for a meeting in the second week of February. When the date is confirmed, Neda will send a message to the board members.

- Kathryn gave an update on the meeting with Council Member Fani-Gonzalez stating that it was one of the most promising in terms of feedback.
- Council Member Fani-Gonzalez showed interest in housing and wants to understand more about when a victim of DV arrived the shelter and what happen when they leave.
- Council Member Katz had a question about whether Trauma Services is making any efforts to reach out to retired attorneys or others in the retired population in Montgomery County to serve as victims assistance volunteers.
- Linda stated that Trauma Services is still recruiting volunteers and that most court volunteer are retired attorneys.
- Trauma Services has currently two full time VAs, one part time VA and one broker.
- Trauma Services has two full-times and two part-times positions that are vacant. All positions are based on grant funding.

**b. Update on CJCC or other Meetings – Kathryn, Larry**

- Council member Luedtke who's on the CJCC was voted vice chair for this year.
- Dr. Santiago attended the CJCC Meeting and mentioned that there is a new fentanyl program for youth, targeting the Aspen Hill area.
- Chief Jones talked about what fentanyl is doing to young people particularly to the hispanic community.
- The highest number of stats for juvenile victims involved sexual assaults for high school girls, general assaults, and gun use, ect.
- Kathryn said that is a link between truancy and juvenile crime and that schools in Montgomery County are not taking responsibility.
- Judge Koch established a court for specially for individuals charged with a DUI.

**VII. Legislative Subcommittee Update– Kathryn**

- Kathryn gave an update about her efforts to schedule a meeting with the Intergovernmental Relations Office (Leslie Fray) and Linda since December 2023.
- Leslie forwards a legal memo to clarify that these groups shouldn't be doing advocacy anymore.
- The board members discussed different channels for how to proceed with support for Montgomery victims.

**VIII. Public Affairs/Events Subcommittee updates– Leah**

- Leah said that January is the busiest month with a lot of mental health issues, victim of trafficking and stalking awareness, etc. February not so much but it ramps up in March and April.
- Leah also asked the board “in terms of diversity/equity, what holidays should they be posting social on media?”. “Should they send safety education messages and possibly posts with a mental health component?”.
- They discussed possible projects for students to compete, making videos for any of the awareness months to help loop young people into some of the messages and to earn student learning hours.

Next Meeting:

February 22, 2024, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM