



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Maxwell C. Uy
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, May 9, 2024
5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Mission: To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.

Minutes

Present: Tom Manion, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Dr. Jessica Volz, Vice Chair (Adventist Healthcare); Debbie Feinstein (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Assistant Chief Nicholas Augustine (Montgomery County Police Department); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court Montgomery County); The Honorable Michael Glynn (District Court Montgomery County); The Honorable Sidney Katz (Montgomery County Council); Rochelle Perry (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services-Parole and Probation); Amy Palumbo (DVS Legal Services); Ben Stevenson (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation); Lavontte Chatmon (Community Member); Dr. Mindy Thiel (Community Member); Michelle Maxberry (Community Member); Ashley Noy, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff)

Absent: The Honorable Lynne Harris (Montgomery County Public Schools-Board of Education); Kendall Stanley (Community Member); Maura Lynch (Community Member); Dorne Hill (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Aanika Arjumand (Student Member); Lieutenant David Cohen (Montgomery County Police Department); Tondalayo Royster (Montgomery County Commission for Women)

Guests: Jeffrey Bunge (Montgomery County Police Department-SVID); Sharon Ledner (Chief of Staff- Sidney Katz); Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Chief of Staff); Clarie Beck (House of Ruth Maryland-Associate Director of Clinical Services); Rebecca Baldwin (Public Member); Eddy Ameen (Chief Program Officer- A Wider Circle)

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

Tom Manion reviewed guidelines for virtual meeting participation. He asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. He asked the participants to use the chat function or the raise hand function if they would like to speak. He also requested that participants identify themselves each time they speak.

III. Approval of March Minutes

The March 14, 2024, DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Amy Palumbo proposed a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Lavontte Chatmon and passed.

IV. Announcements

- Tom Manion announced that two years ago the Family Justice Center hosted a delegation from Moldova, which had expressed their interest in the Family Justice Center Model in hopes of having one in their country. The delegation took a tour of the center and spoke with individuals from the States Attorney's Office, Montgomery County Police Department- Special Victims Unit, and the Sheriff's Office. About a year ago, Tom Manion and Sergeant Steve Cheoung were invited to Moldova's National Conference on domestic violence for a virtual presentation. In October 2023, the Moldova Family Justice Center opened in Chisinau, and they have served more than 200 victims of domestic violence and their families. The Moldova Family Justice Center has modeled some of their interview rooms and family spaces on the ones they saw in Montgomery County during their tour. The Moldova Family Justice Center is the only FJC in Eastern Europe and is giving tours weekly to people from neighboring nations who are looking to also build their own center.

V. Guest Speaker: *Chief Program Officer Eddy Ameen, A Wider Circle*

- A Wider Circle's mission is to advance equity by fostering the exchange of goods, skills, and connections and engaging in advocacy to address the root causes of poverty. The organization has been around for 25 years, and its first location was in Silver Spring, Maryland.
- A Wider Circle is commonly known for its furniture services. They provide gently used furniture items such as beds, couches, lamps, and tables to families in need. In addition, they distribute clothing, and baby items and have a career support program.
- The average wait time for services through A Wider Circle is three months. The center does require individuals to bring their own vehicle as the vehicles they have are limited.
- A Wider Circle also accepts donations and can arrange for pick-up of items that someone may want to donate by contacting their office phone number.
- A Wider Circle also has the *Support in Ward 8* program, which is a safe and supportive space for individuals in the DC's Washington Highlands area. This program provides long-term wraparound support groups for the individuals such as career counseling workshops, health and wellness classes, family enrichment workshops, etc.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – *Maura Lynch, Chair*

- Maura Lynch was not in attendance at the meeting. Debbie Feinstein made reports on 2024 legislation related to domestic violence. When it comes to consent and second-degree rape, there will no longer be a requirement for force or threat of force. Debbie stated that she is working with the States Attorney's Association to provide training around this new law as it pertains to consent.

B. Victim Services Committee update – *Tom Manion, Chair*

- Tom Manion reported that the committee is continuing to discuss their goals for the year, which include gathering information on housing resources and how to better provide services to victims experiencing homelessness or housing insecurities. In addition, the committee will also work on conducting an

assessment of protective orders to discern the reasoning behind the low rates of Petitioner representation that have been observed during Protective Order hearings.

C. Education and Outreach Committee – *Debbie Feinstein, Chair*

- Debbie Feinstein reported that the committee is currently working on ways to provide more outreach to medical providers and hospitals. This is an initiative that Lavontte Chatmon is working on with the assistance of Smita Varia.
- Tondalayo Royster has continued to reach out to apartments in the county providing leasing offices and condos the Family Justice Center awareness cards. Tondalayo has also attended tabling events at the Gateway Apartments.
- The committee is also working with Harris Teeter to distribute Family Justice Center information on their pharmacy bags.
- RespectFest was hosted on April 7th with about 400 individuals in attendance.
- Debbie has also met with individuals from the Montgomery Recreation Department to incorporate the Coaching Boys into Men, Athletes as Leaders and the Expect Respect presentation into their summer programs.
- Debbie announced that Education and Outreach is looking for facilitators for the Expect Respect presentations conducted in middle schools and high schools around Montgomery County.

D. Offender Program and Policy Committee – *Ben Stevenson, Chair*

- Ben Stevenson reported that the committee is still working on getting the Abuser Intervention Programs in the jail. There is still difficulty when it comes to capacity. The jail is working on getting departmental tablets. There has been discussion on having programs available to the populations such as Abuser Intervention.
- Ben reported that he will be coordinating a meeting with Rochelle Perry (Parole & Probation) and the Pre-Trial team to enhance the communication with both groups. Within the past few months, Pre-Trial has returned to having domestic violence case managers.
- The Corrections Department is working on moving its information online. They are using business intelligence software to show how they are addressing the population.
- The committee also discussed working with juveniles and how to provide them with the support needed. They are looking to expand the mental health services that are provided in the jail and how to expand the programs with tablets. There has been a 30%- 40% increase in the number of juvenile offenders within the past year.
- The Corrections Department has re-started their parenting class, the Inside Out Dads Program. This is a parenting program located at the MCCF facility. Inside Out Dads is an evidence-based curriculum with volunteers who facilitate the program. Within the next 3-4 months the department will look into bringing the program to the pre-release center.
- Debbie Feinstein suggested bringing Expect Respect to the juvenile population as they were doing pre-covid.

VII. Adjournment

Tom Manion, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:04 pm

The next DVCC meeting will be on July 11, 2024, 5 pm-7 pm via Microsoft Teams



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