

NC Domestic Violence Commission Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2022, 10:00 am until 12:00 pm

This Meeting was Conducted Remotely by Zoom

Ethics Statement: The State Government Ethics Act mandates that, at the beginning of every meeting, the Chair remind all members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interest and inquire as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict with respect to matters to come before the Commission. If any member knows of a conflict of interest or potential conflict, please state it for the record.

Members Present: Deborah Weissman, Chair, Tiffany Bell, Shelby Benton, Dr. Jada Brooks, April Burgess-Johnson, Kriquette Davis, Dr. Kim Eagle, David Elliott, Jessica Englert, Saira Estrada, Karen Fairley, Carianne Fisher, Regina Gurley (joined after roll call), Sarah Kirkman, Honorable Nathaniel Knust, Kathleen Lockwood, TeAndra Miller, Elizabeth Outten, Ricky Parks, Krishana Polite, Starleen Scott-Robbins, Sheriff Greg Sebolt, Joetta Shepherd, Sheriff Elect Christopher Thomas, Caroline Valand, and Sarah Owens Weeks.

Members Absent: Cathy Cloninger, Cheryl Howell, Holly Jones, Denise Mazza, Honorable Terri Sharp, Honorable Christine Strader, Annette Taylor, and Amy Vaughn-Jones.

DOA NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement Staff Present: Danielle Carman, Charnessa Ridley, Deborah Torres, Lori Gerber, Bernetta Thigpen, Sandra Ross, Rebecca Reaves, Deatrice Williams, Toshia Dunlap, Angela Winston-Hill, and Sarah Michael McNeese.

Guests Present: Evin Grant, Nikki Locklear, Calvetta Watlington, Michael Adams, Angela Harper-King, Natasha Earle-Young, Judith Johnson-Hostler, and Donovan Grant.

Meeting was called to order by Chair Weissman at 10:00 a.m.

Welcome/Member Roll Call: Chair Weissman welcomed everyone who was present and read the Ethics Statement. No conflicts of interest were noted. Carman conducted the roll call and members stated present as their names were called.

Approval of Minutes: Burgess-Johnson moved to approve the minutes of the August 26, 2022 meeting and Miller seconded. All members who were present approved the minutes, with the exception of Benton, Brooks, Eagle, Estrada, Sebolt, Thomas, and Owens Weeks abstaining.

Oaths of Office: Judge Knust administered the oaths of office for reappointed members Bell, Davis, Kirkman, and Owens Weeks, and for newly appointed members Eagle, Outten, Sebolt, Shepherd, and Thomas. Oaths for reappointed members Strader and Vaughn-Jones were postponed until the next meeting.



CFWYI Executive Director Report – Danielle Carman

Carman directed the Commissioners to a memo from her in their meeting materials. She said the division has launched a new online grants management system that will ultimately make grant administration easier and more efficient for the staff and, more importantly, for the grantees and subgrantees that are providing crucial victim services. Parts of the system are still under development, but grantees and subgrantees can now enter their budgets and submit budget change requests online. The staff has also begun issuing payments from the system. Additional functionality will be released in stages.

Carman said the division is continuing to experience staffing changes, noting that all but one member of the human trafficking team recently resigned to pursue new opportunities. She thanked the team for their service and said CFWYI would be working to refocus its human trafficking work on training and providing resources around the intersections with domestic violence and sexual assault. Carman said CFWYI's youth involvement team is gearing up for the summer 2023 state internship program, and recently posted 100 internship projects and 112 positions.

Bell asked whether Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (DVIPs) are eligible for Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) funding, and Carman said she does not believe they are. Ridley said they are not eligible because the program participants have to pay for services.

Chair Report – Deborah Weissman

Weissman gave the ethics advisement. She said the Commission is a working body and Commissioners need to be active participants on at least one Committee. She said there have been recent discussions about the frequency of committee meetings and the attendance and participation of Commission members. She added that, despite some participation challenges, the committees are doing fantastic work and she is grateful for those efforts. She asked all members to let her know if there is anything she can do to facilitate participation, including changing committee assignments.

Weissman returned to Bell's earlier question about whether DVIPs are eligible for FVPSA funding, and said they do not appear to be according to her research. She encouraged members to think about ways to address all aspects of domestic violence and whether there is anything that can be done about DVIPs being left out of funding opportunities.

Committee Reports and Updates

Access to Health Services Committee Report – Starleen Scott-Robbins and Regina Gurley, Co-Chairs

Scott-Robbins said the Health Committee has been discussing its current focus and has agreed that it should be on promoting enhanced domestic violence screening by primary care providers. The members agreed that we need a baseline for how primary care providers, including hospitals, medical practices, and clinics, are handling screening and referrals now. They have developed a list of organizations, including accreditation bodies, to reach out to about screening and education practices. They have developed a draft list of questions, and each committee member is thinking about which organizations they are in the best position to contact.

Burgess-Johnson said this is very exciting work. She noted that she worked with NCCADV a few years ago to get a federal grant for developing a training and screening protocol for medical providers, and that effort might be informative for the committee. Scott-Robbins asked Burgess-Johnson to send her any materials she may have about that effort.

Gurley said, if any Commissioners have contacts at the executive/administrative level in the organizations the

committee is looking at, they would be happy to take that contact information and try to ensure that the committee is getting in touch with the right people. Weissman said there are guidelines about the obligations of health care providers to screen for domestic violence, and Gurley said the committee is working to pull those together. Weissman said she might be able to get some law students to help with that effort.

Weissman said there has not been much discussion about screening for offenders and asked if that would be incorporated into the next phase of the committee's work. Bell said the most effective way is probably to ask similar questions that are asked to identify victims. Bell and Outten said that may require more work to tease out relevant responses on the back end. Weissman asked if there could be a set of questions for providers to ask that might help identify people who are about to lose control. Bell said questions that might be effective include whether the person has ever had a restraining order taken out against them or whether they have an intimate partner who has ever received victim services.

Burgess Johnson said, when she was working on this issue with NCCADV in the past, they had a series of conversations with healthcare providers about screening for offenders. She said the providers were concerned about opening that Pandora's box but were willing to take the time for it if they had a defined protocol and identified referrals. Burgess-Johnson said the providers remained hesitant to work with offenders because of security concerns and the potential for escalating violence in the healthcare setting. Thigpen said NCCADV previously gave a presentation to the Commission about that project, and noted that Cassandra Rowe, NCCADV's Survivor Wellbeing Co-Director, will begin serving on the committee in the near future.

Domestic Violence Offender Management Committee – Tiffany Bell, Chair

Bell said the DVOM Committee met after submitting its written report to the Commission. She said the committee is receiving concerning information from programs about closing or not providing services because of the lack of funding from the Governor's Crime Commission. She said the committee is also looking to get input on the best way to evaluate the programs and is developing a survey for that purpose.

Bell said the committee reviewed recent statistical report from DVIPs and was struck by the discrepancy between the number of domestic violence victims in the state and the number of abusers who are being referred to services. She said, last year, about 3,000 offenders were referred and about 1,250 completed a DVIP, but there were an estimated 30,000 domestic violence protective orders issued during the same time period.

Bell added that North Carolina Providers of Abuser Treatment (NCPAT) recently met and is working to develop best practice guidelines. Weissman said the committee is also looking at the low numbers of referrals from civil court, adding that we know survivors want their partners to go to treatment programs.

Victim Services Committee – Shelby Benton, Chair

Benton said the Victim Services Committee is charged with raising awareness of domestic violence services for underserved populations and is currently focused on the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind population. She said the Committee sponsored two series of lunch and learns, and is now working on a third series for domestic violence providers to share information with Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind providers.

The committee's next project is to look at innovative programs across the country that North Carolina should consider replicating. Benton said the Commission cannot implement new programs directly, but there may be other ways to plant the seed for new programs that could help with services to this population. Benton added that Commissioners should always be open to speaking with groups and serving on panels that could help raise

awareness around these issues.

Benton noted she is the Chair of the North Carolina Interest on Lawyers' Trust Accounts (NC IOLTA) Board of Trustees, which awards grants for civil legal aid. In that capacity, she attended a recent North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance meeting, and one of their requests is for \$6 million in domestic violence funding for Legal Aid of North Carolina and Pisgah Legal Services.

Transportation Access Committee – Kriquette Davis and Carianne Fisher, Co-Chairs

Davis said the Transportation Committee is working to learn more about Greenway Public Transportation Services, including how it is funded. She said the committee is concerned about broadband access and the potential for identifying shelter locations. Fisher added that the committee is discussing GIS mapping of broadband access while still protecting shelter confidentiality. Ultimately, they decided to delay the planned survey to add some questions about broadband access and they are still working through how to ask those questions. The plan is to work on a lunch and learn after the survey is complete.

Legislative and Advocacy Committee – Holly Jones and Kathleen Lockwood, Co-Chairs

Lockwood said the General Assembly is out of session and the Legislative and Advocacy Committee has not met recently. She said the Commission approved an Extreme Risk Protective Order resolution at the last meeting, but the committee has decided to wait to distribute it until later this year or next year. She invited any Commissioners to refer issues for the committee's consideration.

Benton noted that the North Carolina Bar Association will have a full-time lobbyist on staff at the beginning of next year, which might present some opportunities for partnerships.

2023 Meeting Schedule

Carman said the Commission Chair has established the following meeting schedule for 2023: February 10, May 12, August 18, and November 3, 2023. She said the February 10, 2023 meeting would be in person with a virtual option. The staff will let members know next year whether the other meetings will be in person or hybrid. Carman said in-person meetings will be from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, with any fully virtual meetings running from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Carman said the staff would send calendar holds to all Commissioners. Benton asked if the hybrid meetings would include a virtual option for committee breakout meetings, and Carman said the staff would look into that option.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Next Meeting

February 10, 2023, from 10:00 to 2:00 pm. The meeting will be in person with a virtual option and the staff will explore virtual options for committee breakout sessions.