

**Domestic Violence Commission Meeting
Minutes – Sept. 17, 2010
Public School Forum
3739 National Drive, Raleigh, NC 27612**

Commission Member Attendees: *Karen Parker-Thompson, Chair, The Honorable Sharon T. Barrett, Marisol Barr, Rick Zechman (for Sherry Bradsher), Jennifer Brobst, Gwen Burrell, The Honorable J. Thomas Davis, David Elliott, Beth Froehling, Janeen Gingrich, Dr. Peggy Goodman, Chief John Guard, The Honorable Lorrin Freeman, Kathy Hodges, Linda Holden-Cox, Robin Colbert (for Monika Johnson-Hostler), Sheriff Dewey Jones, Jo Liles, Tracy Little, Representative McLawhorn, The Honorable Beverly Scarlett, Steven Storch, and Ben Thalheimer*

Department of Administration (DOA) Attendees: Jill Dinwiddie, Mary Williams-Stover, Cindy Olsen, and Christy Agner

Guest Attendees: Scott Proescholdbell (DHHS), Emily Hunt (AOC), Leah Perkinson (NCCADV), and Gloria Stallworth (NCDSS)

I. Opening/Welcome - Karen Parker-Thompson, Chair

- Chair Karen Parker-Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced The Honorable Judge Wanda Bryant to begin the swearing in ceremony for the newly appointed DV commission members.

II. Swearing in of New Members – The Honorable Wanda Bryant

- The following new members came forward to be sworn in: Ben Thalheimer, Steven Storch, The Honorable Lorrin Freeman and Sheriff Dewey Jones. Each member placed their left hand on the bible and raised their right hand and repeated the oath. The Honorable Wanda Bryant announced that each of the four members are now officially sworn as members of the DV Commission.

III. Approval of Minutes

- Chair Karen Parker-Thompson asked if all of the members had a chance to look over the minutes of the last meeting held on April 9, 2010 and whether anyone had any changes or comments. The following changes were reported:
 - Tom Moose should be “Tim” Moose.
 - On Page 2, everything should be stated in the third person tense.
 - On Page 3, where it’s stated “comments included SA”, it should be moved to the end of the paragraph.
 - The 3rd paragraph from the bottom on Page 3, where it’s stated, “All were in favor”, it should read “It was stated by some that”.
 - Tracy Little reported that on Page 6, it should say “Mr. Moose” made the presentation (not Ms. Williams).
- Gwen Burrell made a motion to approve the minutes with the stated changes and Marisol Barr seconded the motion. All were in favor. The minutes were approved with the above stated changes.

IV. Executive Director’s Report - Jill Dinwiddie

- Ms. Dinwiddie gave an overview of the DV Commission notebook that was sent to newly appointed members. She pointed out each section of the notebook and stated that members should feel free to ask any questions they may have or feel free to call her at her office.

- Ms. Dinwiddie directed members to take a look at the new roster of all DV Commission members and asked that they let her know if they have any changes to their contact information.
- Ms. Dinwiddie pointed out that the Council for Women is a state agency that falls under the Department of Administration and the Council for Women Board and the DV Commission are both staffed by appointed members. All Council for Women Board members are appointed by the Governor and the DV Commission members are appointed by the Speaker of the House, the Senate Pro Tempore and the Governor (in equal parts). She stated that men are welcome to serve on the Council for Women board.
- The next meeting of the Council for Women Board will be Friday, September 24 at this same location. The next meeting of the DV Commission will be December 10 at the Governor's Crime Commission. The dates for the 2011 DV Commission meetings are listed on the handout that members received today.
- Ms. Dinwiddie invited new members to look at the DV Commission subcommittee list and to sign up for at least one subcommittee.
- Ms. Dinwiddie stated that any questions regarding the Ethics Commission and members responsibilities as a DV Commission member should be clear. If not, feel free to ask any questions. Ethics training is offered around the state and DV Commission members are expected to attend a training class and to complete a certificate of completion. The question was asked about whether writing a letter of recommendation for an Abuser Treatment program to be certified was considered inappropriate for a DV Commission member. Ms. Dinwiddie responded that the DV Commission member should excuse themselves from a vote; if it were to take place. Ms. Dinwiddie added that members should consider the connections they have and whether they impact their position as a DV Commission member so that there are no conflicts of interest.
- Ms. Parker-Thompson announced that the 2011 meeting dates for the DV Commission have been established. If anyone has conflicts with those dates, please let her know. Currently, the meeting times are scheduled to be 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. Let Ms. Parker-Thompson know if you have suggestions or changes that need to be made. In addition, if there are too many presentations or the meeting times are too long, let her know.
- Ms. Parker-Thompson introduced Christy Agner, Legislative Liaison with the Department of Administration. Ms. Agner distributed a green handout entitled "Resources for Tracking the Budget" and a yellow handout entitled "An Unofficial Guide to Working with Lawmakers and Staff".
- Ms. Christy Agner gave a brief overview of the Legislative process and how funds are allocated by the legislature. She stated that the next Legislative session will begin on January 26, 2011 and November 2 new legislators will be elected.
- Ms. Agner reported on her role as an advocate for the Department of Administration and its divisions. She stated that the NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence plays a key role in creation, requests for sponsors and provides help to pass domestic violence legislation that directly impacts victims. In addition, the Joint Legislative Committee on Domestic Violence, chaired by Representative Marian McLawhorn, also plays a big role in the legislative process. She stated that they look to the DV Commission for their support and input in what legislation is needed as it relates to Domestic Violence. The DV subcommittee is chaired by Representative Melanie Wade Goodson and their next meeting will be held on September 28 at 2:00 pm at the legislature.
- Jill Dinwiddie stated that at the last DV Commission meeting, a vote was taken to recommend to the legislature that the Coalition Against Sexual Assault be added to the name and mission of this commission.

- Ms. Agner reported on the grants that are administered by the Council for Women. These grants include: 35 competitive Displaced Homemaker, 92 Sexual Assault and 102 Domestic Violence.
- Ms. Agner can be reached at Christy.agner@doa.nc.gov. Feel free to contact her with any legislative process questions.
- Ms. Jill Dinwiddie pointed out that Dr. Phil has adopted the topic of domestic violence in his upcoming programs. This should help to get the word out. Amnesty International has also adopted this topic and their initiative will be focused more on North Carolina.
- Ms. Dinwiddie reported that the Council for Women name change became effective July 1. The name changed to “NC Council for Women”. Staff changes included the addition of a new Assistant Director, Mary Williams-Stover, who came to us with lots of experience, including what a good non-profit should do. In addition, Diane Castellow (Central Region Director) and Patti Kelly (Council for Women Coordinator) both retired and Courtney Watkins (Processing Assistant) left to pursue a job in college recruitment.
- The Council for Women’s six regional offices were reduced to five, with redistribution and responsibility of 5-6 additional programs for each Director to oversee. Due to budget cuts, the Central Region office position was eliminated. This change was effective July 1 and has been working well.
- The Abuser Treatment position was not funded so it continues to be handled through the Western Region office.
- The grants process has been streamlined and is currently in the first part of a 2 year cycle.
- Ms. Dinwiddie stated that she would like to add “prevention” as a part of the focus on domestic violence.
- The NC Governor’s Women’s Conference will be held on November 9 at the Raleigh Convention Center. Ms. Dinwiddie pointed out that she has been on the board for the past year. The conference will feature noted guests: Sapphire, Cheryl WuDunn, Jean Chatsky, and Governor Beverly Perdue. Topics will include: Successful Women Business owners, New Medical Discoveries, a Panel on Philanthropy and Violence Against Women.
- Karen Parker-Thompson reported on efforts to start a Public Awareness Campaign. She stated that a committee has been formed and has met to discuss the 3 year public/private partnership.
- Ms. Jill Dinwiddie pointed out that the goal is to have the information on the Public Awareness Campaign together in time to present it to the Legislature.

V. Chair Report on DV Center Allocation Activities

- Karen Parker-Thompson reported that a meeting was held on August 30th to discuss Statute 50C and recommendations to make it more clear. Representative Marian McLawhorn assigned Melanie Wade Goodwin to chair the subcommittee. A draft recommendation was developed and the committee has requested your feedback. They looked at how other states allocate funds and this taskforce will send out an electronic survey.
- Conference calls were conducted for the DV programs to give their feedback. The Coalition will hold their membership meeting on November 1. They will bring back information to the DV Commission members at the next meeting in December.
- The question was asked as to whether the survey can be posted on our website. Jill Dinwiddie added that the Region Directors recently completed a survey. The Region Directors could come to Raleigh and present their findings at the next Council for Women Board meeting.
- Comments included: The Coalition Against Sexual Assault is not part of this study, but they are interested in participating. It was stated that the numbers were greatly skewed. Gwen Burrell offered the Governor’s Crime Commission database information.

- Karen Parker-Thompson reported that the information is based on one allocation per county and the population number is based on the number of people who receive services. Ms. Parker-Thompson added that feedback is welcome.
- Representative Marian McLawhorn pointed out that it's important to keep in mind that this will not be a vehicle in which to receive more funding. The budget will be tight with the 5, 10 and 15% cuts that State agency Heads have been asked to submit.
- Ms. Parker-Thompson stated that if anyone is interested in serving on the taskforce, please let her know. Robin Colbert, Beth Froehling and Gwen Burrell all volunteered.

VI. Committee Reports

- **Legislative Committee** – The Honorable Beverly Scarlett distributed a handout and gave an update on the committee's activities. She reported that Cheryl Howell has agreed to look over Subsection 2 of Statute 50C. The committee has discussed consent orders of 50B and the "Finding of Fact" checkbox. Judge Scarlett pointed out that some 50B's have been challenged and set aside due to the checkbox not being checked. She added that the committee has also discussed what should be done in cases where a person has a previous conviction of "possession of a firearm by a felon"; since this has come up three times in recent months.
- The Honorable Beverly Scarlett requested that DV Commission members take this issue back to their area and report the number of similar cases back to her. Her e-mail address is bscarlett716@msn.com. Robin Colbert stated that NCCASA would like to work on this issue. *Their next meeting will be held on October 18.*
- Judge Scarlett pointed out that this is going to take a lot of work and they don't expect to introduce legislation for at least the next year.
- Chair Karen Parker-Thompson announced the list of subcommittees was being passed around the room and new members are welcome to sign up to be part of a subcommittee.
- **Abuser Treatment Committee** – Jo Liles reported that the committee met yesterday for the first time since March. The committee reviewed six applications for certification as an Abuser Treatment Program. After their review, one was approved, two were provisionally approved and three were not approved. Jo Liles pointed out that the rules they follow have a specific set of guidelines. Ms. Liles added that they have seen a new curriculum from programs that have applied to be certified. The Best Practices Manual for North Carolina includes some new issues to be addressed, such as how to handle payments from abusers who are indigent. She added that results from a survey to see how this is handled revealed that there's a wide variation.
- **Law Enforcement Committee** – Chief John Guard acknowledged and shared his appreciation for the many years of service that Kathy Hodges has given to the DV Commission.
- Chief John Guard pointed out a study completed in 2004 that collected statistics on the number of abusers who abused their victims while out on pre-trial release. Chief Guard added that data has been collected by the State, the SBI, and the Coalition Against Domestic Violence and their data collection process revealed some troubling issues concerning differences in the number of reported cases.
- Chief John Guard reported that since the 2004 Crawford case, there has been an increase in cases involving "victim blaming" across the state and that offenders have exploited this rule. Chief Guard pointed out that giving officers the statutory authority to subpoena witnesses on the scene would help to deter this problem.
- **Workplace Violence Committee**– David Elliott reported that his committee met via conference call in August. He stated that more members are needed to serve on this committee. Mr. Elliott added that more representation is needed from the business community. The committee discussed a Public Awareness Campaign in order to raise awareness.

- The question was raised about forms that the AOC manages and the exparte form. There is a problem with the order only being valid on a certain date.
- A suggestion was made to have the 50C form translated and printed in Spanish.
- **Professional Education Committee** – Dr. Peggy Goodman reported that curriculum has been expanded. The curriculum is dictated at the National level and her committee believes that Nursing schools are the best resource to work with. Dr. Goodman added that the committee hopes to work in communication with the Nursing schools this fall. The goal is to encourage standard curriculum.
- **Victim Services Committee** – this committee has not been active.

VII. **Domestic Violence Homicide Tracking in North Carolina Presentation** – *Leah Perkinson, NCCADV*

- Ms. Perkinson gave a powerpoint presentation and distributed a packet of information to each member. Ms. Perkinson began her presentation with a list of objectives and tracking systems used to extract data on homicides. Ms. Perkinson pointed out that different groups track the data on domestic violence homicides from different resources, definitions of a domestic violence homicide, as well as variables of information gathered.
- Ms. Perkinson presented information on how the NCCADV, NC Violent Reporting System (NC-VDRS), NC Department of Justice and the Violence Policy Center each collect data. This included the type of information collected, the source, the definition of a DV homicide and the variables involved. This process helped to explain why there are differences in the number of domestic violence homicides reported.

VIII. **Domestic Violence Fatality Team Presentation** – *Marie White and Helen Lipman*

- Ms. Marie White gave a powerpoint presentation and an overview of how this group came together and what the Domestic Violence Fatality Team does. Ms. White stated that the team was formed through legislation passed in June 2009 and it's modeled after the Child Fatality Team. It is supported by funding from Community Support Services.
- The DV Fatality Team mandated members include survivors, DV workers, Sheriff's and the local public schools. The unmandated members include the 26th Judicial District, the Dept. of Correction Community Partners and four year universities.
- Ms. White stated that her team met four times in a year to look at data collected on domestic violence homicides and what policies need changes and what gaps exist. Ms. White pointed out that they are given access to domestic violence fatality information by the Legislature and they are required to notify the victim's surviving family members that they are reviewing the case. The guidelines state that the case cannot be an active, open case and confidentiality and immunity from prosecution must be upheld.
- Ms. Helen Lipman reported that the Review team consists of 10 to 12 members and the Team Leader is Judge Jane Harper.
- The domestic violence cases that they review have been cleared from civil and criminal prosecution and date back to 2007-2008.
- The surviving family members were given an opportunity to express their expectations and given resource information if they want it.

IX. **Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

- Mary Williams-Stover announced the GCC Grant Writing Workshop in October and the Safe Communities Conference being held December 1-3 in Greensboro. Registration information can be found on the website.
- Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Cindy Olsen