

NC Domestic Violence Commission Meeting Minutes

August 26, 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, Dr. Jada Brooks, April Burgess-Johnson, Cathy Cloninger, Kriquette Davis, David Elliott, Jessica Englert, Saira Estrada (joined after roll call), Karen Fairley, Carianne Fisher, Regina Gurley, Holly Jones, Sarah Kirkman, Honorable Nathaniel Knust, Kathleen Lockwood, Sheriff Hans Miller, TeAndra Miller, Ricky Parks, Krishana Polite, Starleen Scott-Robbins, Honorable Terri Sharp, Honorable Christine Strader, Caroline Valand, Amy Vaughn-Jones (joined after roll call), and Karen Wallace-Meigs (joined after roll call).

Incoming Members Present: Dr. Kim Eagle, Sheriff Greg Seabolt, and Joetta Shepherd.

Members Absent: Tiffany Bell, Shelby Benton, Surhabi Gawande, Cheryl Howell, Denise Mazza, Bryan Miller, Vickie Pait, Sheriff Larry Pierce, Annette Taylor, and Sarah Owens Weeks.

Members Resigned Since Last Meeting: A.W. Burgess and Elizabeth Hunt.

DOA NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement Staff Present: Danielle Carman, Charnessa Ridley, Deborah Torres, Alisa Milliken, Lori Gerber, Philisa Fowler, Deatrice Williams, Toshia Dunlap, Sandra Ross, Candace Settle, Mario Richardson, and Kendra Underwood.

Guests Present: Evin Grant, Katie Hall, Donovan Grant, Karen Hammonds-Blanks, Susie Camilleri, Maggie Slocumb, Natasha Earle-Young, Julia Horrocks, John Weil, Shaye Lloyd, Seema Kaka, and Bronwyn Thornton.

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: After Commissioners noted two corrections to the proposed minutes of the May 13, 2022 Commission meeting, Burgess-Johnson moved to approve the minutes and Scott-Robbins seconded. All members who were present approved the minutes, with the exception of H. Miller and Vaughn-Jones abstaining.

CFWYI Executive Director Report – Danielle Carman

Carman directed the Commissioners to a memo from her in their meeting materials. She summarized the state domestic violence and sexual assault grants for last fiscal year and the current fiscal year, as well as the various funding streams through the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). She said the memo omitted what may be the most exciting CFWYI news, which is that the division had released a new online grants management system that week. The system is still under development, but grantees and subgrantees can now enter their budgets online and can also submit budget change requests. Additional functionality will be released in stages. Carman said the system should make grants management much easier and more effective for the staff and, more importantly, for the grantees and subgrantees that are providing crucial victim services.

Carman said the memo highlights some recent initiatives in the human trafficking and youth involvement teams and outlines some critical vacancies in the division. Carman added that she is pleased to announce that Sandra Ross has joined the staff as a Communications and Research Specialist, and that Angela Winston-Hill has been promoted into a state Grants Administrator position.

Carman briefly discussed plans for Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October. She also gave a legislative update from the General Assembly's last session, including: 1) the planned demolition of the Administration building to construct a new State Government Executive Headquarters facility; 2) the receipt of \$470,000 nonrecurring for CFWYI's human trafficking team; and 3) the fact that the final budget bill did not include funding for a Domestic Violence Intervention Program (DVIP) Coordinator position as requested by the Commission.

Carman said there have been several recent resignations from the Commission, and a number of terms that will expire at the end of August. She directed attendees to a chart on the last page of her memo showing the status of those resignations and expirations, and she noted that three of the incoming legislative appointees were in attendance.

Chair Report – Deborah Weissman

Weissman gave the ethics advisement, and she directed the Commissioners to a document reciting potential conflicts of interest identified by the Ethics Commission based on the 2022 Statements of Economic Interest. Weissman said the Commission is a working body and Commissioners need to be active participants on at least one Committee. Weissman added that there are significant intersections between the work of the various Committees. She said the Committee Chairs have reported that much of their work is being done by volunteers, rather than Commissioners, and she asked about the obstacles to fuller Commissioner engagement.

Scott-Robbins said the Access to Healthcare Committee has been able to accomplish some great things, such as lunch and learns and surveys of local management entities, but Commissioner participation has been lean lately. She asked if there is anything the Committee Chairs could do to support more full participation, such as different meeting times. Weissman said volunteers are doing much of the work with other Committees as well, and she asked whether there is a way to restructure the Committees that would encourage more Commissioner participation. Weissman said she convened a meeting with all of the Committee Chairs to discuss ideas, and there was some discussion of streamlining the current five Committees into three. She said the group agreed that the Commission has to have Victim Services, Domestic Violence Offender Management, and Legislative Committees, but discussed the possibility of merging the work of the Access to Healthcare and Transportation Committees into Victim Services. The other possibility the group discussed was to have the Committees meet less frequently than monthly.

Polite stated that she is not in favor of combining the Committees. She said the Access to Healthcare and Transportation Committees are tackling large issues, and she thinks it would do a disservice to those issues to combine them. She added that she is in favor of less frequent meetings. Elliott asked how Committee assignments were made, noting that they may not reflect the core interests of all Commissioners. Weissman said Commissioners were asked to select their preferred Committees, and she invited Commissioners to let her know if they prefer a different assignment. Elliott said he is generally in favor of fewer meetings, although that could make the remaining ones last longer. He added that the Committees used to meet before or after the in-person Commission meetings and said that may help with participation.

Gurley asked whether the Commission could resume in person meetings, at least for some quarterly meetings, or look at hybrid meeting models. She added that the advantage of consolidating Committees would be getting larger groups together to address topics. Jones said she does not feel strongly either way about consolidating Committees but, whatever the Commission decided, she thinks the group should revisit that decision in six months to see if additional changes are warranted. Jones added that the demands on staff increase the more Committees there are.

Parks said he thinks more in-person meetings would make Commissioners feel more engaged and accountable. He added that, if Commissioners are not meeting their commitments with respect to Committee participation, the Committee Chairs should address that with them directly. Weissman suggested that the Commission could strive to have one or two in-person quarterly meetings per year, or it could move to a hybrid model for all of them. Carman said hybrid meetings create more logistical challenges, but those challenges are not insurmountable. She added that in-person meetings also come with costs for transportation and meals, and the lack of those expenses has made it easier to cover the cost of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter services. Valand said she would like to see the Commission meet in person at least once each year. Fisher asked if the staff has distributed a list of Commissioner responsibilities, and Carman said that is part of the orientation materials for new Commissioners. Carman added that the content of that list could be revisited with the Committee Chairs.

Weissman summarized the discussion as follows: She said there appeared to be consensus not to consolidate the Committees at this time, and she added that the work of the Committees had been progressing even with limited Commissioner participation. She said the current Committees should each poll their members to determine how to facilitate more robust participation, such as changing meeting times or meeting less often. The Commission should also hold one or two in person or hybrid meetings each year and should consider holding some Committee meetings before or after the quarterly Commission meetings.

Gurley and Burgess-Johnson both stressed the need to remain committed to providing ASL interpreter services, even if that means not providing lunches at in-person meetings. Elliott asked for a show of hands for people who would prefer in-person meetings, and many Commissioners indicated they would attend in person. The group agreed that the preference appeared to be for hybrid options. Weissman said she and Carman will follow up on the discussion and seek additional comments via email.

Committee Reports and Updates

Access to Health Services Committee Report – Starleen Scott-Robbins and Regina Gurley, Co-Chairs
Scott-Robbins said the Committee has been discussing a lunch and learn series about partnerships between primary care providers and domestic violence programs to encourage universal screening for domestic violence in primary care settings. Scott-Robbins said the Committee did some outreach through the Region Directors to see how many programs are currently working with primary care practices and health

departments in their communities and how they cultivated those relationships. The Committee will be reaching back out to organizations that responded to see if they are willing to be part of a lunch and learn series in early 2023 to talk about their experiences and lessons learned.

Domestic Violence Offender Management Committee – Tiffany Bell, Chair (Lori Gerber as designee)

Gerber stated that the Committee has been working with the Administrative Office of the Courts to distribute benchcards with information about DVIPs to judges. She said, now that the emergency declaration has ended, the Committee has also reviewed the DVIP guidelines and determined that continuing remote group work should be permissible as long as they are face-to-face virtually. The Committee is also working with North Carolina Providers of Abuse Treatment (NCPAT) on training initiatives.

Geber said the programs have all reported their FY2021-22 statistics and the staff is working to evaluate and summarize the data. Gerber said the Committee plans to continue to explore evidence-based practices for the programs and to review and revise the DVIP guidelines and the administrative code.

Victim Services Committee – Shelby Benton, Chair (Danielle Carman as designee)

Carman said the Committee has two working groups. The Capacity Building and Education Working Group has sponsored four lunch and learns about ensuring communication access and equity for the Deaf/DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) community and is now working toward programs that will cross-train DDBHH service providers on domestic violence, sexual assault, and DVIP services. The 50 State Working Group is looking at the work that has been done by UNC law students and the Vera Institute to identify innovative programs in other states that North Carolina may want to consider implementing.

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

Fisher said the Committee is focusing on four main projects: 1) a future lunch and learn on access and barriers to transportation; 2) a survey on transportation access, a draft of which was sent to the Commissioners that morning for feedback; 3) research and data collection about broadband access, including the use of GIS mapping without revealing shelter locations or endangering victims; and 4) understanding funding for the Greenway Public Transportation Flex Service in the Appalachian region.

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

Lockwood said the Committee tracked two bills that passed during the last session. The first allows judges to temporarily extend protective orders when the hearing date is after expiration of an emergency order. The second requires the collection of DNA samples from people convicted of some domestic violence crimes. She said the Committee has also been looking at recent changes to federal gun laws that partially close the boyfriend loophole and is continuing to review all publicly available reports from Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams.

Lockwood said the Committee is also proposing a resolution for the Commission's consideration in support of Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO) legislation. Lockwood said the Commissioners' materials included two versions of the proposed resolution—one that is intended to be the public-facing resolution and a second with citations so that individual Commissioners would have the ability to fact-check the statistics if they wanted to do so. Lockwood said ERPOs are civil orders that temporarily prohibit someone from possessing or purchasing firearms, and they involve a process similar to domestic violence protective orders. Burgess-Johnson moved to adopt the resolution version without citations as proposed, and Wallace-Meigs seconded the motion.

Commissioners Brooks, Burgess-Johnson, Cloninger, Elliott, Englert, Estrada, Fairley, Fisher, Gurley, Jones, Knust, Lockwood, H. Miller, T. Miller, Polite, Scott-Robbins, Strader, Valand, Vaughn-Jones, Wallace-Meigs, and Weissman voted to approve the resolution. No Commissioners voted against the motion. Commissioners H. Miller and Polite stressed the need for due process to be part of the procedure, and Lockwood said due process protections are incorporated in the proposed legislation.

Oath of Office

Judge Knust administered the oath of office for member Estrada.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Remaining 2022 DVC Meeting Dates

November 4, 2022, from 10:00 to 12:00 pm.