

**Center for Crime Victim Services
Board Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2024**

Board Members Present: Susan Ide, Susan Carr, Richard Katzman. **Absent:** Bob Paolini, Alycia Post.
Staff Members Present: Jennifer Poehlmann, Maria Gibbs, Jodie Bacon, Michelle Pelletier, Carol Brochu, Melinda Meyer. **Absent:** Carol Morgan, Anna Harrington.

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM.

REVIEW MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board reviewed the meeting minutes of February 12, 2024, and unanimously approved them as presented.

COMPENSATION PROGRAM REPORT

Maria Gibbs presented the Compensation report for February 2024. A total of 38 regular claims were received, compared to 28 the previous February. A total of 14 sexual assault (SA) claims were received, compared to 13 the previous February. Year-to-date, regular claims had increased 5.7% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. Year-to-date SA claims had increased 16.28% compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year.

The largest compensation expenses for February 2024 were related to Homicide and Domestic Assault claims. Year-to-date, compensation expenses for regular claims were about \$47K less in the current fiscal year (FY24) than at the same point in the previous fiscal year (FY23). Year-to-date SA expenses were about \$9.5K less than at the same point in the prior fiscal year. Maria advised that the Compensation staff was arranging a training for newly hired States Attorneys' Victim Advocates to orient them to the program's guidelines, etc.. The Compensation Report was accepted as presented.

RESTITUTION UNIT REPORT

Michelle Pelletier presented the Restitution Unit (RU) reports for February 2024. A total of 112 Restitution Judgement Orders (RJOs) were received from around the state, which was the highest monthly number received in the current fiscal year. Michelle noted that 112 RJOs had been more typical pre-Covid, so this was encouraging, indicating that court systems were getting back up to speed. The largest number of RJOs came from Chittenden County (25), followed by Washington County (20). Several other counties had more RJOs than usual in February, especially Rutland County. Jennifer Poehlmann remarked that an experienced Victim Advocate had returned to work in Rutland County which probably contributed to the increase there. The RU's Case Managers had collected just over \$45K in February and just over \$70K had come in via tax offsets. The Restitution Report was accepted as presented.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Carol Brochu presented the Financial Report through February 2024. As noted in previous meetings, revenues into CCVS's special funds were still falling short of what the Joint Fiscal Office (JFO) had hoped. Carol remarked that the special fund balances didn't appear to have been updated since February yet, so hopefully the balances would improve by the April board meeting, once new revenues were posted. Otherwise, the cash balances in each fund were doing okay and the Compensation Fund balance had increased in February. Carol Brochu explained that the Federal Funds will show as negative until she draws down CCVS's federal dollars. CCVS pays its subgrantees quarterly, before she goes into the federal grants reporting system and requests reimbursement based on how much we've paid out in federal dollars. Federal grant payments are made to some subgrantee organizations after CCVS has received the federal reimbursement, hence the negative federal balance shown.

CENTER UPDATE

Jennifer Poehlmann updated the Board on a variety of issues. She reported that Representative Squirrel had supported and presented CCVS's request to the House Appropriations Committee for funds to support a new Grants position at CCVS and half the salary for the Victim Advocate at the Attorney General's Office. The House Judiciary Committee had given these requests high priority, although it's a slow process. The legislature's "Crossover Deadline" was coming up, when all bills generally need to move out of one legislative body and into the other if they are to be taken up (bills with appropriations attached have an extra week). Jenn mentioned language had been introduced to ensure that survivors of sexual assault would have the right to information about where their rape kits are located; the passage of this language will allow Vermont to receive an additional \$83,500 in federal funding through our STOP grant.

CCVS was also working on the bill regarding "earned time," which proposes that another seven days be shaved off an offender's sentence for courses taken by the offender. This bill might now only apply to offenders who are on parole, and not be retroactive. Jenn would be testifying on "earned time" on March 12. Among other things, Jenn advised that there had been lots of complaints about the Department of Corrections' (DOC) automated Victim Notification System (VANS). Crime victims and advocates say the system provides no real information and needs to be revised or replaced.

Jenn has also been working with Compensation and Restitution to provide figures on a quarterly basis to the Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs' Central Office on the low number of compensation claims and restitution judgement orders received from certain counties, in hopes that may lead to improvement.

MEETING ADJOURNED: Motion was made, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.
Adjourned at 2:17 PM.

Next VCCVS Board Meeting Date:

Monday,

April 15, 2024

1:30 PM

**In the conference room at 60 South
Main Street, Waterbury.**