

NC Domestic Violence Commission Meeting Minutes

March 1, 2024

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, Michelle Bardsley (joined after roll call), Tiffany Bell, Shelby Benton, Dr. Jada Brooks, April Burgess-Johnson (joined after roll call but authorized Maggie Slocumb as her proxy vote for approving minutes), Cathy Cloninger, Kriquette Davis, Dr. Kim Eagle, David Elliott, Saira Estrada, Karen Fairley, Carianne Fisher, Donovan Grant, Holly Jones, the Honorable Nathaniel Knust, Tracy Lee, Kathleen Lockwood, Denise Mazza, TeAndra Miller, Elizabeth Outten, Krishana Polite, Dr. Angelia Riggsbee, Michelle Scott, Starleen Scott-Robbins, Sheriff Gregory Seabolt (joined after roll call), Joetta Shepherd, the Honorable Christine Strader, and Caroline Valand.

Members Absent: Jessica Englert, LaKiera Grimes, the Honorable Steven Hollowell, Cheryl Howell, Sarah Kirkman, Sheriff Christopher Thomas, Amy Vaughn-Jones, Avis Watkins-Smith, and Sarah Owens Weeks.

DOA NC Council for Women & Youth Involvement Staff Present: Danielle Carman, Charnessa Ridley, Jessica Benson, Jennifer Boedicker, Jamie Davis, Lori Gerber, Harriet Lunsford, Sandra Ross, Bernetta Thigpen, Deatrice Williams, Angela Winston-Hill, and intern Danielle Jeffrey.

Guests Present: DOA Secretary Pam Cashwell, DOA Legislative Liaison Wes Kyatt, Michael Adams, Chrissy Griffin, Julia Horrocks, Judith Johnson-Hostler, Brook Hudson, Seema Kak, Angela Harper King, Nikki Locklear, Ellen Rummel, Maggie Slocumb, and Skye Sullivan.

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

Welcome/Member Roll Call: Cashwell and Weissman welcomed everyone who was present, and Cashwell thanked the Commission members for their service. Weissman gave the ethics advisement.

Approval of Minutes: Bell made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2023 meeting, and Scott-Robbins seconded the motion. All members who were present at roll call approved the motion.

Oaths of Office: Knust administered oaths of office to reappointed member Cloninger and newly appointed member Lee.



CFWYI Executive Director Report – Danielle Carman

Carman said the staff had issued the first three quarters of state grants appropriations to sexual assault and domestic violence grantees, as well as the first two quarters of court system collections for marriage license and divorce filing fees. Carman said combined payments so far this fiscal year totaled almost \$10 million.

Carman said CFWYI continued to have some vacancies in the office but would soon be posting the new Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator position that the General Assembly authorized in the Appropriations Act. She said she would circulate the posting to Commissioners and asked them to forward it to anyone they thought might be interested.

Chair Report – Deborah Weissman

Weissman complimented the CFWYI staff on their work and thanked the Committee chairs for keeping their committees moving forward. Weissman said there was discussion at the last Commission meeting about a lack of financial resources to support the committees in, for example, paying survivors for their time. She added that the committees do not have the bandwidth to research grant opportunities and prepare applications, so they need to seek partnerships with other organizations that are engaged in similar work.

Weissman said there was also discussion at the last meeting about the Commission having a stronger presence in the state and better positioning itself to be a resource for legislators. She said she urged members to reach out to the legislators who appointed them and to introduce themselves and the committees on which they serve. She also encouraged members to offer to help assess the impact of legislation under consideration. Weissman said, if any members reached out, she would love to hear any feedback they may have received.

Weissman raised Governor Cooper's [Executive Order 303](#), which is designed to create a unified approach to reentry for formerly incarcerated people and to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes for those people. She said it includes a number of things that are relevant to people who commit acts of domestic violence, and she encouraged all committee members to read the order and to think about how its provisions might intersect with their committee work.

Committee Reports

Access to Health Services Committee Report – Starleen Scott-Robbins and Dr. Jada Brooks, Co-Chairs

Scott-Robbins shared that the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Use helps support the Mountain Area Health Education Center's (MAHEC) annual women's recovery conference and has offered two scholarships to members of the Domestic Violence Commission. She said the conference will be held (both in person and virtually) from May 1-3, 2024, and offers 15.5 educational credit units. She asked any Commissioner who is interested in the one remaining scholarship to reach out to Carman for details.

Scott-Robbins turned to the Health Committee report, and said the Committee continues its work to promote increased routine screening by primary care providers for indications of violence, especially in rural areas and with underserved populations. She said the Committee is currently working with the NC Community Health Center Association to provide training, consultation, and technical assistance to eight or more of their community health centers across the state, and is exploring avenues to get funding and resources to support those efforts. Scott-Robbins thanked Thigpen for her work staffing the Committee and invited any Commissioners who might be interested to join it.

Access to Transportation and Broadband Committee Report – Kriquette Davis, Chair

Davis said the Committee's current action steps are to plan a two-part lunch and learn, and the group is contacting potential speakers and moderators. The first part will be more like a think tank to gather information

about what people want to know about transportation services. The Committee will then utilize the information gathered to create a lunch and learn, and Fisher will integrate the transportation survey results into the materials. Davis added that NCCADV applied for a grant that centers on accessing broadband for survivors in rural areas and, if awarded, they will collaborate with the Committee.

Domestic Violence Offender Management Committee Report – Tiffany Bell, Chair

Bell said the DVOM Committee's focus for the past nine months has been to prepare draft revisions to the administrative code that governs Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (DVIPs) and CFWYI's best practice guidelines for the programs. She said Weissman and UNC's Project RESTART team have been working with Committee members on the code revisions, and representatives of North Carolina Providers of Abuser Treatment (NCPAT) have been working with members on the guidelines. Bell said the goal is to have both documents finished by the end of March to submit with the UNC Project RESTART final grant report. The documents will then go to Carman for her review. Bell added that UNC Project RESTART's co-lead Beth Moracco and Carman will be giving a presentation in April, and Carman clarified that the presentation will be at the Office of Strategic Partnership's annual Learning Forum on April 11th.

Bell said Project RESTART has been working with the Committee to look at measures for programs to evaluate success. She added that CFWYI received 30 DVIP renewal applications and one new application in the most recent round and added that NCPAT will be hosting a conference sometime in September. Grant said he would confirm the conference date once they know it.

Victim Services Committee Report – Shelby Benton, Chair

Benton stated that the Committee's charge is to raise awareness of domestic violence services for marginalized populations. She said the Committee is continuing its work with the Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind population, noting that the prior lunch and learns about services for that population are on the Commission's website. Benton added that NCCADV has obtained grant funding to conduct a needs assessment for that population over the next three years, and Committee members are continuing to work on building capacity in that area.

In addition, Benton said the Committee has now started to focus on creating awareness about domestic violence in the teen population. She said they are in the early stages of that work and have formed a working group to do some initial investigation and brainstorming. Benton invited anyone who is interested in services for that population to join the Committee. Outten said she would be interested, and Benton said she would add her to the meeting invites. Carman mentioned that the DHHS Secretary had reached out through Secretary Cashwell about connecting his team with the State Youth Councils to discuss mental health training, and she thought the Committee's new focus might dovetail nicely with those efforts and create a potential area for collaboration. Benton asked Carman to connect her with the DHHS team member who is working on that, and Carman said she would.

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

Lockwood said the Committee provided detailed notes from recent meetings in the meeting materials and she encouraged Commission members to review them, noting that she wanted to share a few highlights in her verbal report. Lockwood said the first deadline to pass a federal budget for FY23-24 was today, but there has been a continuing resolution moving that deadline to March 8, 2024.

Lockwood said there is an expectation that federal funding for domestic violence services will remain level and increases are not on the table for this fiscal year. Lockwood added that observers are hopeful that there will not be cuts to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Family Violence and Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) funding. Lockwood said the Crime Victim's Fund (CVF), which is the source of VOCA funding, is running at a deficit and hit a

crisis point this year with \$700 million less funding than last year's appropriation.

Lockwood said legislators are looking for solutions and there are a few options to increase funding, but they will not make up a \$700 million deficit so there will probably be additional VOCA cuts. Lockwood said the programs across the state are feeling the impact of VOCA reductions, and NCCADV has been working to ensure that North Carolina's federal legislators understand the crisis. She added that there is not one clear ask to fix the issue, and their message has been to ask legislators to be thought partners in identifying various places to look for additional funding.

Lockwood said there are links in the Committee's written report that help people identify and contact their representatives. There is also a link to a digital toolkit prepared by national partners, and to an evolving document on the impact of VOCA reductions that people can use in their communications with legislators.

Lockwood said the Federal Communications Commission issued new [rules](#) in November 2023 implementing the [Safe Connections Act of 2022](#), which improves access to communications services for survivors of domestic violence and related crimes. NCCADV is still working to digest those rules and they will not be implemented until the third quarter of 2024.

Lockwood turned to the state General Assembly's upcoming short session and said there may be movement on some policy bills from the long session, such as the ICE detainer bill. She added that the Committee meetings over the next few months will include updates from the short session. Lockwood noted that the Committee report includes some updates for future legislation and advocacy, and she encouraged Commissioners to review those items.

Lockwood said the report also highlights a few new resources, including a recorded North Carolina Center for Nonprofits webinar about what 501(c)(3) nonprofits can and cannot do during an election year, as well as an upcoming live webinar on "How to Implement a Strangulation Protocol in Less than Six Months" from Alliance for Hope and The Strangulation Training Institute. Weissman said her law students worked last semester on a project involving strangulation and traumatic brain injury (TBI), and it is critical to assess victims for TBI. Lockwood invited any Commissioners who were interested to join the Legislative and Advocacy Committee, and said they are always open to new advocacy ideas.

Guest Presentation: Mecklenburg County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team Report

Rummel, Chair of the Mecklenburg County DVFRT, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the team's reviews of 46 cases between 2010 and 2022. That report is on file with the Council for Women and Youth Involvement. Rummel reviewed data on domestic violence homicides in the county, as well as the findings and recommendations of the local fatality review team. Grant shared a link with the Commission to a report on the [Status of Intimate Partner Violence in Mecklenburg County from 2018 to 2022](#).

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Next Meeting

May 17, 2024