

FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
September 28, 2011
Room 14, Potomac Building
5:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Council in Attendance: Judge Karen Abrams, Krisanne Bentley, Judge Christy Chesser, Kimberly Gregory, John Helldorfer, Laura Joyce, Kathy Lacer, Dr. Kathy O'Brien, Bob Rezza, Ella May Russell, Elizabeth Schaeffer, Sheriff Tim Cameron, Buffy Giddens

Other attendees: Ashley Croyle, Dawn Wilier, Kristan Thomas

Absent: Bella Wright, Rona Harding, Lanny Lancaster, Nancy Luginbill, Sue Sabo, Judge Greg Wells, Heather Bauer, Sarah Gray

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kathy O'Brien at 5:02 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Kathy O'Brien requested Council approval of the June 22, 2011 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. Council voted and meeting minutes were duly approved.

II. Status Reports:

SART report: Dawn Wilier, pediatric practioner, was introduced and reported that a Forensic Nurse Examiner from Calvert County has joined SART and that there are 5 adult practioners and 1 in training. They have been attending the State Safety Coordinating meeting and are trying to change the collection system. SART is involved with the Champs program as well, and the program provides training. Dawn reported that in 2010 there were 12 rape cases with evidence collected, 3 restrictive reportings and 1 acute child case. In 2011 there have been 2 acute child cases and 11 adults. 12yrs of age or younger is considered a child and 13yrs or older is considered adult. The SART team is composed of a BCI detective, Walden Sierra, PAX, Calvert County, Center for Family Advocacy, and CSM representatives.

Child Advocacy: Ella May Russell reported that in June there were 3 sexual abuse cases and 12 physical abuse cases. In July there were 3 sexual abuse cases and 9 physical abuse cases. In August there were 8 sexual abuse cases and 6 physical abuse cases. In September there were 3 sexual abuse cases and 13 physical abuse cases. There has been a continual rise in neglect cases. The number for neglect cases are 15 for June, 22 for July, 17 for August, and 18 for September. Ella May also reported that the Child Advocacy center is moving to a new space which will be in the building across the street from where they are currently located. The state will be paying the rent for the new space as well as renovate it. The new building will have everything that the current center has; it will be exactly the same.

Committee Updates:

Fatality Review Committee:

Sheriff Tim Cameron suggested conducting the case review in November. Dr. Kathy O'Brien suggested conducting the review in December. Sheriff Tim Cameron has discussed with his team of possibly reviewing a suicide domestic violence case this year. Sheriff Tim Cameron will have the decision for the case to be reviewed for the October FVCC meeting. It is at that meeting that the decision will be made as to whether or not the Fatality Review will be conducted at the November meeting or the January meeting.

Case Review Team (CRT)

Laura Joyce reported that the team continues to meet bi-weekly. Ashley Croyle from the Sheriff's Office and Buffy Giddens from the States Attorney's Office are now attending the meetings. They are currently going through a database change at the center so she doesn't have the current numbers. She will provide them at the next FVCC meeting. Although, the numbers seem to be steady.

Other Business:

Laura Joyce informed the council that she has been conducting research regarding mediation in domestic violence cases. She has made contact with approximately 30-35 states to find out whether or not they do mediation in domestic violence cases. When she is conducting her research, she is looking at coalitions, networks, and state offices that handle federal and state money. She has spoken to approximately 1-3

agencies in each state and has conducted internet research for state's policies and procedures, as well as, legal research regarding statutes and laws. Laura has found that 28 states have a clear ban on mediation as it relates to domestic violence and protective orders. 17 states conduct mediation only when protective orders are in place. Most states do not do mediation in domestic violence cases. The majority of states conduct mediation separately for each party. She elaborated stating that each involved party is in separate rooms and the mediator goes back and forth from each room. This is mainly in family law cases. She found that 14 states have no policies and statutes. This information will be in a report for next month's meeting.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien revisited the Mediation Center conducting a presentation to the FVCC. She suggested that maybe having them come out once all the FVCC's research is done. An open discussion was held and it was decided that there will be no Mediation Center presentation and that Dr. O'Brien will direct them to the State's council.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien informed the council that the county has developed new Rules of Order for county boards and commissions. She distributed the new Rules of Order, as well as, the new by-laws for the Family Violence Coordinating Council. She informed the council that the County Attorney did change the by-laws and the new by-laws were reviewed by the council.

The new work plan for the year was discussed. It was suggested that more training be conducted regarding domestic violence. October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and Dr. Kathy O'Brien would like the council to get involved. She explained that it is required by the by-laws that the community have input. Dr. O'Brien also suggested that the October FVCC be modified to have the regular meeting from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM in which each agency on the council present to the community what it is they do and how they are involved in domestic violence. Then from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM each agency will be available to discuss information on an individual basis with the community. Refreshments would be served.

Sheriff Tim Cameron informed the council that on November 29th the Sheriff's Office will attend a training session at the College of Southern Maryland on identifying the aggressor in domestic violence cases. He would like to see some of the FVCC members attend. Sheriff Cameron is hoping to see changes in investigation of these cases after the training is conducted. He also expressed how important it is to get the domestic violence unit housed together in one place. He requested that the FVCC push for the space as well, and that the council write a letter to the Board of County Commissioners requesting that the DV unit be housed in the same space and how important it is. Dr. Kathy O'Brien made a motion to authorize a letter to be written and sent to the Board of County Commissioners. This motion was seconded and moved.

Ella May Russell would like to see training conducted on understanding the damage that domestic violence has on children and not just the physical damage, the emotional and mental damage that it creates. She would like someone to come out to do the training.

Judge Abrams also discussed that she would like to see a change in legislation to remove the ability to get married after domestic violence occurs and charges are filed and before the trial occurs. The ability to do this has prevented the victim to testify against their spouse.

Bob Rezza said the he would like to see a change regarding protective order enforcement. There have been several cases where the applicant of a protective order contacts the respondent to come over or meet up, then the applicant calls the cops and gets the respondent arrested or they get caught together and the respondent gets arrested. He suggested that the applicant be held responsible as well. This initiated further discussion within the FVCC regarding their thoughts on the matter.

It was discussed and agreed upon that the November meeting be moved from the 4th Wednesday of the month to the 5th Wednesday which would be November 30th. There will be no December meeting, and the meetings will resume in January.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien told the FVCC to email any further training suggestions.

V. Next Meeting / Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 26, 2011 at 5:00 pm-Hope Place of Walden, Lexington Park

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Submitted by: Kristan Thomas, Recording Secretary