

FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
April 27, 2011
Room 14, Potomac Building
5:00 P.M.

MEETING MINUTES

Council in Attendance: Krisanne Bentley, Laura Joyce, Dr. Kathy O'Brien, Bob Rezza, Ella May Russell, Judge Karen Abrams, Christina Taylor, John Helldorfer, Sue Sabo, Lanny Lancaster

Other attendees: Heather Bauer (Walden Sierra), Sarah Russell, Sarah Gray, Kristan Thomas

Absent: Sheriff Cameron, Kimberly Gregory, Rona Harding, Kathy Lacer, Judge Greg Wells, Nancy Luginbill, Elizabeth Schaeffer

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kathy O'Brien at 5:04 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Kathy O'Brien requested Council approval of the March 23, 2011 Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded. Council voted and meeting minutes were duly approved.

II. Status Reports:

SART report: Heather Bauer reported that everything is good. She also reported that Dawn Webber is taking over.

Child Advocacy: Laura Joyce reported they had a visit from CHAMP. CHAMP monitors doctors who sexually and physically abuse children. Ella Mae Russell reported that the number of cases for physical abuse is 205 and for sexual abuse it is 105 cases. Ella Mae Russell reported that the numbers are up on neglect cases and generally the cases are in households where there is drug and alcohol abuse. In March 8 children were placed in foster care. Ella Mae Russell also reported that they now have a permanent Directors position. Dr. Kathy O'Brien reported that a grant was received to provide counseling services.

Committee Updates:

Fatality Review Committee:

The Fatality Review Team Annual Report draft was distributed. Sarah Russell described/elaborated on the report. The draft has been approved by the Sheriff's Office but the FVCC has made suggestions for corrections and/or changes to some of the information the report contains.

Case Review Team (CRT)

Laura Joyce reported that 23 cases were reviewed in a month and there were 43 reviewed last quarter. The numbers have increased significantly. There is a trend noted and the cases are really serious cases. Sarah Russell pointed out that once the strangulation law changes to the charges being a felony there will be a dramatic increase in the amount of cases. Lanny Lancaster reported that amount of shelter services provided have not really increased, but the seriousness of the cases has increased.

Other Business:

Christina Taylor reported that she is resigning from her position at the State's Attorney's office to pursue another position at the Prince George's County State's Attorney's Office in the Domestic Violence unit. Sarah Russell also reported that she has accepted another position in the BCI department.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien discussed having guidelines for the Fatality Review Council to protect confidential information during the review. It was suggested to meet as an executive session. Sue Sabo reported that she spoke with George Sparling in the legal department regarding the executive session meetings and he said that it was okay. It was also established that when case specifics will be reviewed the group will be notified ahead of time.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien also discussed a current case she's involved in and suggested that the public needs to be educated of the efforts of the county and the dynamics of domestic violence. She suggested that an

educational video be televised on a public network to educate the public on domestic violence. There needs to be more public awareness on the legal aspects, the abuse cycle, the victimology of domestic violence etc. Maybe have a video to play in doctor's office's waiting rooms and the hospital waiting rooms because they have tv's. Sue Sabo that televising on local channel 95 is a possibility. Sue will contact Amy and maybe she has more contacts for example with MetroCast. Christina Taylor pointed out that the public is the jury in these cases so it is very important that they be educated in the matter. Dr. Kathy O'Brien said that she will talk to Amy about channel 95 and other services and videos. Christina suggested that victims who want the cases dropped must watch the video or go to a seminar before the State's Attorney's Office even considers dropping the charges. Give the victim a form to provide the State's Attorney's Office to show that they took the course. Kathy O'Brien also stated that doing this would provide the opportunity to get an assessment of the victim and circumstances. Christina would like to get the video/program up and running before she leaves.

Sarah Russell informed the council that the Sheriff's Office was provided pocket cards from Southern Maryland Center for Family Advocacy that is a quick reference to the red flags of domestic violence, the services available to victims, etc.

Heather Bauer discussed that they are still having problems mainly with the visiting Judges not granting protective orders and they are usually recommending mediation which is continued trauma for the victims. It was pointed out that there may still be some gaps in communication.

Christina Taylor also suggested that a victim be featured in the video. She knows a victim that wanted to be involved in the FVCC meetings and domestic violence education. She will talk to her and give the information to get involved in FVCC.

Krisanne Bentley reported that the Commission for Women had received another date for a meeting with the BOE. She also informed the council that CSM recently did a play called Don't You Love Me which was a very powerful and moving play regarding healthy relationships. Krisanne received prizes for them to do the play in the schools. It would be a couple hour program during school hours. There are a few hurdles which funding and adding additional work for teachers though, but they are trying to work those details out. She would still like for the FVCC to submit a letter to the BOE supporting the Commission for Women efforts. Krisanne is going to request the use of funds from the banquet from the Commissioners for this program.

Dr. Kathy O'Brien will draft a letter then send to the council for input and/or approval.

V. Next Meeting / Adjournment

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 25, 2011 at 5:00 pm-Potomac Bldg, Room #14

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:00p.m.

Submitted by: Kristan Thomas, Recording Secretary