



## Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 22, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.

**Barbara Jean (BJ) Nelson - Chair**  
SC Crime Victim Services  
Division Office of the Attorney  
General

**Nettie Jacobs**  
SC Department of Probation,  
Parole and Pardon Services

**Lisa Catalanotto**  
SC Commission on  
Prosecution Coordination

**Karin Ho**  
SC Department of Corrections

**Marcia Nobles**  
SC Department of Juvenile Justice

**Veronica Swain Kunz**  
SC Department of Crime Victim  
Ombudsman, Crime Victim  
Services Division, Office of the  
Attorney General

**Salley Foster**  
SC Sheriffs' Association

**Nataki Brown**  
SC Solicitors' Advocate Forum

**Tressa Dixon**  
SC Law Enforcement  
Victim Advocate

**Sara Barber**  
SC Coalition Against Domestic  
Violence and Sexual Assault

**Trisha Allen**  
SC Attorney General's Office

**Joe Corey, Deputy Director**  
SC Department of Crime Victim  
Assistance Grants, Crime Victim  
Services Division, Office of the  
Attorney General

**Chief Sonny Ledda**  
SC Police Chiefs' Association

**Dean Kilpatrick, Ph.D.**  
Medical University of SC

**Laura Hudson**  
SC Victim Assistance Network

**Debbie Curtis, Deputy Director**  
SC Department of Crime Victim  
Compensation, Crime Victim  
Services Division, Office of the  
Attorney General

**Thomas Knapp**  
SC Network of Children's  
Advocacy Centers

**Jada Charley**  
SAFE Homes-Rape Crisis  
Coalition

**Kassy Alia Ray, Ph.D**  
Serve & Connect

**Ginger Dukes, Deputy Director**  
SC Department of Crime Victim  
Services Training, Provider  
Certification and Statistical  
Analysis, Crime Victim Services  
Division, Office of the Attorney  
General

**Ashley Olayinka**  
The Hive Community Circle

**Chief John C. Hicks, Jr.**  
SC Jail Administrators'

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Barbara Jean (BJ) Nelson, Debbie Curtis, Nettie Jacobs, Lisa Catalanotto, Veronica Swain Kunz, Karin Ho, Marcia Nobles, Salley Foster, Nataki Brown, Sara Barber, Trisha Allen, Joe Corey, Dean Kilpatrick, Shannon Geary (Laura Hudson), Thomas Knapp, Jada Charley, Kassy Alia Ray, Ginger Dukes

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tressa Dixon, Chief Sonny Ledda, Ashley Olayinka, Chief John Hicks, Jr.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Steve Yarborough, Patrick Cable, Bonnie Brooks, Sheila Hoffman, Dexter Boyd, Mignon Lee-Thompson, Natoya Taylor, Eron Schoolcraft, Christina Toler, Tyrone Guyton, Jennifer Aplin, Cyril Belton

### I. Call to Order

Today's meeting was called to order by Director Nelson.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Director Nelson asked the members for any discussion of the minutes from the May 23, 2024 meeting. There was one correction made to the minutes with Dean Kilpatrick stating that the funding has gone from 50 million dollars in **2018**, to the amount expected this year of 12 million dollars. After the correction, the minutes were accepted as prepared and approved by members of the Council.

### III. Business

*Strategic Plan Assessment Update:* Steve Yarborough announced they are nearing the end of this phase of the Strategic Plan. He didn't have the final report from the NCJA on the focus groups. However, he has a preliminary report that he will share with the Council. Steve emphasized that the work group will make recommendations with the Strategic Plan, but with the Council being the owner, the Council can choose to do whatever they want to do with it. Steve said he hopes to have recommendations ready by the November meeting. The Council may make reference to the presentation that was sent to you via email. In the questionnaire, ninety individuals responded they would be willing to participate in a focus group effort. The actual attendance count was 49. One reason for the low attendance was they were only able to offer it one time at one site, during the daytime. He was hoping that more would have been able to attend. Steve did highlight efforts to communicate with the Native American community during these focus groups, specifically with the Chief of the Waccamaw tribe. He had an opportunity to meet with the Chief of the Waccamaw tribe in Aynor, SC for two hours, with that meeting being very successful. Steve also spoke of a meeting he and Debbie had with the Commissioner on Minority Affairs that was a success as well. Steve stated he and Debbie will meet with the Native American Advisory Council next month. During the presentation Kassy indicated that the presentation slides were not visible to the zoom attendees. The presentation was sent to the Council during the meeting. For more details on Steve's presentation of the Preliminary Report, please refer to the attached PowerPoint slides.



# Victim Services Coordinating Council

*Proposed Legislation:* Dexter Boyd made reference to a proposed change of current “Proviso 59.15”, as of July 1 referred to as “Proviso 59.14”, State Victim Assistance Program (SVAP) program. He reminded the Council that this proviso was developed to keep towns and municipalities from hoarding victim assistance funds. He stated that they were having problems with a lot of agencies keeping the funds, not doing anything with them, if they did not have an advocate, they were not even donating to any of the nonprofit organizations. He further stated that the proviso was developed so that if they don’t spend at least 90% of what they collect in a fiscal year and they have over \$25k in their account, they would have to remit some of that money to SVAP. Dexter said they were requesting these changes, because in the current proviso there is no clear definition of who provides oversight of this proviso, and it has no way in it for them to enforce this proviso. Dexter said that they have encountered some difficulty enforcing the current proviso, with one agency asking, “What gives you the authority to enforce this?” Another said, “If we don’t do it what are you going to do about it?” He stated that these were the type of problems they were dealing with until the development of this proviso. Dexter suggested that they can initiate a penalty like they do with formal audits, so that if they don’t comply, they can be penalized. If they don’t comply with that, they can contact the State Treasurer’s office, and it is withheld from their fiscal year probations and eventually it will be sent to the SVAP programs. Dexter solicited the Council for their feedback or suggestions on the recommended changes. Right now, there is a \$1,500 penalty, which is the same penalty with other audits that they perform if the entity does not comply. Thomas Knapp questioned his reasoning for the additional penalty. Dexter said that if the agency doesn’t do what is required by law, they don’t have any recourse. Veronica and BJ suggested that they publish the agency’s name on a noncompliant list on the website. After much discussion with the Council, it was suggested that the fine be a meaningful fine to be recognized, and Trisha responded, not too much that Legislature would not pass it. Karin, suggested that the fine would not be the first recourse of action. The agency would be given a warning, mentored and encouraged, way before the fine is actually administered. Dean questioned about the use of the penalty funds to pay that penalty and if so, that is obviously not a good thing. He was saying that it should be in the proviso, the fine would be used towards victim services. Ginger suggested they reach out to the Municipal Association County Administrators Association and the County Administrators Association. Dexter responded when he communicated with these associations, via an eblast email, he suggested that they be allowed to publish something in their quarterly publication. He says some of them know about the proviso, they just don’t want to comply. It was also suggested to apply a percentage of what the agency may owe as penalty. An error was noted on the document handout. This will be corrected. As a result of further conversation these points will be taken into account with the current proviso. BJ, thanked Dexter and his staff for all of the hard work they do. Considerable discussion was offered.

*Address Confidentiality Program:* BJ Nelson updated the Council that Senate 142 passed with a section being the confidentiality program, which will be coming to the CVS Division. She’s not exactly sure who they will be reporting to at this time. It was an unfunded mandate. She hopes to have positions posted in the next week or so. They hope to hire a Program Coordinator II, and a Program Coordinator I. The Program Coordinator II would go out and meet with all of the service providers, let them know about the program and they would need to develop the program from start. She explained we are one of a few states that have this program. She’s excited about this program and ready to start it.



## IV. Council Member Updates

**Debbie Curtis** announced DCVC Regional Training will be on October 24, 2024 in Aiken at the Aiken County Government Center. The next Regional Training will be in February (venue is yet to be determined). She asked the Council for any suggestions on a venue to have that training. She mentioned concern over a decrease in claims received in DCVC and maybe there was something going on with crimes in the different counties that she didn't know about. She has visited Orangeburg, Charleston, Clemson for deeper understanding of why this may be occurring. Any suggestions from the Council are welcomed. She's wanting to get feedback from the advocates in these counties to see what can be done differently from DCVC. She mentioned that Orangeburg says that there has not been a decrease in crime, Charleston has more stabbings and shootings, just to name a couple of examples. She also mentioned that she learned that there was a gap in servicing the Native American communities in our state. Debbie said that she will be adding this in the conversations as she is communicating with other agencies.

**Thomas Knapp** shared they just completed their second Victim Services Provider training, and it went really well. At the last VSCC meeting he reported they received a foundation and endowment grant for improvement for Children's Advocacy Services across the state and they were going to implement some SC accreditation standards to enhance their national standards. They are working with the Children's Justice Act Task Force, forming an advisory committee, to get professionals that are involved in the child abuse response in SC to come in and provide input. Thomas will be sharing additional details with members via email. On their website there is a pamphlet that describes there will be fifteen different work groups that will meet virtually one to three times depending on the topic. He will send this information out to the Council in hopes that they share with others that may be involved with different victim advocates and other work groups of interests.

**Dean Kilpatrick** shared an update on their Mass Violence Summit held in Pittsburg in July. There were three parts to it. One was the first part which was a full two days; one was a virtual which was partly live and partly filmed and distributed on-line (which was one day); and the third part was a Partner Meeting within the Summit. The Mass Violence Center now has twenty national partners (he named a few). Right before the Partner Meeting happened, there was an assassination attempt about thirty miles from their location which put the entire Department of Justice in a situation. Their scheduled keynote speaker, Governor Shapiro, and another speaker, the second in command of the DOJ, were both unable to attend due to the surrounding emergency. Even with all the disruption, everyone in attendance felt it was a really big success. They had over 1100 people come for the virtual event and stayed for the full day. They are getting final clearance (approval) from OVC to put it online. Once this occurs, Dean will forward the link to members should they be interested in viewing it.

**Ginger Dukes** announced that they are about to conduct their second Basic Core in person class since COVID. The class posted last Thursday and closed it Monday, because they had so many people to apply. They have a waiting list and are referring people to SCADVASA and Chaundra will be conducting a class in December, so if they know anyone to inquire about the Basic Core class these classes are available. Ginger mentioned that this is a very busy season, because people are trying to get their hours in. Currently they have 3,369 active VSP hours and trying to enter in all of those hours is a task for her staff. Ginger said that there are at least two victim advocates that work with the Catawba Tribe that may have taken the Basic Core class through SCCADVASA.



# Victim Services Coordinating Council

**Joe Corey** announced the Public Safety Coordinating Council reviewed and approved 26.2 million. This is spread across 143 awards. 102 of those awards are former VOCA and SAVS projects. Out of those was a cumulative reduction of about 6 million dollars between 2024-2025. Cuts at the low end were about 14% and on the high-end cuts were about an average of 21% and that's the bad news. After attending a conference in New Orleans, he learned that there was one big deposit that was being hung up in litigation and he doesn't know how much of that would go into the crime victim funds for 2025. The proposed budget the president released would bring the cap back up to the 2023 levels. Joe did say that they will be asking for more state funding. BJ mentioned they may have to ask for 20 million. Joe added that grants are currently funding about 727 positions across the state, with 663 funded from VOCA/SAVS, and agencies are making their adjustments now based upon these cuts. We don't have a final number yet on funded personnel for 2024-25, but a good estimate would be to take the 663 staff funded through VOCA/SAVS and reduce it by the average cut of 21%. Ultimately though, the final number is contingent upon how the agencies choose to structure their budgets. Dean did mention one of the reasons why the claims may be low is because of a low number of advocates. Secondly, Dean discussed the need for the state to now set up to the plate.

**Shannon Geary** mentioned that their FNE Team has made their second law enforcement agency safe designation. She announced that VRW is scheduled for March 24, 2025. She mentioned that they will provide virtual training that week and in-person training the following week. They will be having their first committee meeting next week and they are also having a Crime Victim Focus Group for VRW that evening. This meeting will have about 20-25 of their survivors to attend to gather and share information with them. They are involved in Orangeburg Basic Core in December. She asked the Council if they know of anyone that is interested in participating, they may sign up using Shannon as a contact via email. She also mentioned that Nicole is spending a lot of money in the emergency fund, because of the increase of costs with what they need.

**Trisha Allen** announced that their VAWA program has the silent witness on October 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00am on the back side of the State House, as always. She invited everyone to attend or even volunteer if you desire. She said that you may find all of the information concerning this event on the website. She announced her office was approved by a prosecution unit to assist Solicitor Offices with case backlogs.

**Kassy Alia Ray** announced they are offering free online language courses for up to ten first responders in Richland and Lexington Counties and that will include Victim Advocates. She mentioned that they are working with Richland County Sheriff's Department, they already have a 24/7 phone line where victims that need assistance that don't speak English. Richland County wanted to transfer it to a zoom account, so they are measuring what type of calls are coming in and understanding more of the process that's behind it. She wants it to be informative for other departments throughout the state. She also mentioned their Compassionate Acts Program that's intended for law enforcement partners and victim advocates may use it as well that are requesting support with emergency services. She wanted to remind the Council that they are not a direct service provider. Kassy announced they are preparing for their statewide annual Greg's Groceries Packing event on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Jan Nobles** wanted to thank everybody for the presentation that was given on Strategic Planning. Highlighted efforts of training opportunities for more advanced victim advocates. Jan mentioned a training that she attended in Pheonix, AR for two weeks, part virtual, part in-person, that was suggested



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by Karin. One of the best trainings of her career. She stated Nataki previously mentioned a subcommittee looking at statutes, they are rather old. She wanted to know if that is a possibility for review or at least discussion, because they were written a long time ago. Nataki strongly agreed with Jan about the discussion concerning the statutes.

**Karin Ho** mentioned their partnership with NAVAC (National Association Victim Assistance in Corrections) and NIC (National Institute for Corrections) who have totally funded and supported the victim offender dialog program. It's a very powerful training. Karin shared they have a Basic Training with facilitating victim/offender dialog and have also developed an advanced course on sexual assault cases specifically. Next year they will have two trainings, one basic and one advanced. She said being able to support survivors who want to meet with their offenders involved in their cases requires this type of intense training. She also mentioned that SCDC is always willing to mentor and help newly trained facilitators go through the process. Karin expressed OVC has supported updating the impact of crime curriculum, as she has mentioned in previous meetings, and it is still going on. She says that the process is long, because they want to do it right. They are adding in different topics such as human trafficking and cyber-crimes. They will be looking at survivors across the nation to be willing to participate and possibly be recorded, virtually, no travel involved. She asked the Council if they are familiar with anyone who is a speaker about their experience of being a victim of crime and would like to participate and they may be good in this particular area to please let her know. Karin mentioned in their youthful offender area, Sharon Gaddist, in their office, coordinates all of the victim notifications and input survivors can put into determining when a youthful offender may be released. Victims are now able to come in person, they can write letters, share their input with Sharon concerning these offenders.

**Jennifer Aplin** as it relates to looking at the statutes, in October of last year they hired legislative counsel to deal with all of the legislative concerns. They broke up their basic core trainings into three parts this year. They did part one in June; they have a virtual planned for September 20<sup>th</sup> and part three will have the rest on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Sara Barber** shared if people who are looking for core training via recorded webinars for VSP, they can watch them now and earn credit hours. They are still working on their grants and audits. They have two overlapping projects. Sara announced they received a grant from Allstate for survivors of sexual violence to increase their economic situations. Last year they had \$65,000 and spent it all in less than a week, so they are looking for a different way to roll that out. They have just hired a new Housing Coordinator, and they are looking for a Staff Attorney. They also have additional funding for hotels and emergency shelters.

**Nettie Jacobs** shared that she was appreciative of the receipt of information the different council members shared and she was saddened to know that the nonprofit partners are suffering.

**Veronica Swain-Kunz** added that although non-profits are taking a big part of cuts, she was recently speaking with someone in a Solicitor's Office who had shared that they have incurred a 40% cut of their funds. This kind of feeds into what CVO does as last year they had 643 cases (a 39% increase in caseloads), and this year we have an increase of 45% increase in caseload. That's 858 individual requests for help from people across the board in which 88 of those came from victim service providers who were brand new. Turnover always leads to confusion, and we've had a lot of turnovers in our upper echelon law enforcement and leaders in the community and it all kind of trickles down. Veronica gave examples. Veronica announced they have hired a new employee and introduced Eron Schoolcraft who came from



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Arizona. Eron has a long-standing history as a LEVA. Eron also served with a child protection agency when she was in Michigan. Veronica shared they went to a NOVA conference recently where they learned of a new tool that was developed by OVC. It measures outcomes – it's an outcome measuring tool. She distributed information about it to the members. Any agency can use this to develop their own tool and it's free.

**Nataki Brown** concurred with Jan Nobles concerning the needed updates of the statutes. She expressed a deep compassion on this subject. She mentioned the Solicitor's Conference in October, their basic training in December.

**V. Next Meeting Date:**

Thursday, November 21, 2024

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**VI. Adjournment:** Director Nelson moved for adjournment. Council members seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.