

**MICHIGAN DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE
PREVENTION AND TREATMENT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2021**

***** Approved *****

Members Present:

F/Lt. Yvonne Brantley, Acting Chair
Hon. Thomas Cameron
Elizabeth Pollard Hines
Hon. Melissa Lopez Pope
Matt Wiese

Members Absent with Notice:

Hon. Amy Ronayne Krause, Chair
Sue Snyder

Staff Present:

Jess Averill
Michael Bobbitt, Board Secretary
Debi Cain, Executive Director
Gail Krieger
Karen Porter
Angela Povilaitis
Lore Rogers

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Y. Brantley, as Acting Chair, convened the March 12, 2021 Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board Zoom meeting at 1:32 p.m. She provided an overview of the Michigan Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention and Treatment Board and explained how the remote Zoom meeting would proceed.

BOARD CONSENT

Review of March 12, 2021 agenda and approval of February 12, 2021 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Moved by M. Wiese to approve the March 12, 2021 agenda. Motion seconded by T. Cameron. Motion carried.

MOTION: Moved by M. Pope to approve the February 12, 2021 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by E. Hines. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no Chair report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – GENERAL OVERVIEW OF WORK TO DATE

D. Cain reported that all MDHHS funds from the Department of Justice are being reviewed as part of a routine financial audit including funds administered by DVS/MDSVPTB. Staff is working with applicable DHHS offices to finalize this process.

G. Krieger is preparing a grant application for continued funding from the Office on Violence Against Women Improving Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, Stalking and Dating Violence grant program. This is funding that supports the Attorney General's Office Cold Case Unit.

The MDSVPTB Board is responsible for the Child Advocacy Center fund which provides funding for Child Advocacy Centers throughout Michigan. The legislation that establishes the fund requires that an annual audit must be completed and submitted to the Governor and the Senate and House Majority and Minority Leaders. The audit of FY 20 funds has been completed and the required report has been submitted.

D. Cain said the amount of dollars is declining precipitously and there will not be enough money to fund them at the current level next year without taking other actions.

MOTION: Moved by T. Cameron that Board members have reviewed and accepted the Child Advocacy Center audit report. Motion seconded by M. Pope. Motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

A. Povilaitis provided a legislative analysis of HB 4228, which is part of the child marriage package that also includes HB 4226, 4427 and 4429. They Board already had prior positions on previously introduced but bill identical to HB 4226, 4227 and 4429. HB 4228 would amend MCL 722.4e and prohibit emancipated minors from entering into marriage contracts. A minor who is at least 16 years old can petition the court to become an emancipated minor. Currently emancipated minors may enter into marriage contracts, as well as other types of contracts, just as other adults are able to do. Some supporters of HB 4228 believe there should be a bright line rule that no one under 18 should ever be allowed to marry and that by excluding emancipated minors (who must be 16 or 17 to be eligible for emancipation) from the right to enter into a marriage contract, a loophole is closed. Their concerns are that minors might be coerced into pursuing emancipation in order to enter into a marriage contract. Those in opposition to the bill argue that emancipated minors should be allowed to enter into the same legal contracts as any other 18-year-old would be allowed and that a minor must meet a very high burden in order to be emancipated by a court. The Board remains in support of HB 4226, 4227, and 4229, based off of the positions taken in February 2020 to similar legislation.

MOTION: Moved by M. Wiese to remain neutral on HB 4228. Motion seconded by T. Cameron. Motion carried.

A. Povilaitis discussed a February 4, 2021 memo regarding potential criminal justice reform of the Michigan's truth in sentencing laws. In Michigan, maximum prison terms are set by statute and minimum terms by the Michigan Sentencing Guidelines, which allow a judge to determine the minimum sentence term. Michigan truth in sentencing laws apply to crimes committed on or after December 15, 1998 and require an offender to serve their entire minimum sentence before becoming eligible for parole.

Truth in sentencing is an inherent victim protection that allows victims to have meaningful plea discussions which provide certainty in the length of minimum prison sentences. The retroactive elimination of minimum mandatory sentences could result in a large number of offenders being released back into the community. Any criminal justice reform which does away with truth in sentencing would betray the trust of victims who relied on the certainty of minimum sentences.

J. Averill discussed Senate and House bills of interest to the Board's constituency that had been introduced since the February 12, 2021 Board meeting.

MOTION: Moved by M. Pope that Board members acknowledged they had an opportunity to review House and Senate bills of interest to the Board's constituency that had been introduced since the February 12, 2021 meeting. Motion seconded by T. Cameron. Motion carried.

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

No Board announcements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Pollock from the American Association of University Women of Michigan stated she was in attendance.

Stephanie Beyersdorf from State Court Administrative Office said Board members can contact her for information such as what she shared with A. Povilaitis.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by M. Wiese to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by T. Cameron. Motion carried. The meeting ended at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Michael Bobbitt
Board Secretary