

CRIME VICTIM SERVICES COMMISSION

Meeting – March 31, 2025

MINUTES

*****Approved*****

Commission Members Present:

Thomas Clement
Jeffrey S. Getting
Karen Gray Sheffield
Dr. Tolulope Sonuyi

Commission Members Absent with Notice:

Cpl. Robin Hornbuckle

Staff Members Present:

Jess Averill, Policy Analyst
Shalonna Banks, Crime Victims Compensation Director
Michael Bobbitt, Departmental Analyst
Molly Collins - Law Student Assistant
Robin Douthard, Compensation Claims Analyst
Alexandra Engen, Compensation Claims Analyst
Gail Krieger, Director of Operations
Aaron, Levin, Assistant Attorney General
Catherine Michael, Compensation Claims Analyst (Teams)
Angela Povilaitis, Staff Attorney (Teams)
Nicole Quinn, SAFE Response Analyst (Teams)
Rob Spada, Staff Attorney
Bethany Talaske, Compensation Navigator (Teams)
Krystan Tharpe, Compensation Navigator (Teams)
Alicia VanEyck, Compensation Claims Analyst (Teams)

Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Karen Gray Sheffield, Chairperson, called the Crime Victim Services Commission meeting to order at 12:34 on March 31, 2025, in the Dempsey Room at the Grand Tower Building, 235 S. Grand Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933.

Chair Report

Ms. Karen Gray Sheffield said it is great to see everyone and that it had been a while since the Commission last met. She said there would be lots of updates from staff today on the great progress and happenings with victim compensation.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Mr. Clement made a motion, supported by Mr. Getting to approve the March 31, 2025, meeting agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes

Mr. Getting made a motion, supported by Mr. Clement to approve the November 18, 2024, open meeting minutes as written. Motion carried.

Staff Report

Ms. Banks, Director of Crime Victims Compensation and Crime Victims' Rights announced that Gail Krieger has been promoted to Director of the Division of Victim Services. Ms. Krieger brings a wealth of legal knowledge and a brilliant vision to move the Division of Victim Services into servicing underserved populations in a respectful and victim centered way. Ms. Krieger said she is excited to take on the role of Director because the Division has such a great team of people that work incredibly hard and have such a depth of experience. There have been a lot of opportunities to tighten up policies and procedures to keep in line with the statute and the changes that have been made.

Ms. Banks said Ms. Michael will be tasked with heading up the training department, with all the new trainings and initiatives. Ms. Michael is also responsible for onboarding new employees. Ms. VanEyck has been tasked with taking the lead on the policy and procedure changes for the Crime Victims Compensation program. Ms. VanEyck has been instrumental in developing new procedures that ensure alignment with the amended statute. Ms. Kemp is a new program assistant who is tasked with doing some of the administrative duties of the program. Currently she is responsible for entering all the new claims.

Ms. Banks said a letter was included in the packet that was sent to the former Director of OVC, Kristina Rose, on the Commission's behalf regarding a request for AEAP funding for the mass violence event that happened in July in Detroit. Staff have not heard anything back from OVC regarding the letter.

Krystan Tharpe is the new Navigator in the Detroit region and is responsible for Wayne, Oakland and Macomb Counties. All the Navigators have been fully trained and are working in their respective regions. Mary Selby will also be assigned to work with tribal populations. Over 350 separate victim contacts have been serviced since the inception of the program in October. That includes new applications, document retrieval support, resource gathering and distribution and general support for victims throughout the state.

A contract has been signed and there is a vendor for the claims management program. Work will start on April 14th. Blue Vector was chosen, which is a subsidiary of Google.

Mr. Spada updated the Commission on the AEAP grants. The Oxford AEAP grant is winding down, and there will still be a virtual option for anyone who still needs victim assistance. He said they are still working closely with the AEAP Training & Technical Assistance Centers (TTAC) team on the budgets for MSU and Rochester Hills. Resiliency centers were opened in Rochester Hills and near MSU campus. Work is continuing to get finalized budgets.

Ms. Krieger spoke about the Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission 2024 Annual Report. The report gives a nice overview of where resources have been invested. There were \$8 million in claims distributed last year. This more than doubles the amount of money distributed in previous years for compensation under the new statute.

Motion: Mr. Getting made a motion, supported by Mr. Clement to approve the Michigan Crime Victim Services Commission 2024 Annual Report and relay any edits by the end of the week. Motion carried.

Ms. Krieger provided a funding update. With the considerable decrease to both VOCA funding and decrease to the fines and fees assessed that comprise the Crime Victims' Rights Fund, Governor Whitmer and the Legislature created a \$30 million budget request to backfill both of those funds. This funding continues to decrease, and \$20 million will be needed to keep services at a current sustainable level. Governor Whitmer has asked for an additional \$20 million in funds (\$50 million total) to fill both of those gaps. It will not be known what funding the state will provide until the budget **is** passed. Within the next few months there should be a better idea of whether funding will be available when the Senate and House budget comes out. If funding is not allocated, it will be very difficult for our grantee.

DVS staff are looking at all areas to ensure that outstanding assessment dollars, unclaimed restitution, and any other funds that are owed to the Division are received, including from the courts. Staff will continue to update the Commission on these matters.

Ms. Banks provided some outreach updates. She said her and Mr. Spada were both at the PAAM new advocate basic training. There are 33 Victim Advocates who started their new roles in January 2025. The Compensation team and the Victims' Rights team both presented.

Ms. Banks has been attending a collaborative working group in the Lansing area regarding community violence and gun violence intervention. It is called Lansing 360, and it is made up of the Chief of Police of Lansing, the Ingham County sheriff, the Ingham County Prosecutor's office, the Lansing City Council, local Representatives, the Judges of the 54-A District Court, and community advocates. The Chief of Police of Lansing, the Ingham County Sheriff and community advocates are incorporating compensation into their response. When there is a crime that includes qualifying injuries, the Chief of Police has made it mandatory for his staff to distribute information about Crime Victims Compensation. The Navigator for Ingham County has been attending and training the Ingham County Sheriff's office for the last week and a half. Excellent feedback has been received.

Ms. Averill and Ms. Banks both serve on the Governor's Gun Violence Prevention Task Force subcommittee for the Community Violence Intervention. One recommendation that they have made to the group was to incorporate some kind of assistance for mass gun violence incidents in urban areas through AEAP, the same issue the Commissioners have raised with OVC.

A draft copy of the proposed CVSC rules changes to comply with the statute was shared with statewide partners including Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM), Attorney General, The Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, Uniting Three Fires Against Violence, and the Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ). ASJ sent feedback and recommendations. After staff discussed these recommendations, they asked AAG Bennett to review ASJ's recommendations. Ms. Bennett drafted a memo which is protected by attorney/client privilege and is division-level advice and is not the opinion of the Attorney General. To preserve privilege, the Commission decided to go into closed session before discussing the memo.

Motion: Mr. Clement made a motion, supported by Mr. Getting to go into closed session. Motion carried.

Motion: Mr. Getting made a motion, supported by Mr. Clement to go into open session. Motion carried.

Motion: Mr. Clement made a motion, supported by Mr. Getting for final Commission approval of draft rules and to further this document to the rules making process. Motion carried

Legislative Updates:

Ms. Averill said we are in a new legislative year. The last time the Commission met, a bill was brought to them that dealt with temporary pet boarding costs. At that time the Board opposed the bill and recommended making changes. The ASPCA was the proponent of this bill, and they have accepted the Commissioners language in their draft which they plan to introduce soon. Staff has seen the new draft which includes the Commission's recommendations.

There is a package of bills creating a Public Safety and Violence Prevention fund. The Commission was not asked for a position on the bills but just for a general statement that the Commission appreciates that some of the funding is planned to go to the Crime Victims' Rights fund. Those bills were re-introduced this year as HB 4260-4261. The bills are a little different, but there is still 2% allocated to the Crime Victims' Rights Fund (of the first \$75million) which would generate around \$2 million according to their projections. There is another 2% going to MDHHS to create grants for Community Violence Intervention (CVI) programs, which will probably be about \$2 million as well. The rest of the money is to go to local law enforcement agencies. The bills are bipartisan and have gone to the Government Operations Committee in the House.

Crime Victim Rights Week is April 6-12, and some events were included in the Commission packets.

- Capitol Vigil: April 2, 6:00, Library of Michigan
- Survivor/Victim Walk: April 6th, 10:00, Belle Isle Park
- Community Event and Resource Fair: April 11, Noon, Criminal Justice Center

New Business:

None.

Unfinished Business:

None.

Commission Member Report:

None.

Adjournment

Motion from Mr. Getting and seconded by Mr. Clement to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Bobbitt