

V. R. E. A. C

Victims' Rights Enforcement Advisory Commission

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015

1ST Floor Training Center, Chief State's Attorney's Office

300 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill, CT

2:00 – 4:00p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions --- Call to Order 2:05 pm

Members Present: Natasha M. Pierre, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Esq. (in place for Susan O. Storey, Esq.), Kevin T. Kane, Esq., Andrew Woods, Hon. Elliot Solomon (in place for Hon. Patrick L. Carroll, III), Linda J. Cimino, Karen Martucci (in place for Scott Semple), Janice Heggie Margolis, Jillian Knox, Jessica Pizzano, Bethany Phillips, Esq., Scott Devico (in place for Dora B. Schriro), Laura Cordes, Ana Gonzalez, and Mario T. Gaboury, Esq.

Also in Attendance were Merit Lajoie, Hakima Bey-Coon, Esq., and Valina Carpenter

Members Absent: Dawn Luddy, Karen Jarmoc, Carleton J. Giles, Anne Mahoney, Esq., and James C. Rovella

2. Discuss & Finalize Progress Report

Judge Solomon had questions concerning the Post-Conviction/Violation Status Subcommittee's recommendation that the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch review its policies and procedures for providing victim notification when a probation officer decides to violate a person's probation or when a person's probation is scheduled to terminate early and to make improvements as necessary to ensure timely notification to victims. Members of the subcommittee responded that while the Court Support Services Division has a formal victim notification process for early termination probation cases, CSSD did not currently have a formal victim notification process for violation of probation cases. The VREAC members were all in favor of submitting the Progress Report to the Governor as written.

3. Other Business

Linda J. Cimino questioned whether members would have an opportunity to discuss other issues at future VREAC meetings. Natasha M. Pierre responded she would disseminate a list of the remaining issues to the membership and that members could add other issues of concern to the list. Natasha M. Pierre also made suggestions with how the VREAC can

operate going forward in the event that the Governor granted her request for a six month extension for the VREAC to continue its work. Some ideas mentioned were meeting twice a month, relying on E-mail communications in-between meetings and continuing the work of the three subcommittees. Deborah Del Prete Sullivan expressed the challenges with meeting more frequently especially during the legislative season.

Andrew Woods questioned whether the VREAC would be amenable to supporting legislative initiatives of other members. Deborah Del Prete Sullivan responded that it may not be appropriate for the VREAC as a whole to support other members' legislative initiatives but that it is appropriate for individual members to support legislative initiatives. Merit Lajoie suggested that perhaps at each VREAC meeting we can have a legislative update section on the agenda so that VREAC members can discuss and learn about other legislative initiatives and support those where there is an interest.

Andrew Woods informed the Commission about his legislative initiative for a CT Statewide Urban Violence Task Force similar to New Jersey's model as it relates to challenges that victims face when dealing with violence in urban communities. In response to questions from Natasha M. Pierre, Mr. Woods stated that he would prepare a write up of this legislative initiative so that it could be distributed to the VREAC membership.

Natasha M. Pierre informed the Commission that a VREAC membership designee form will be disseminated to the membership so that members will have the option of selecting designees to participate with the VREAC on their behalf. The designee will be authorized to vote on the member's behalf.

4. Public Comment

The Commission heard comment from Ms. Bridget Prince. Ms. Prince wanted to update the Commission on the progress of the criminal case wherein she is a victim of a serious assault. Ms. Prince thanked the OVA, OVS, the State's Attorney's Office, the Hartford Police Department and VREAC members for their support and assistance to her. Since her first appearance before the VREAC at its Hartford Public Hearing on October 27, 2014, the offender has since been arrested and arraigned in Hartford Court. She is happy to report that the criminal justice system can work. Ms. Prince also adds that she listened to the earlier discussion between Judge Solomon and the subcommittee members concerning offenders who violate probation. She expressed that it is not fair when a defendant, who is on probation, is arrested for new criminal charges and is violated on their probation yet they do not have to serve their remaining jail sentence that is still hanging over their heads. She believes that offenders should be held accountable for their actions especially when they commit the same crime for which they were initially sentenced to serve probation.

Janice Heggie Margolis was moved by Ms. Prince's testimony and stated that there is a need to continue holding public hearings to hear from victims. Jessica Norton stated her support for public hearings as well. Linda J. Cimino felt that victims' access to individuals in the field is also important.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.