

Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center Advisory Council

Meeting held on Zoom

October 15, 2020

Minutes

Members Present: Mary Ann Burg, Maddy Coy, Robert Edelman, Rita Lawrence

Members Absent: Commissioner Wheeler

Staff Present: Laura Kalt

Guests: None

There was a quorum

Meeting called to order at 5:32pm

Mary Ann Burg chaired the meeting

Motion to approve the minutes from 9/17/20 meeting: Mary Ann Burg

Seconded: Maddy Coy

New Business:

- I. Members reviewed Alachua County Victim Services & Rape Crisis Center's FY2020-2021 budget
 - a. Laura Kalt discussed an unexpected shortfall in the FY2020-2021 VOCA grant award. This is due to the Florida Office of the Attorney General (OAG) not being able to draw down the total fund amount it requested for financing the grants from around the state for victim service programs. From Laura's understanding, there is sufficient money available in the federal VOCA fund allocated for Florida, but the state's Legislative Budget Commission wouldn't allow the OAG to draw down the full amount requested. Possibly there are concerns that projections for future federal VOCA funding will be reduced, and state's will not receive as much. Laura will continue to update the Council as new information is known. There is a plan for Florida OAG to attempt to request the funding again in the coming months to see if the Budget Commission will allow.
 - i. Members asked if fundraising was an option, but according to Laura Kalt, the Center has strict limits on fundraising, and in most instances cannot fundraise. There can be some exemptions, but the funds raised cannot be for any expenditure that is already being paid for with County funds and employees cannot be able to participate in fundraising, just to name a few of the limitations. She will see if legal office can attend a future meeting to discuss the potential for whether a Community Foundation board would be possible to fund the Center's work?
 - b. A question about the Center's donation fund was asked that Laura Kalt will research: how much has the Center spent annually over the last 5 years?

Staff Report:

- I. Laura Kalt reported on staffing update: Valeria Tirado, Bilingual Victim Advocate Counselor, was hired in September, is going through orientation and is expected to begin direct services soon.
- II. The Center's staff are continuing to provide in-person services at the time of reporting and seeking forensic exam services. Some in-person counseling taking place when the client feels it's needed, but otherwise a telehealth format is being used for counseling and support services.

Sub-Committee Reports:

- I. Sexual Assault Forensic Services Subcommittee
 - a. No new activities to report on
- II. From Report to Court Subcommittee

- a. Maddy and Laura reported on a meeting they attended, along with Dr. Alyssa Zucker, with Brian Kramer and Heather Jones with the State Attorney's Office. The meeting was held to introduce the case analysis project to their office and ask for future opportunities to discuss legal processes/filings which are being reviewed by Maddy and her research team. The meeting was positive with Brian stating that his office would be open to considering pulling data from their internal system based on public records request from the research team as well as offering insight into legal processes and filings. There was some agreement that specific cases could be discussed but might be limited in scope due to confidentiality or filing decisions made by attorneys that are no longer with the office. Additionally, they were open to allowing attorneys who work on sexual violence cases to be interviewed for the purposes of talking about the process and barriers they face, but not specific cases.
 - b. Some discussion of whether engaging the Sheriff's Office now would be worthwhile since Sheriff Darnell will only be in office for a short time longer, or whether waiting until the next Sheriff comes on board would be better. Laura Kalt will ask her counterpart at ACSO to see if they can provide insight into this.
- III. Education/Awareness Subcommittee
- a. Laura reported the Center's current plans based on the meeting with other Centers that the Advisory Council held in August.
 - i. Short-term awareness and prevention goals
 - 1. Present to counselors/teachers with the Alachua Co School Board.
 - a. Cassandra worked with Jennifer Taylor and presented to counselors and social workers with the Alachua Co School Board last week. She will look for options to meet with teachers in the near future.
 - 2. Network with teachers/counselors to better understand what they see being needed to better engage with students on prevention and awareness and to identify opportunities to present information to students
 - 3. Locate funding to hire staff
 - ii. Long-term awareness and prevention goals
 - 1. Train volunteers to take on more active role in presenting awareness and prevention content.
 - 2. Create short videos for counselors/teachers based on what they feel would be most helpful to increase their understanding of sexual violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
 - a. Videos could be made available to medical providers, or even to the public, depending on the content and focus.
 - b. The Child Advocacy Center and Peaceful Paths would be potential partners in this endeavor
 - c. Expand to making videos for parents
 - b. Subcommittee members agreed to hold a meeting Thursday October 29th to discuss researching funding. Laura Kalt will send out the link for Zoom.

Motion to end the meeting: Mary Ann Burg
Seconded: Rita Lawrence

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 19, 2020 @ 5:30pm on Zoom and in-person. Link provided by Laura Kalt before the meeting.