

**COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
AND SEXUAL ASSAULT  
(CDVSA)**

**Host Location:**

State of Alaska Department of Public Safety  
Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault  
150 3rd St., Suite 201  
Juneau, AK 99801

**CDVSA Quarterly Council Board Virtual Meeting  
FY 2021 Quarter 3  
March 30, 2021**

**Tuesday, March 30, 2020**

**Board Members Present:**

Lydia Heyward – Vice Chair  
Jillian Gellings  
Laura Brooks  
John Skidmore  
Angela Garay  
Kelly Howell  
Ryan Turley

**Board Members Absent:**

Niki Tshibaka  
Teresa Lowe

**Staff:**

Diane Casto, Executive Director  
Crystal Bourland  
Kelly Gohl  
Marjorie Hamburger  
Shannen O'Brien  
Meggie Stogner  
MaryBeth Gagnon  
Ann Rausch

**Minutes prepared by:** Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

### **CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL**

Lydia Heyward called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

### **AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Lydia Heyward called for a review of the meeting agenda. Angela Garay **MOVED** to approve the agenda, **SECONDED** by John Skidmore. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

### **CONFLICT INQUIRY**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS AND CDVSA STAFF ATTENDING**

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for brief introductions of the board and staff members. Diane Casto remarked that the only change in board members the Council had since the last meeting is the addition of interim Commissioner Kelly Howell. Kelly introduced herself and gave a brief work history. She noted she has participated in Council meetings in the past in her role with the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jillian Gellings **MOVED** to approve the December 10, 2020 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Laura Brooks. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, January – March 2021**

Diane Casto remarked that 2021 is off to a rough start. It's been an incredibly busy quarter, and even though there is a pandemic, things are continuing to move forward. The Council's overall workload is ramping up because of closing out FY 21 and preparing to begin FY 22.

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the executive director's report contained in the board packet and highlighted the following information:

#### **Staffing/Personnel:**

- The current staffing at CDVSA, combined with the current workload, creates concern about completing the necessary tasks and deadline obligations.
- CDVSA is currently recruiting for a Research Analyst 3, and they are expecting to conclude the second recruitment and interviews by April 12, having an RA3 onboard by April 30.
- CDVSA created and received approval to hire a long-term, non-perm Office Assistant III to offset the temporary loss of Angela Wells, who is currently on family medical leave. They anticipate having this position filled by late April.
- Kelly Gohl has tendered his resignation effective April, and the current UAA practicum student will be leaving at the end of April. CDVSA has been

approached by two MSW practicum students interested in joining CDVSA efforts in the fall.

- The CDVSA team is still working to maintain a safe combination of telework and in-office work, following CDC and DHSS pandemic protocol and safety measures.

Diane Casto took a moment to express CDVSA's appreciation to Kelly Gohl and the work he has done to help shore up the financial area of CDVSA. Board members conveyed their gratitude to Kelly for the progress he made while at CDVSA and the ease with which he presented the Council's financial information.

### **Impact of COVID-19 and CDVSA Response:**

Diane Casto reported that it has been difficult for the subgrantees to find safe and alternative ways to provide critical emergency and support services to domestic and sexual violence victims. She shared that CDVSA's 35 funded agencies have carried on with determination and quiet resolve, and they have continued to have their doors open and services provided.

Diane Casto shared that CDVSA is partnering with the UAA School of Social Work to review and analyze all service data received from the funded programs comparing FY 19 data to FY 20 data. Diane noted that one data point that was significantly striking was the increase in shelter overflow by 1,000 percent (285 overflow nights in FY 19 and 3,316 overflow nights in FY 20.) In addition to service data, they will analyze other issues related to COVID including staffing, personal protection supplies, testing, and quarantining.

Diane Casto reported that CDVSA's partnership with the DHSS Division of Public Health continues. Dr. Liz Pietralczyk supports and develops processes for shelter and service programs to have ongoing health emergency plans and partnerships with local public health and other health providers. She shared that before the Governor opening up vaccinations for everyone, DV/SA service providers and their residents were categorized as priority critical service providers for vaccines.

Diane Casto reported that they plan to use a portion of the CAREs Act funding to purchase HEPA filters and air systems for needy shelters as well as portable bathrooms for easier access to handwashing and sanitizing services. She noted that other impacts of COVID include changes in how they provide training, hold meetings, and support technical assistance. This past quarter, two traditional spring pieces of training were held virtually instead of in person. While there were a few minor glitches in the new approach's navigation, both events were successful.

### **CDVSA Priority Projects Updates:**

#### CDVSA Sunset Audit

Diane Casto reported that the Council is set to terminate on June 30, 2022. The standard process for state-established councils is that the Division of Legislative Audit is

required to conduct audits of boards, commissions, and agency programs subject to termination under AS 44.66. The audit report, along with other reports and testimony, is considered by the legislature when determining if there is a continuing public need for a board, commission, or program.

The CDVSA Sunset Audit kicked off on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, with the official audit engagement letter being sent to board chair Teresa Lowe and interim DPS Commissioner Kelly Howell. Diane reported that the auditors have met with Teresa Lowe and other board members as well as herself and one CDVSA staff member. CDVSA has received numerous requests for information that staff has been responding to. Once the auditors have completed their review of documents, they will determine their audit methodology for testing to see if the Council is following its policies, procedures, and practices. Diane shared that it is her understanding that the auditors hope to have the collection of materials and the testing portion of the audit completed by the end of May. She noted that the Quarter 3 board meeting agenda sets aside time to discuss the Sunset Audit.

#### CDVSA Language Access Plan (LAP)

Diane Casto reported that they are continuing to assess current written materials, office signage, and website sections where they can begin translation of information to better meet the needs of non or limited English speakers. Their goal is to start small with two to four languages. Another priority is to continue translating a portion of the media/social media messages.

#### CDVSA Five-Year Strategic Plan

Diane Casto reported that staff continues moving forward to create tasks and timelines for each of the five initiatives identified for the Five-Year Strategic Plan. The two initiatives they are making the most progress on are the internal initiative to implement a grants management system and the perpetrator rehabilitation service improvement. She noted that the perpetrator rehabilitation work is beginning to take shape with Crystal Bourland, a practicum student conducting research, collecting information and talking with current programs. CDVSA is involved in creating a workgroup that will lay out a clear direction forward to improve the response and define the outcomes wanted from a perpetrator rehabilitation service.

Diane Casto shared that CDVSA continues its partnership with Professional Growth Systems (PGS) and John Gregoire, the project manager. PGS provides technical support and tracking tools. They are creating a formalized process of tasks, deadlines, reviews, revisions, and continuous focus on the initiatives in the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

#### Alaska Victimization Survey (AVS)

Diane Casto reported that the AVS concluded phone interviews in late November with over 2,100 completed surveys, surpassing its goal of 2,000 completed surveys. Dr. Ingrid Johnson with the UAA Justice Center is reweighting the data for accuracy and

beginning the analysis of the AVS data in the next two weeks. The timeline still indicates that initial data validation and estimates will be available in spring 2021.

#### Perpetrator Rehabilitation Workgroup

Diane Casto reported that CDVSA is making significant progress in creating a Perpetrator Rehabilitation (PR) Workgroup. Invitations were sent to stakeholders and subject matter experts to become a part of the PR Workgroup, and currently they have heard from approximately 18 individuals. Follow-up e-mails will be sent to those individuals who did not respond. They hope to have a workgroup membership of between 20 and 25. CDVSA has procured a contract with Denali Daniels & Associates to facilitate the workgroup. The agreement in its entirety should be signed by March 26<sup>th</sup>. After the meeting with the contractors to lay out the first steps, the initial workgroup virtual meeting will be scheduled. Diane noted that the task had been a long time coming. They feel confident that within the next 12 to 18 months, they will have a new approach and design for the critically important work with perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner violence.

#### VOCA Crime Victim Fund

Diane Casto reported that there had been concerns regarding the decreasing amount of funds being deposited into the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). She explained that the CVF is where funding for the VOCA formula and discretionary grants is generated. She stated that Congress is looking at solutions to improve the stability and sustainability of the CVF in the form of legislation to fix the VOCA deposits problem. The current VOCA Fix Bill has passed the U.S. House and is waiting for Senate action. Diane remarked that CDVSA had been advised that even with the passage of this bill, it will not rectify the lack of funding for the FFY 21 state allocation (projected to be a 34.6 percent reduction), and most likely will not alleviate a similar decrease in FFY 22. The 34.6 percent reduction equals approximately \$1.5 million in the FFY 21 VOCA allocation, and there are limited carry-forward funds in the next few years.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS, OUTREACH, AND MEDIA**

Diane Casto reported that CDVSA solicited a new communications contract last quarter and received two proposals. The winning proposal was from Walsh|Sheppard, the former contractor. With a new contract in place, Walsh|Sheppard is busy with promoting CDVSA's work and critical issues through a comprehensive and ongoing social media presence, an audit of the website and recommendations to improve its usability and access, and identifying new messaging and communications efforts to undertake in the next year.

Diane Casto shared that although it has been delayed for numerous reasons, the staff is beginning to craft the FY 20 Annual Report for distribution by May 2021.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- Proposed timeline remaining for FY 21 Quarterly CDVSA Board Meetings:

- Quarter 4, June 16 or 23, 2021 (Approval of FY 22 grant awards)

John Skidmore expressed appreciation to Diane and the CDVSA staff. He noted that he recognizes the challenges CDVSA has had personnel-wise and noted the staff has been doing an excellent job given the challenges. Kelly Howell echoed what John Skidmore said about CDVSA's work during COVID-19 and personnel challenges. She commented that she is in awe of the amount of work CDVSA does despite challenges.

Laura Brooks remarked that several people from DOC are participating in the workgroup, and they have begun collecting information related to perpetrator rehabilitation. She stated that it is a good opportunity for DOC to do a deep dive coupled with the work of CDVSA, and she feels that it is going to turn out to be one of the most comprehensive reviews of interpersonal violence programming in a very long time. She shared that DOC is looking to expand its programming. The fact that programming is only in three facilities is baffling and likely due to not having confidence in the available curriculum products. She noted that HB 118 is a bill to expand prisoner access to computers. It is a very carefully reviewed process and would be done through a secure platform run by experienced large-scale vendors that would not allow inmates direct access to the internet or allow inmates to contact victims. What it is intended to do is allow expansion of rehabilitative programs. She said that DOC recognizes the need for offender training in a host of reentry issues that increase their ability to move more successfully back into the community. Part of that includes the ability to provide videoconferencing for classes, training, and helping to build infrastructure to allow that.

Angela Garay remarked that she is glad to see the Perpetrator Rehabilitation Workgroup moving forward. The workgroup would address concerns heard from rural communities about offenders returning to the communities. In many cases, they are family members, husbands, or boyfriends, and the families want to see that the issues are addressed.

John Skidmore asked if the board members should expect contact from the auditors. Diane Casto noted that she has limited access to information related to the audit. She understands that once they have established their methodology, they may talk to more board members and staff and ask for more documentation.

### **CDVSA BUDGET REVIEW/FISCAL REPORT SFY 2021 Q.3 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES**

Kelly Gohl directed the members' attention to the financial documents updated March 30, 2021, in the board packet for review. Kelly highlighted the following information:

- Page 1 – Program Budget FY 2021
  - Total budget authority, \$26,729,300
    - State funding authority total, \$12,990,500
    - Federal funding authority, \$13,738,800
  - Total operating budget, not including grants, \$3,825,400

- Total program budget, \$21,809,739
  - Total budgeted obligations, \$25,635,139
- Page 2 – Grants Awarded FY 2021
  - Total grant award authority, \$22,903,900
  - Total awarded to programs, \$21,809,739
- Page 3 – Detailed Sub-Award Plan for FY 2021
  - Total spending plan, \$21,809,739
- Page 4 – Contracts and Services FY 2021
  - Total authority for contracts and services, \$2,428,400
  - Total of contracts and services obligations, \$1,353,384
- Page 5 – FY 2021 Remaining Balances
  - Total remaining balance across all appropriations, \$2,410,983

Diane Casto commented that one reason for the media buy-up was to expand CDVSA's media presence and focus on a more constant and consistent year-round messaging. Up to this point, messaging was focused on the three highlighted months related to Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Month.

John Skidmore and Lydia Heyward expressed their appreciation to Kelly Gohl for his excellent work at CDVSA. They noted that he was instrumental in helping board members understand the financial business of CDVSA. They wished him the best. Diane Casto pointed out that the CDVSA budget is a complicated budget with various specific funding sources. Kelly's ability to produce valuable reports that are clearly defined and understandable was incredibly valuable. Diane shared that Kelly will be missed a great deal.

### **VOCA FUNDING ISSUES FOR FFY 2021 and CONGRESSIONAL VOCA FIX LEGISLATION**

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the document titled *VOCA Fix Act Overview* for review. The overview outlined the basics of VOCA funding, the impact of the changes for VOCA funding, and the proposed solutions to the VOCA funding issues.

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the document titled *Crime Victims Fund Update – Alaska Specific* for review. MaryBeth Gagnon reported that CDVSA has been working in coordination with Alaska's VOCA grant manager, who confirmed that the FFY 21 allocation, which comes out October 1<sup>st</sup>, will have an approximate 34 percent reduction of the last award, which she noted was already diminished. That equates to an approximate \$1.6M reduction. The grants manager confirmed that they are optimistic that the legislation proposed to fix how the CVP is funded will pass, although it would not help for the FFY 21 award receipt. He also advised not to count on it fixing the FFY 22 award. He recommended preparing to operate at an all-time low from the VOCA grants. MaryBeth noted that VOCA is the most significant federal funding stream CDVSA receives.

Diane Casto reported that one other component that impacts the future is that the money held over from year to year will have been used and not available for carryover. One of the issues addressed in the VOCA fix legislation is they might allow a one-year, no-cost extension of those funds.

John Skidmore noted that all 56 state and territorial attorney generals signed a letter sent to Congress in support of trying to get more funds to flow into VOCA. He stated that it was one of the very few letters that received unanimous support. He noted that Congress pays attention when all state attorney generals are saying the same thing. John stated that the troubling part is the speed at which those dollars might become available and how the changes to the formula would impact the available funding.

Diane Casto noted that the crux of the proposed legislation is to make the VOCA fund sustainable and stable. She stated that what it boils down to is that VOCA has been the largest federal grant, and CDVSA is facing a significant decrease in grant awards for FFY 22, which starts in three months. CDVSA staff has been calculating the numbers, and no matter how they look at the funding, the reality is CDVSA is looking at between a 30 to 33 percent cut in victim services grants, which is huge. Diane reported that CDVSA is looking to mitigate the impact by putting a one-year freeze on the match dollars. She asked for a board discussion on how CDVSA moves forward. MaryBeth Gagnon reported that implementing a blanket VOCA match waiver is only being allowed currently because of the pandemic. It is not tied to the reduction in VOCA dollars, and it is not a permanent fix for subsequent years.

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for questions and comments:

**Q:** Staff is evaluating the impact of the reduction. Is it fair to say it would significantly impact the direct care services in the communities?

**A:** Yes, because that is where the VOCA money goes.

**Q:** Are there other grant opportunities that could be pursued that could potentially replace some of the funds?

**A:** Not immediately. There could be down the road. It is not something CDVSA has pursued. Most of the discretionary grants available through DOJ and HSS are more specific to a project than the formula funding that can be used broadly. Not an overall solution. Also have to consider staff availability to pursue/admin other funding.

**Q:** Is this a downward trend CDVSA expects to continue to see?

**A:** Yes. The expectation is that it will continue without a fix. Even with the fix, it's going to take time.

John Skidmore directed the members' attention to the document titled *Subaward Plan for FY 2021*, page 3 of the financial documents contained in the meeting packet. Diane Casto identified the first two columns as VOCA funding. She noted that the reduction would be felt across the board equally. The perpetrator rehabilitation programs will not be affected because a majority of the funding comes from DOC for the specific project, and the prevention funding is also designated GF dollars. Diane



reported that what specific allocation a program gets is decided by CDVSA by the program's application and services provided. John asked if CDVSA has contacted grantees to let them know about the reduction. Diane answered that they have not, that staff felt it was their responsibility to talk to the board before going forward. Angela Garay noted a concern with notice to subgrantees in that delaying the news might deprive them of opportunities for other funding sources.

Mary Beth Gagnon stated that CDVSA could not do anything about the 34.6 percent cut and asked the board to consider a 0 percent match to the GF funding stream. She explained that it would take the 15 percent match requirement for the GF away for the upcoming fiscal year. She noted that at this point, every little bit helps. One of the federal funding streams that CDVSA does not have the authority to change is the FVPSA 20 percent match. Currently, the Council has two subgrantees who receive FVPSA. One option that CDVSA could do is cover the match requirement for those subgrantees, which is allowable. MaryBeth shared that, in essence, if the Council were able to implement all of these things, what they would be able to do is have a 0 percent match requirement for the victim service subgrantees for the upcoming fiscal year. She stated that these actions are above the internal office decision-making, and she would appreciate the board considers having a discussion and possibly a vote.

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for questions and comments on the recommendation of waiving the 15 percent match for all GF funding for FY 22.

**Q:** If we were to do what is proposed, what would that look like budget-wise? Are we still talking about a significant reduction to the programs? If we waive the match, what does that mean for the Council's overall budget?

**A:** It would not affect the numbers for the direct funding that the subgrantees are receiving, so they would still have to take between a 30 to 33 percent cut according to the rough estimates. Waving the match does assist the programs in not having to come up with extra funds delegated towards the matching amount. They could use that funding towards their direct services or discretionary uses, and it does help them not have to have the pressure of coming up with match funding and using their flexible cash to meet the matching funds. The only way it would affect CDVSA's budget minimally is if CDVSA covered the FVPSA match funds for the two subgrantees. The FVPSA match is 20 percent, which equates to roughly \$150,000 that CDVSA would take from its funds to cover that for them so that all of the subgrantees would have a 0 percent match for the next fiscal year that would be paid with GF dollars.

John Skidmore **MOVED** that the Council needs to notify all of the subgrantees about this immediately, **SECONDED** by Angela Garay. During the discussion, Diane Casto noted CDVSA agrees with the motion. John Skidmore made a friendly amendment that the notice is not only to the subgrantees but also to the Alaska Municipal League to be notifying all of the municipalities as well, agreed to by Angela Garay. During the discussion, board members raised concerns about informing subgrantees prematurely, noting that specific amounts are unknown. Diane Casto pointed out that staff intends to

send a notification once the board decisions are made, and specific amounts are defined. A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

John Skidmore **MOVED** to waive the match for general fund dollars for this year (FY 22) in light of both the pandemic and what is known about VOCA, **SECONDED** by Angela Garay. A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

A public testimony period was offered, and a full transcript was prepared.

### **ANDVSA REPORT TO CDVSA**

Carmen Lowry joined the meeting and shared that the Council and Network have had a long history of being in a partnership. With what is predicted to be challenging financial times, she believes that the relationship and past history of working together will continue to serve both entities.

Carmen Lowry stated that ANDVSA is the federally-recognized state coalition and receives formula-based funding from the federal government through FVPSA and the state coalition. ANDVSA currently has 23 member programs. She shared a PowerPoint presentation titled *ANDVSA FY 21 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report, March 2021*, and highlighted the following information:

- ANDVSA's priority areas include:
  - Policy:
    - HB 5, Revising the definition of consent
    - Creating more access points for victim-survivors who have limited English proficiency (LEP)
    - Creating more access for victims/survivors who experience disabilities.
  - Practice: Over 110,000 Alaskans need language access services.
    - Three of the top ten most diverse communities in the U.S. are in Alaska.
    - Diversity stems from the presences of military bases and seasonal labor in fisheries and tourism, which draw immigrants from Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.
    - According to the 2019 Census ACS Survey, 16 percent of Alaskans speak a language other than English at home.
  - Practice: People with disabilities experience greater rates of sexual violence than people without disabilities.
    - From 2010 to 2014, the rate of serious violent crime—rape or sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault—against people with disabilities was more than three times higher than the age-adjusted rate for people without disabilities.
    - 2019 Violence in Alaska Data Resources reports that among adults reporting a disability, 24.3 percent experienced sexual abuse in

childhood. Comparatively, 11.7 percent of adults without a disability reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse.

- The Power of Partnerships:
  - OVW Federal Funding for FY 21 – FY 24 (Grants)
    - Legal Advocacy for Victims (LAV), comprehensive legal services through direct representation
      - Partnership with Alaska Institute for Justice (AIJ) and Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC).
    - Rural Grant – supporting community-based integrated services for DV/SA, mental health, substance abuse:
      - Partners include Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Bering Sea Women's Group in Nome, WISH in Ketchikan, and KWRCC in Kodiak.
    - Improving Criminal Justice Responses (ICJR), through accessible, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed services and processes (ACRTI). Focus on supporting community-based sexual assault responses and expanding access to trained medical experts, and focus on training legal advocates on navigating the criminal justice systems.
    - Working in tandem with AIJ to contact member programs to create language access plans.
      - Partners include AIJ and CDVSA.

Carmen Lowry reported that she is transitioning out as the executive director, and she intends to do a handover in July to a new executive director. In August she will be starting a year-long sabbatical. She assured the board and CDVSA staff that this is something ANDVSA has been working on for two years using available resources through its national TA providers and guidance from the Foraker Group. ANDVSA hired a local navigator to lead the hiring committee to ensure they knew where to publicize to get the kind of person they want. They stipulated that a person had to have worked in Alaska, realizing how important it was with relationships. She noted that the final round of interviews with the top candidates has been scheduled. They believe that by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, they will have someone chosen. Carmen noted that the board decided that the new executive director could be located anywhere in Alaska, although there is an expectation that they would be active with the legislature and different people in Juneau.

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for questions or comments. Lydia expressed the board's appreciation and congratulations to Carmen.

### **SUBGRANTEE ISSUES/REQUESTS**

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the two documents titled *Seaview Community Services Transition Report* and *AWARE Emergency Funding Request* found in the board packet for review.

### **Seward Community Services Request to Transfer CDVSA Grant to Seward Prevention Coalition**

Marjorie Hamburger reported that SeaView Community Services, a behavioral health entity primarily, has been housing DV/SA services for Seward and the surrounding communities. After evaluating their services and capacity, the SeaView board decided to part ways with some of the services that are not strictly behavioral health. They had initially talked about ending the service provision earlier and then realized there was one more year in the grant cycle. That would give them time to look for another entity in the community that could take over the DV/SA service provision. Although they found someone to take over, CDVSA extended the grant to four years, so the break is different from what they intended. Marjorie stated that the Seward Prevention Coalition has agreed to take over the program and provide DV/SA services in the area and transition the whole program from one non-profit entity to another.

Marjorie Hamburger stated that since CDVSA does not have an update for them to apply for an RFP, the ask is not that they will transfer the funds that CDVSA would have given to SeaView, but now instead would provide it to the coalition. Other comments included that the two entities have a relationship and shared stakeholders. The community will not see any outward difference because SeaView will continue to offer space for the program, and the staff will move with the services, so the transfer should be seamless.

Laura Brooks **MOVED** to approve the transfer of the Victim Services Grant from SeaView Community Services to the Seward Prevention Coalition, **SECONDED** by John Skidmore. A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

### **AWARE Request for Emergency Funding**

Marjorie Hamburger reported that the AWARE facility experienced flooding, erosion, and debris flow impacts during a significant storm event in December of 2020. A mudslide on the east side of the Glacier Highway crossed the highway and into the AWARE parking lot, plugging storm drains and causing the parking lot and basement level to flood. Currently, work needs to be done to stabilize the hillside and other things they are still trying to assess. AWARE shared the costs to address the issues and asked the Council whether emergency funds were available to support AWARE. Currently, the support they are looking for is for the initial phase of the project. There are no FEMA funds or city funds for the initial assessment of the damage. She noted that AWARE is requesting \$19,000 in emergency funding from CDVSA to complete Phase 1 of the site stabilization.

Mandy Cole joined the meeting and shared her perspective and photos of the AWARE property damage suffered in the event. She noted that the building sustained minimal flooding and damage, and they could mitigate that quickly. Still, the next piece is essential for both the current safety and future of the facility. She noted that the project would be done in three distinct phases. Phase One is the survey and geotechnical work.

Diane Casto reported that CDVSA has money to fund emergencies through GF. The criteria used asks if it is a critical step that needs to be taken to protect a subgrantee and their facility to ensure there is a continuation of services.

Angela Garay **MOVED** that CDVSA approves the request for emergency funding for AWARE, **SECONDED** by Jillian Gellings. A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED**. (7/0)

### **CDVSA SUNSET AUDIT UPDATE AND OVERVIEW**

Diane Casto added to the information she provided in the executive director report relating to the CDVSA sunset audit. She relayed that CDVSA has provided documentation and information on CDVSA's policies and procedures. Once the auditors complete the collection of the information, they will develop a plan for how they will test the information. Diane shared the good news that following the 2017-18 VOCA review, CDVSA got their policy and procedures in excellent shape and made significant progress in some of the areas from the 2013 audit. CDVSA also had a review at the end of August by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for DOJ, which was an opportunity to ensure the policies and procedures were in good shape. The auditors indicated that data collection and methodology might be complete by the end of May. The next step in the process would be that the audit would go to the legislature. The legislature will review the audit and have hearings about it during the next legislative session. There would be legislation presented to continue or end the Council then.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE AND PRESENTATION OF ACTION STRATEGY PLATFORM**

John Gregoire and Drew Cason with Professional Growth Systems joined the meeting and shared the CDVSA Strategic Plan manual and spent a portion of the presentation reviewing the manual. John stated that the manual is meant to be a large picture overview. It starts with the process overview and captures meetings with the board, staff, and stakeholders, then designing the plan. The last stage is executing or creating the project planning, which is where the Council is now.

John Gregoire led the Council members through a review of the program, highlighting the many features in the online tool. He noted that the plan is broken down by quarters and includes project details for each strategy. Viewers can look at the online portal and see how the program will be managed on a day-to-day basis, the way the team will access and update information, and create their project plans. He shared that the primary landing page is the vision navigation chart, which is a way to look at the strategic plan and see progress.

Diane Casto opened the floor to staff to report on the strategies as follows:

### **Barriers to Access**

MaryBeth Gagnon reported that there had been a delay when the contract with the agency for starting the Language Access Plan expired on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The Council went back out to bid for a new contract, which stalled the LAP project more than anticipated. The Council is working with procurement and hopefully soon can write an RFP and go to bid. She noted that there is an identified Language Access Plan, and the next contract will be for the implementation of the plan. MaryBeth remarked that once there's a contract in place, they are confident it will go smoothly. Diane Casto stated that language access is the starting point on barriers to access, and indeed, there will be other strategies moving forward on how to remove barriers to access.

John Gregoire shared the vision navigation chart feature of how the information is accessible in the program related to barriers to access.

### **Collaboration with Stakeholders**

Marjorie Hamburger reported that she and Meggie Stogner designed a two-pronged approach to the strategic initiative:

1. Gather information on best practices for collaboration
2. Work on understanding what CDVSA does, its capacity, internal roles and responsibilities, and processes CDVSA could offer to a partnership and identify CDVSA's deficiencies and areas lacking capacity.

Marjorie Hamburger stated that the goal for 2021 is to draft a stakeholder needs assessment and prepare to begin working on a needs assessment in 2022. Diane Casto commented that some of the partnerships CDVSA has are ingrained in the work, and they do not think about them in terms of a partnership. Still, it is essential to recognize how to make the existing partnerships more deliberate.

John Gregoire shared the vision navigation chart feature of how the information is accessible in the program related to collaboration with stakeholders.

### **Primary Prevention Programming**

Ann Rausch reviewed the goals set forth for 2021. She explained that funding for primary prevention was initiated under the Parnell administration. Since 2010, there's been research that occurred through various federal initiatives, the first being the DELTA grant through the CDC, all of which indicated shared risk and protective factors.

Ann Rausch reported that one thing they are doing this year is a scan of federal research documents on violence and identifying the common risks among multiple areas of concern. Once that knowledge is acquired, they can begin to leverage resources, organize teams, and work on a particular focus that might positively impact multiple social harms. She noted that by identifying shared risks and protective factors statewide and nationally, they would connect the dots to help make future decisions about how to best think about prevention in the state and where to go as a state in primary prevention.

Ann Rausch reported that with respect to the internal prevention indicators review, there has been consistent funding for primary prevention for the past five years. The majority of the funds designated prevention funds that CDVSA receives are released through an RFP to communities to do community-based work. For the last three years, CDVSA has had the communities track common indicators for prevention to see how change occurs in those communities and how the common indicators that CDVSA is tracking in Alaska align with national data. Ann noted that CDVSA plans to release an RFP once they align the goals for this year and look at best practices occurring nationally and in Alaska and begin to align the RFP with best practices in prevention.

Ann Rausch reported that key partners and grant opportunities have been identified. The Council recognizes that partners need to organize and work together to identify other funding opportunities. She noted that there is a statewide plan called the Pathways Plan. The Pathways Plan is the state directive organized by ANDVSA with their federal DELTA grant. The Council is working to align the Pathways Plan with how CDVSA works in the communities and connects with partners statewide. The Council is also working to identify all the different materials designed and developed for primary prevention specific to domestic and sexual violence and is planning to build an online curriculum specifically for CDVSA grantees. Ann shared that the Council also recognizes that staff turnover is high in Alaska, especially in shelter programming or work related to domestic and sexual violence. Best practices warrant a consistent onboarding process. Training needs to be developed so that those entering into positions in the field will have consistent information about the work occurring in the state.

John Gregoire shared the vision navigation chart feature of how the information is accessible in the program related to primary prevention programming.

### **Perpetrator Rehabilitation**

Crystal Bourland reported that the strategy is about revising and enhancing the approach to perpetrator rehabilitation programs and services. The main strategies are related to the pre-work, such as organizing the workgroup, getting the workgroup convened, getting the facilitator on board, and then the recommendation and stakeholder engagement process. The workgroup will be doing the substance of the work in terms of the goals and objectives.

Diane Casto remarked that the process is going to help staff keep focused. At the end of 12 to 18 months, there will be a new process that people support, and it will include accountability for perpetrators and treatment, healing, and other things to assist them in moving forward in their lives. Diane noted that Crystal had done remarkable research looking at what is available, and she has also been working with the therapeutic courts for the Alaska Court System. There is some interest from them to look at the possibility of a DV therapeutic court. The Council is working with the Center for Court Innovation, and they will be one of the TA providers as the activities move forward.

Laura Brooks expressed her excitement about the progress of the perpetrator rehabilitation goals.

John Gregoire shared the vision navigation chart feature of how the information is accessible in the program related to perpetrator rehabilitation. He noted that the four strategies above are what are considered the outward-facing strategies. The following strategy is an internal strategic goal. The internal improvement selected for this year's cycle is the Grant Management System. Internal improvements tend to be shorter-term, impactful projects that will make it possible to reach the vision in the future.

### **Grants Management System (GMS)**

Diane Casto reported that Shannen O'Brien and Kelly Gohl have been working on the GMS. Kelly shared that CDVSA has a grants management system, GrantVantage. It is compatible with Microsoft, and it can be accessed through Office 365. Currently, the subawards are in the system, but not all reimbursements are up to date. Beginning FY 22, the Council will direct the programs to request reimbursements through GrantVantage and provide training to grantees.

Shannen O'Brien shared that the valuable feature of the GMS is that it is going to be a completely integrated system. In the future, CDVSA grantees will be able to build budgets and participate in performance measurements. There will be space for program staff to provide narratives. The system will be beta tested by six grantees, large and small programs. Diane Casto commented that CDVSA might focus on a data management system as the next internal improvement process in the future.

John Gregoire shared a brief overview of the program for board members to understand what is happening now and how it is managed. He noted that the entire structure of the planning system is meant to real-time change and adjust. All the information about the strategic plan and the activity is embedded in the program. There will be access to historical data once the strategic plan has some time behind it.

John Gregoire noted that there are two principal phases that the board will be engaged in again. At the six-month mark, there's a mid-year course correction. There will be a meeting with the staff and a meeting with the board for a status update and an opportunity to make changes. In the final quarter, when preparations are being made for the next year, there will be an assessment of where the plan is at, where it's going in the next year, and that would also be a time where the board would be engaged. He noted that hopefully over time there will be opportunities to engage board members who want to put time into supporting or being attached to specific strategies. Other than that, the board can request to have reports at particular intervals.

### **QUESTIONS AND CLOSING REMARKS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for board questions and closing remarks. A summary of board comments are as follows:



John Skidmore noted there would be challenges in the fourth quarter, particularly as it comes to financing. He is looking forward to the conversation, and hopefully there are some good ideas between now and then that can be shared with subgrantees.

Board members echoed their appreciation to Diane Casto and the CDVSA staff for their hard work and thoughtfulness about the individuals the Council serves.

Jillian Gellings shared the good news that she is expecting in August.

Lydia Heyward shared that she has decided not to stay retired and has accepted an AmeriCorps position partnering for Native Health and Alaska Legal Services.

### **LEGISLATION – HB 5**

Emily Cohen, an MSW graduate student at UAA, working on consent and improving the state's consent law, joined the meeting and shared a PowerPoint presentation titled *CDVSA House Bill 5*. She highlighted the following information:

What is House Bill 5?

- Among other details, the bill affirmatively defines “consent” as “a freely given, reversible agreement specific to the conduct at issue by a competent person.”
- It closes legal loopholes by criminalizing specific instances like “rape by fraud,” in which a person obtains sex with another person by misrepresenting their identity.
- It establishes that sex between an adult and a minor of ages 13 to 17, who is at least ten years younger than the adult, is predatory and a crime of sexual abuse of a minor.
- It requires law enforcement agencies to process new sexual assault examination kits (also known as “rape kits”) within six months of collection.

Emily Cohen posed the following questions to the board:

- **Q:** What recommendations do you have for promoting the success of House Bill 5?
  - **A:** CDVSA has put together a new series of social media postings for Sexual Assault Awareness Month focused on consent. The Council would be willing to provide copies of the posting that change the attitude about consent and educate young people about a healthy relationship, what consent looks like, and why it is important to give consent.
- **Q:** Do you as a board member have avenues to assist in the distribution of the advocacy toolkit I will create?
  - **A:** Ryan Turley, as the EMS coordinator for the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound, offered to disseminate the advocacy toolkit.
  - The Department of Health and Social Services monitors this issue as it will affect the juvenile offender statutes and recommended looking at youth centers to disseminate toolkits.

- CDVSA staff will make sure it gets sent out to the board members, and perhaps they will be able to assist in distributing it to other people in their network.

### **NEXT BOARD MEETING DATES**

Diane Casto presented the proposed FY 21 Quarter 4 Board Meeting date of either June 16<sup>th</sup> or sometime during the week of June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. After a brief discussion, the board recommended scheduling a meeting for the week of June 21<sup>st</sup>, preferable June 23<sup>rd</sup> or 24<sup>th</sup>. Diane noted that the meeting's focus will be on the approval of the FY 22 grant awards.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Angela Garay **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Laura Brooks. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
& SEXUAL ASSAULT

HOST LOCATION:

State of Alaska Department of Public Safety  
Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault  
150 3rd St., Suite 201  
Juneau, AK 99801

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tuesday, March 30, 2021  
11:45 a.m.

ROUGH DRAFT TRANSCRIPT  
Pages 1 - 21, inclusive

Committee Members Present:

Lydia Heyward, Vice Chair  
Jillian Gellings  
Laura Brooks  
John Skidmore  
Angela Garay  
Kelly Howell  
Ryan Turley

Reported by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 LYDIA HEYWARD: We have a public comment  
3 from Malan Paquette in Anchor Point. Thank you for  
4 coming, Malan. Would you like to begin?

5 MALAN PAQUETTE: Yes. I am Malan  
6 Paquette. I am a life-long Alaskan and advocate. I  
7 am an associate member of the Association of Certified  
8 Fraud Examiners, and I also volunteer for the  
9 Long-Term Care Ombudsmen.

10 I am here representing myself and my own  
11 views and efforts to share some insights I've seen  
12 across public meeting attendance and activity at the  
13 legislature.

14 As an advocate, I just want to say last  
15 Thursday, the Early Childhood Coordinating Council did  
16 a fabulous meeting. They have a ton of new survey  
17 results available. Sounds like we are in a severe  
18 childcare shortage, and I think that these are areas  
19 that impact the topic of domestic violence and sexual  
20 assault. So that's new information that's available.  
21 If you haven't heard about it, please go check it out.

22 Also, today at 1:30, the Alaska  
23 Legislature is taking public testimony regarding  
24 missing under 21 years of age. This is a bill written  
25 by the Governor essentially through the Rules

1 Committee asking for our state to come up to federal  
2 standards in the reporting of missing under the age of  
3 21. Please consider reaching out to them as the lunch  
4 hour is approaching, and you have personal time to  
5 provide personal testimony. If you'd like to write  
6 written testimony, it's shss@alaskaleg.gov. Again,  
7 the committee that's hearing it today at 1:30 is the  
8 Senate Health and Social Services Committee. It was  
9 rescheduled from March 23rd.

10 Again, I'm referring to SB 92, missing  
11 persons under the age of 21. It could really use  
12 advocate support, and this is also unfortunately a  
13 topic that falls under your purview, I believe, as an  
14 advocate. Kind of a shock and awe effect what's going  
15 on with the missing persons is one of the areas that I  
16 focused on.

17 My final comment is that according to  
18 the state's missing persons clearinghouse, there were  
19 92 -- 90-plus missing persons in 2020. And already  
20 here we have -- in March 2021, the missing persons  
21 clearinghouse for this year is showing over 50 people  
22 missing. So these are some dire reference  
23 circumstances, and I really would appreciate public  
24 testimony. Maybe your board could take some time to  
25 provide board support. Due to the research, I've got

1 a simple letter here. If you want, I can read the  
2 closing paragraph from the Governor's office.

3 Looks like -- oh, here it is, the  
4 closing paragraph from the Governor's office: Persons  
5 under the age of 21 who go missing are at an increased  
6 risk of being harmed. It is crucial that reports are  
7 met with urgency. The bill will bring Alaska into  
8 federal compliance and ensure that we are leveraging  
9 state and national databases to bring these young  
10 people home safely.

11 Thanks again for allowing me to do a  
12 quick public comment. I am Malan Paquette. I am in  
13 Anchor Point, Alaska, essentially anti-fraud and  
14 accountability and the missing as my focus, but I do  
15 other stewardship, like I mentioned at the beginning,  
16 and volunteerism. That, again, is not why I'm here,  
17 I'm just wanting to get the word out and these  
18 three -- two or three resources here for you. And if  
19 you wish to provide written comment regarding SB 92,  
20 that's [shss@alaskaleg.gov](mailto:shss@alaskaleg.gov).

21 I'll go ahead and leave the meeting for  
22 the day. I will be joining -- the Police Standards  
23 Council has public comment here shortly.

24 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Ms. Paquette.  
25 Are there any others scheduled, Diane?

1 DIANE CASTO: No. At this point nobody  
2 else has notified me, but there could be other people  
3 online who want to make public comment.

4 And before we do that, even though I  
5 know we're past the time of public comment, I would  
6 like to come back to the concept of a blanket waiver  
7 for one year of our general fund dollar 15 percent  
8 match amount. But I think we should continue with  
9 public comment and see if there are others at this  
10 time that want to public comment since we are in that  
11 time slot.

12 So Lydia, I'll turn it back to you to  
13 ask if there's other people who want to make public  
14 comment.

15 LYDIA HEYWARD: All right. Thank you.  
16 Are there any other individuals interested in making  
17 any comments or questions?

18 DIANE CASTO: So Cheri Smith says she  
19 would like to comment but can't get through. So I  
20 don't know what that means. I will -- I see Cheri on  
21 here. Cheri, can you not hear us? Hmmm. Let me work  
22 with Cheri and if there's others, go ahead.

23 LYDIA HEYWARD: Okay.

24 JOHN SKIDMORE: Lydia, you've got Carmen  
25 Lowry who has a hand raised, I think, for public

1 comment.

2 LYDIA HEYWARD: Okay. Thank you. Hi,  
3 Carmen, would you like to make a comment or a  
4 question?

5 CARMEN LOWRY: Yeah, thank you. And  
6 thank you, John Skidmore, because I forgot, Lydia,  
7 that you couldn't see. I apologize for that.

8 LYDIA HEYWARD: I know.

9 CARMEN LOWRY: Yeah, it's a lot of  
10 learning.

11 I just want to bring up a comment about  
12 some of the -- some of the Rescue Act funds that are  
13 coming out. And, you know, we, being the Network, are  
14 really looking to -- and my name is Carmen Lowry, I'm  
15 the executive director of the Alaska Network on  
16 Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Sorry for not  
17 putting myself -- there's a thing that came up.

18 So one of the things that we are  
19 anticipating, just as we did with the Rescue Act, both  
20 the Council and the Network received funds, you know,  
21 through our formula grant. So the Council gets a  
22 formula grant, the state does, and then the Network  
23 gets one as the statewide -- as the federally  
24 recognized coalition.

25 So it was basically about the same



1 amount, not a lot of money, but together we had about  
2 \$150,000 come in through FVPSA, and so that was for  
3 FVPSA. What I'm hearing from our national partners in  
4 some of the work that we've been involved in from  
5 advocacy is that FVPSA also has allocations through  
6 the Rescue Act. So again, those will be coming out as  
7 formula grants and this year, it looks like there will  
8 be some SASP funds that will be coming out as well.  
9 And again, that is also through DHHS.

10 So the really great thing about the  
11 state of Alaska is that the SASP funds will be coming  
12 in if those are allocated to the Council.

13 So it looks like we're going to have  
14 some monies, not a lot. I would -- I don't know  
15 exactly how much. Like I said, last time it was  
16 \$150,00, maybe \$200,000 to come in that is really  
17 related to the Rescue Act and to relief funding.

18 And when we first got the notification  
19 about the Rescue -- not the Rescue, but the CARES Act,  
20 you know, we sat down and the Network and the Council  
21 got together and we said, "Hey, this is what we're  
22 hearing, this is what we're going to be using money  
23 for."

24 So that is in no way to be seen as a fix  
25 for this VOCA, which is profound, but it does let us

1 know that we're going to have some funds coming in  
2 that we should be able to quickly mobilize and get out  
3 to programs.

4 So I want to thank you all for having  
5 this conversation. And thank you, that is what I  
6 would like to share.

7 DIANE CASTO: Carmen, this is Diane.  
8 May I ask you a question?

9 CARMEN LOWRY: Yes.

10 DIANE CASTO: Have you received  
11 information from FVPSA saying there's going to be  
12 additional money? We haven't.

13 CARMEN LOWRY: No, we have not received  
14 that from FVPSA. This is coming from our national  
15 partners, so NNEDV, the National Network to End  
16 Domestic Violence, helping us to understand what some  
17 of those funds are going to be.

18 So the SASP funds, if we get that,  
19 that's going to be really good. But that's what we  
20 are expecting, and hopefully we'll hear that  
21 information soon.

22 DIANE CASTO: Okay. Well, hopefully.  
23 We'll all stay -- we'll all be standing by.

24 And I just will say that I'm hopeful  
25 that there is going to be some relief money that will

1 be available. I just can't comment on it at this  
2 point, because I just don't have enough information.  
3 So, thank you, Carmen.

4 I believe Cheri Smith maybe just joined  
5 by phone. She was unable to unmute herself. Cheri,  
6 is that you?

7 CHERI SMITH: Yes, it is. Can you hear  
8 me?

9 LYDIA HEYWARD: Yes, I can.

10 CHERI SMITH: Great. Thank you.

11 I appreciate the opportunity to call in.  
12 As some of you -- if you don't know, I'm the executive  
13 director of the Lee Shore Center in Kenai. And I just  
14 wanted to comment just to let you know what the  
15 potential funding cuts, because of the VOCA decrease,  
16 would do to our agency.

17 You know, over the last year with the  
18 pandemic, we have not been able to fundraise. Our  
19 volunteers' ability has all but diminished, of course.  
20 It's been a really frightening year. We've just been  
21 kind of holding on with our teeth, because, you know  
22 we didn't have a lot of those -- the victims that we  
23 had coming to our agency, we had to put up into hotels  
24 in order to, as Diane stated earlier, in order to  
25 ensure social distancing, that type of thing. So

1 we've been bringing people, if they need to come into  
2 the shelter, quarantine them in a hotel first and then  
3 bringing them into the shelter as we have those beds  
4 available.

5 We're still doing that. COVID is still  
6 with us. Those costs for hotels have been above and  
7 beyond what our budgets -- what we had budgeted. We  
8 didn't really have budgeted, we didn't know COVID was  
9 coming up.

10 Our agency would take a huge, huge hit.  
11 That 34 percent, I think right now we're getting just  
12 a little over a million dollars -- I think it's 1.1.  
13 Our victim's service grant portion is about 677-.  
14 VOCA, we have about 290,000 of that. So probably a  
15 good third of our funding comes from VOCA. Again, a  
16 34 percent cut with the last year, how that has gone,  
17 we are probably -- I'm probably looking at probably  
18 having to do away with any type of medical insurances.  
19 I will be losing positions, there's no way around  
20 that.

21 You know, when we -- even -- even with  
22 the match requirement gone, we were one of the  
23 agencies that asked for that reduction and have asked  
24 for that reduction because it's just been kind of  
25 really tight, as you can imagine. Even with that gone

1 away, even if there's no match requirement, if our  
2 ability has not been able to bring money into the  
3 agency because we can't fundraise, we don't have a  
4 backup plan.

5 So I'm just letting you know from our  
6 agency perspective, it will have a huge impact going  
7 forward if we have to experience that 34 percent cut.

8 I really appreciate the opportunity, and  
9 I know that, you know, it's hard times for everybody,  
10 but I wanted you to hear directly from a program. I  
11 appreciate -- I appreciate all of you. Thank you.

12 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Cheri. Is  
13 there anyone else signed in on here for public  
14 comment?

15 DIANE CASTO: I don't see any other  
16 hands raised at this point.

17 LYDIA HEYWARD: Okay. Okay. So there  
18 was still something you wanted to come back to, Diane?

19 DIANE CASTO: Yes. So let me just say  
20 this.

21 First of all, our public comment period  
22 goes 30 minutes. So we do have another 15 minutes of  
23 public comment. But if people are okay with it, since  
24 we don't have anyone immediately waiting, we could go  
25 ahead and continue to conduct business unless someone

1 comes forward and wants to make another comment.

2 The issue that I wanted to bring forward  
3 was the making sure that -- seeing if we could get a  
4 vote that the -- that the board would support us  
5 putting a temporary, one-year hold on general fund  
6 dollar match money, which is currently 15 percent --  
7 well, that's our standard. We have reduced it to five  
8 percent starting in January of this year to alleviate  
9 some of the problems that Cheri just spoke about of --  
10 you know, much of their match is from fundraising and  
11 those kind of things or volunteers coming into the  
12 shelters to provide time. And with social distancing  
13 and with the pandemic, that has just been near  
14 impossible.

15 So I think it would be great if we could  
16 get a vote by the board that they are okay with us  
17 moving in that direction.

18 JOHN SKIDMORE: This is John Skidmore.  
19 I'll move to waive the match for general fund dollars  
20 for this year in light of both the pandemic and what  
21 we're hearing about for VOCA.

22 DIANE CASTO: And when you say "this  
23 year," John, you mean FY 22?

24 JOHN SKIDMORE: Yes. I'm sorry. Diane,  
25 thank you.

1 DIANE CASTO: Okay. No, it's all right.

2 ANGELA GARAY: I'll second.

3 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I'll second.

4 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you. It's been  
5 moved and seconded that the board support a temporary  
6 one-year hold on general fund matches. How do you  
7 vote?

8 DIANE CASTO: So I think there's a  
9 couple of people I can't see. Ryan, are you -- did  
10 you vote yes?

11 RYAN TURLEY: Yes, I voted yes.

12 DIANE CASTO: It's just there's a  
13 little -- little square with 12 people in it with  
14 hands raised, so I don't know who that is, but I don't  
15 see your face, so...

16 RYAN TURLEY: Sure.

17 DIANE CASTO: And okay, I think I got  
18 everyone else.

19 LYDIA HEYWARD: Diane, my vote is yes,  
20 even though I can't raise my hand on the screen.

21 DIANE CASTO: Great. Thank you. Thank  
22 you. Okay. I appreciate that. So we can actually  
23 have a little more conversation after we come back  
24 from lunch, but we do have another person, Rowena from  
25 Valdez would like to give public comment.

1 ROWENA PALOMAR: Good morning, Diane.  
2 Good morning, everybody. My name is Rowena Palomar  
3 and I'm the executive director of Advocates for  
4 Victims here in Valdez.

5 AVV is one of the small programs that  
6 CDVSA is receiving funding from, and the 34 percent  
7 budget cut from VOCA will tremendously affect the  
8 level of services that we provide to Valdez and our 14  
9 communities, which is as big as the state of Ohio.

10 The VOCA funding paid for the salary of  
11 our seven part-time advocates, and knowing that  
12 advocates are always the front liners in providing  
13 services, this would affect us tremendously.

14 Just like what Cheri had said, we were  
15 not able to do our fundraising because of the  
16 pandemic, and our fundraising is one of our main  
17 sources to help us sustain the operation of providing  
18 services.

19 So I really appreciate you guys doing  
20 everything, but this is really going to be a big  
21 impact in Valdez and the people that we serve and AVV.  
22 Thank you.

23 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Rowena.

24 DIANE CASTO: Is there anyone else who  
25 would like to make public comments? I think some



1 people aren't able to get through because they are  
2 sending me -- sending me messages on Teams. But that  
3 was the last one that I had.

4 And, again, I think I would like to also  
5 say that what Cheri and Rowena have said goes for  
6 every -- every grantee that we support with these  
7 funds. And so it is going to be in all of our best  
8 interests to make sure we work together to try to  
9 figure out the best solution.

10 And, you know, I don't know how or what  
11 all of you think. If there are specific things,  
12 additional things that you would like to see us do or  
13 reach out other than what we've talked about, I think  
14 that we would -- we are certainly open to other  
15 suggestions at this time.

16 And we can think about it and, you know,  
17 we'll just keep -- like I say, we hopefully later this  
18 week will have a fairly good idea of what the cuts  
19 might potentially look like, and we'll certainly be  
20 notifying everyone. And hopefully as the time moves  
21 forward, we will know better what the CARES Act might  
22 have to offer and to support, but I don't think we're  
23 going to have anything that's going to be a total fix  
24 and bring back all the funding that is currently  
25 slated to be missing.

1 Any other comments about it, about the  
2 VOCA issue or the funding issue or other things you  
3 would like to see CDVSA pursue at this point in time?

4 So we still have seven -- eight minutes  
5 on public comment period, so if there's -- I don't  
6 know if people have other things they want to talk  
7 about until that time, but we do need to remain online  
8 until the close of public comment.

9 JOHN SKIDMORE: Diane, I don't have any  
10 other questions, but it does appear as though we've  
11 gotten a few other guests that are online. I don't  
12 know if any of them were interested in making a public  
13 comment or not.

14 DIANE CASTO: If anyone is online that  
15 would like to make a public comment, if you could  
16 raise your hand, then we will know and can call on  
17 you.

18 Mandy. Mandy from AWARE, would you like  
19 to make a public comment?

20 MANDY COLE: Thank you, Diane. So my  
21 name is Mandy Cole from AWARE. And what I will say  
22 about this is that, you know, just like the other  
23 executive directors said, the loss would be pretty  
24 devastating to absorb. And I'm wondering if there's  
25 some way to, if it turns out to be as bad as this kind

1 of worst-case-scenario, if we can phase it in? Which  
2 might mean front-loading the first part of the VOCA  
3 (indiscernible) and then phasing the cuts throughout  
4 the rest of the year rather than starting with a  
5 drastic cut in July? Because there is just -- there's  
6 not a lot of time left in this fiscal year to make  
7 plans to handle that amount of a decrement. And so  
8 right now, the top of my heart worry is letting people  
9 go, and I would love to have more time than a couple  
10 of months to make a definitive plan.

11 So I've heard there's been a couple of  
12 ideas for softening the blow a little bit, but my  
13 suggestion would be to try and work with programs that  
14 maybe want to be able to kind of continue funding  
15 positions through maybe the first quarter of FY 22 and  
16 then phasing them out over time just so that we can  
17 give our staff a little bit of time and let attrition,  
18 which is, you know, it's not very high, but it is a  
19 fact of life in direct service work, to take care of  
20 some of this, if that makes sense. I hope you know  
21 what I'm saying. But basically, rather than think of  
22 33 percent reduction starting in July, think of a  
23 smaller reduction starting in July and then another  
24 increasing reduction -- increasing reduction -- in the  
25 following quarters.

1 DIANE CASTO: Thank you, Mandy. This is  
2 Diane. I certainly hear what you are saying. I think  
3 that the best we could do with what we know now, and  
4 again, we don't know, that might change, is that we  
5 could upfront load the advances to start with, but,  
6 you know, if we do the awards with a big award and  
7 then a small award, we would be having to do grant  
8 paperwork through each of those changes.

9 And I'm only talking off the top of my  
10 head, because I haven't thought this through. But I  
11 think what we could do is work out a plan of here's  
12 how much you're going to get for the full year, but we  
13 can front load possibly the money to start with to  
14 allow you to taper off as we go forward. But again,  
15 that's just the top of the -- off the top of my head  
16 thinking.

17 So let us put that into our  
18 conversation, and we will certainly take that into  
19 consideration, because that's a really important  
20 comment about staffing and not having to let people go  
21 so quickly.

22 Did you have anything else, Mandy? I  
23 didn't mean to just jump in.

24 MANDY COLE: No. Thank you, Diane.  
25 Other than, you know, as a VOCA recipient, one of the

1 higher VOCA recipients, obviously this news is pretty  
2 devastating, and -- or potentially devastating, I  
3 guess. We'll save all our devastation for when it  
4 actually happens. But I reserve the right to be  
5 devastated. And we are -- we are concerned.

6           You know, we put a lot of infrastructure  
7 in place in order to operate VOCA funds, you know.  
8 And what I mean by that is that, you know, the VOCA  
9 funds and the administrative burden and the accounting  
10 burden have been substantial in the past couple of  
11 years, and so we've put stuff into place. We put  
12 personnel and practices into place to be able to  
13 operate, you know. And to some extent it was worth  
14 it, because VOCA was a large part of our budget. So  
15 growing our accounting and bookkeeping sections in  
16 order to keep up with the, you know, federal funds and  
17 the federal audit, you know, felt important. But now  
18 those things feel potentially pretty burdensome.

19           And, you know, I just -- I don't know if  
20 I want to just point this out, but I just want to say  
21 that trying to hurry to catch up to the requirement of  
22 VOCA and then to have VOCA reduced so significantly  
23 after we built out our program to accommodate VOCA  
24 feels like a bit of a disproportionate burden for  
25 those of us who have worked pretty hard to get the

1 VOCA stuff straightened out. So...

2 DIANE CASTO: I agree with you, Mandy.  
3 VOCA is one of the bigger amounts of money, but also  
4 with a higher burden level for grantees.

5 But let me just reiterate what I said  
6 earlier, and again, nothing has been fully decided, so  
7 just keep that in mind. Our thinking is that we don't  
8 want to -- I don't know when you came on, Mandy, so I  
9 don't know if you already heard this.

10 But because those who get VOCA and those  
11 who get larger amounts of VOCA, they did not choose to  
12 get VOCA. So we are not going to just cut the budgets  
13 of those who currently receive VOCA. We are going to  
14 take all the money for victim services together and do  
15 an across-the-board cut so that those -- so everyone  
16 gets a equal or equitable amount of reduction. And it  
17 won't just be the burden for those who have been  
18 identified to receive VOCA funding, because that would  
19 not be fair, because again, you did not choose to  
20 receive VOCA. We made that decision based on what  
21 funding -- what funding best met you as an agency and  
22 what could be funded with the funding that you needed.  
23 So it will be a fair -- as fair as possible cut.

24 MANDY COLE: Thank you, Diane. I did  
25 understand that, and I do appreciate that, certainly.

1                   DIANE CASTO: Anything else? Lydia, I  
2 do not see any other hands raised at this time, and we  
3 are at 12:15, so unless there are others that want to  
4 make comment, I think we could end public comment  
5 period and begin the lunch break.

6                   (End of recording)

7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25