

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNCIL
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 7, 2008

MEMBERS ATTENDING

*Mayor Mary Manross, Scottsdale, Chairperson
*Kathy Berzins, City of Tempe
Tony Vidale for John A. Blackburn, Jr., AZ
Criminal Justice Commission
*Dr. Jennifer Casaletto, Maricopa Medical
Center
* Suzanne Cohen, MC Attorney's Office
*Councilmember William Conner, El Mirage
Terri Roza for JoAnn Del-Colle, Phoenix
Family Advocacy Center
+Councilmember Trinity Donovan, Chandler
Laura Guild, DES
Shannon Cotton for Cindy Hallman, Marley
House
Terri Woodmansee for Councilmember Brenda
Holland, Goodyear
Linda Melendez for Dan Hughes, City of
Surprise
*Cmdr. Kim Humphrey, City of Phoenix Police
Department, Vice Chair
Rose Rubio for Lynette Jelinek, Glendale Fire
Department
*Candace Johnson, Prehab of Arizona
Alice Gharieb for Mary Lynn Kasunic, Area
Agency on Aging
*Patricia Klahr, Chrysalis Shelter
Councilmember Phil Lieberman, Glendale
*Jodi Beckley Liggett, AZ Foundation for
Women
Betty Lynch, Representative for City of
Avondale
*JoEllen Lynn, American Express
Allie Bones for Arizona Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

* Maria-Elena Ochoa, Governor's Office
Stephanie Olohan for City of Goodyear
Celeste Adams Janice Parker, Save the Family
Foundation
*Connie Phillips, Sojourner Center
Lynn Potts for John Pombier, City of Mesa
DC Ernest for Kerry Ramella, City of Phoenix
Fire Dept.
*Sandra Renteria, Phoenix Police Department
Tina Solomon, City of Phoenix Prosecutor's
Office
* Judy Tapscott, City of Tempe
Judy Shaw for Judy Shaw, Community Legal
Services

OTHERS PRESENT:

Linda Dickerson, DPS/CVS
DeDe Gaisthea, MAG
Jessye Johnson, Elim House
Kristen Kennedy, City of Glendale
Linda King, Fix the Hurt
Kendra Leiby, ACADV
Teresa Livingston, US Vets
Lindsay Simmons, ACADV
Lynn Timmons, City of Phoenix
Amy St. Peter, MAG
Rena Tenney, MAG

+ Those attending by video/audio conference
* Those not present or represented by proxy

1. Call to Order

Councilmember Phil Lieberman, City of Glendale called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. He welcomed everyone and introductions ensued.

2. Call to the Audience
No comments were made at this time.
3. Approval of the October 4, 2007 Meeting Minutes
Acting Chair Lieberman called for approval of the October 4, 2007 meeting minutes. Betty Lynch, Representative for Avondale, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Tony Vidale, AZ Criminal Justice Commission, seconded the motion; the meeting minutes passed unanimously.
4. Approval of the December 6, 2007 Meeting Minutes
Acting Chair Lieberman called for approval of the December 6, 2007 meeting minutes. Betty Lynch, Representative for Avondale, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Stephanie Olohan, City of Goodyear, seconded the motion; the meeting minutes passed unanimously.
5. Presentation on Arizona's Criminal Justice System and Domestic Violence
Acting Chair Lieberman introduced Bill Hart, Arizona State University Morrison Institute for Public Policy, who presented on the *System Alert: Arizona's Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence* report. Mr. Hart began by explaining the ASU Morrison Institute for Public Policy is a resource institute that covers all aspects of research, including criminal policy and its role surrounding the issue of domestic violence. He thanked the Governor's Office for supporting the report. Members can request full copies of the report by contacting him or the report can be downloaded at www.morrisoninstitute.org.

Mr. Hart said the report resulted from a process that he and Dr. Richard Toon started two years ago. He stated the *System Alert* report was conducted because of the strong response they received from their previous report, *Layers of Meaning: Domestic Violence and Law Enforcement Attitudes in Arizona*. This report explored law enforcement officers' attitudes and outlooks on domestic violence. The research for this report included surveying 777 officers and interviewing 31 officers, including supervisors and domestic violence detectives. Participants answered questions based on how they felt about the domestic violence framework. The purpose of the *System Alert* report was to find out what people in the field thought about this issue. The research for this report included surveying 204 judges, 183 prosecutors, 173 probation officers, 103 victim advocates and 160 domestic violence victims from across the state. One-on-one confidential interviews were also conducted with 16 judges, 14 prosecutors, 10 probation officers, 15 victim advocates and 16 domestic violence victims. These interviews resulted in 3,000 pages of interview transcripts.

Mr. Hart shared a few of the findings from the report. The report states that domestic violence is the second highest reason for 911 calls made to the Phoenix Police Department. Domestic violence cases are mostly misdemeanors with 20 percent of defendants being females. Mr. Hart stated it was found there was much frustration throughout the criminal justice system in regards to repeat cases. Domestic violence often co-occurs with other crimes. All participants agreed that domestic violence is a

crime and should be handled by the criminal justice system. Judges and prosecutors stated the system is working fairly well for domestic violence cases. Criminal justice professionals stated domestic violence defenders should be prosecuted even if the victims don't want to pursue it, and shared that "victim reluctance" is their biggest obstacle.

Mr. Hart shared information gathered from domestic violence victims. He said victims stated working with the criminal justice system was a frightening, baffling and disappointing experience. The victims quickly learned the system considered their cases to be "minor cases". They shared in their experiences with the system they had found police officers unsympathetic, prosecutors taking control from them and judges too lenient. The victims did express their appreciation for advocates who had assisted them through the process.

Mr. Hart provided a list of existing challenges in the criminal justice system. He stated research indicated most domestic violence victims don't use the system, most domestic violence cases entering the system are dismissed, and most domestic violence victims who do use it go away disappointed. It was also reported most offenders in domestic violence cases are sent to treatment programs with unknown value. Critics say the system has a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Additional challenges include complaints about repeat cases, disagreement over how orders of protection are issued and whether they work, limited data provided to judges for sentencing, and the lack of probation supervision for most misdemeanor domestic violence offenders.

Mr. Hart explained many procedural improvements are possible. The report identifies the need for more early services for domestic violence victims and enhanced screening of domestic violence victims and defendants. Improvements include the implementation of probation supervision for offenders receiving misdemeanors and data collection and sharing. Expanding training and consolidating criminal and family court cases are also needed.

Mr. Hart stated the report calls for rethinking an adversarial criminal justice approach that only partially fits victims' and offenders' needs. This process would involve rethinking the "one size fits all" approach to domestic violence cases, the concept of "victim reluctance", and the basic model of justice currently used for domestic violence cases. He also mentioned the varying definitions used to describe domestic violence, and how the system leans toward a definition of physical violence while providers and victims tend to use a broader range of actions such as emotional and financial manipulation sometimes called "coercive control." The wider definition includes types of abuse that are currently not measurable or recognizable in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Hart explained the *System Alert* report provided a tremendous amount of information, but also pointed out areas where additional research is warranted. The Morrison Institute is currently pursuing several options for its next research focus.

These potential areas of focus include further study on the challenges faced by victims in the prosecution process, the effectiveness of offender treatment programs and the reporting process of domestic violence crimes in police department reports. Discussion included comments on challenges with collection and sharing of offender-based data across jurisdictions and through the use of multiple databases.

Mr. Hart shared that Chief Justice McGregor of the Arizona Judicial Council has assigned two committees to take the recommendations laid out in the *System Alert* report and develop responses and/or action plans.

6. Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Acting Chair Lieberman introduced Allie Bones, Executive Director of Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to provide an update on the Coalition's strategic planning process. Ms. Bones thanked the Council for providing the opportunity to share information about recent changes taking place at the Coalition. She announced her new position as the Executive Director of the Coalition and provided information on additional staffing changes. Elizabeth Ditlevson was promoted in October to the position of the Director of Domestic Violence Services and now oversees the Training Department. Trainers include Betty McEntire, Christina Fabian and Leah Porter. Kendra Leiby was promoted to Systems Advocacy Coordinator and works closely with Lindsay Simmons, Systems Advocate. Ms. Leiby and Ms. Simmons have organized the Stop Violence Against Women Day, which will be held at the state legislature next week. The Coalition's Legal Advocacy Hotline will continue and is fully staffed by Merri Tiseth, Aliza Ben Moshe and Rose Mary Verdugo. The Administration Department includes Becky Martin, La Tonia Turner and Jerlene Benavidez. The Coalition will be hiring another full-time administrative person.

Ms. Bones explained that the Coalition has been participating in the INSTEP process with Arizona State University School of Nonprofit Leadership and Management. This process has included conducting member and stakeholder surveys, and a stakeholders meeting where the Coalition gathered great information and came up with an outline for their strategic plan. Topics on this outline include operational/organizational structure, advocacy, education, collaboration and marketing. The new plan will include efforts to improve relationships throughout the community, assess training opportunities, expand collaborative ventures and share the Coalition's role within the domestic violence community.

Ms. Bones added the Coalition is planning to add new members to its Board of Directors. She invited everyone at the meeting to consider submitting an application to join the board. The Coalition will be adding four new members within the next month. She also encouraged everyone to visit their new web site at www.azcadv.org.

7. Update from the Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women

Acting Chair Lieberman introduced Renae Tenney, MAG, to provide a brief update from the Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women in lieu of

Jeremy Arp. Ms. Tenney stated Mr. Arp was unable to attend the meeting and provided brief comments to be shared with the Council. Ms. Tenney explained that the Commission is experiencing a phase of restructuring. The Commission recently selected Vickie Shirley, First Lady of the Navajo Nation, as the new Chair.

8. Legislative Update

Acting Chair Lieberman introduced Kendra Leiby, Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence, to provide a legislative update on domestic violence related items. Ms. Leiby commented that she has been with the Coalition in the Systems Advocacy Department for one year. She shared the Coalition's legislative priorities which began with concerns over the \$1.5 billion budget deficit for FY 2009. The Coalition had hoped to advocate for increases in domestic violence funding. However, in the current budget climate, they have decided to advocate for level funding for the coming year.

Ms. Leiby stated the Coalition's support of several legislative bills. The Coalition supports SB 1432, known as the "friendly parent clause". This bill protects a parent acting in good faith to protect their child from witnessing or experiencing an act of domestic violence or child abuse by keeping them from seeing another parent. This bill stipulates that the parent cannot have this used against them when determining the best interests of the child in custody matters. This bill also states a parent who has committed an act of domestic violence carries the burden of proving that they will not endanger the child.

Ms. Lieby continued her report saying that HB2374 would amend the current domestic violence statute to recognize victims of domestic violence in dating relationships, significant romantic or sexual relationships. Ms. Leiby explained that strangulation/suffocation has also been a top priority of the Coalition for the past two years; however, it has not been passed. The Coalition has introduced HB 2545 to convene a study committee to investigate the prevalence of the crime in Arizona, the practice of law enforcement related to this issue, and the city and county prosecutors' insights into the issue. Ms. Leiby stated comments from legislators requesting tangible numbers on the number of victims lead to this action. She noted a bill the Coalition is opposing is regarding the right to carry a weapon in one's vehicle without a permit.

Ms. Lynch inquired if the study would consider only fatalities by strangulation/suffocation or would also include complaints. Ms. Leiby stated the Coalition will look at the number of complaints and use this data to help fill gaps in the definition. Acting Chair Lieberman commented over 300 domestic violence bills have been moved through the Arizona Legislature so far, which illustrates the great work being done by advocacy efforts for domestic violence issues.

9. Youth Empowerment Project Updates

Acting Chair Lieberman introduced Renae Tenney, MAG, to provide an update on Youth Empowerment Project activities. Ms. Tenney thanked the Governor's Office

for their support of the Youth Empowerment Project. The purpose of this project is to raise awareness of teen dating violence by putting resources directly in the hands of teens. The resources help teens to become educated about this issue and make educated decisions about their dating relationships. Ms. Tenney stated the project includes a public service announcement competition. This year's competition invited junior high and high school students to submit entries in the categories of radio ads and electronic invitation design. The competition ended on December 14, 2007 and resulted in 29 entries. These entries were received from students at the Suns-Diamondbacks Education Academy, Free Arts of Arizona and the Avondale Youth Advisory Council. Ms. Tenney thanked the members of the Council for their assistance in promoting the competition.

Ms. Tenney shared the PSA competition entries were evaluated by a panel of judges on the evening of January 24, 2008. The 24 member panel consisted of youth, youth program staff, public relations professionals, DV professionals and DV survivors. She explained the panel included diverse representation of both the East and West Valley. Ms. Tenney thanked members of the Council who participated on the panel, including Laura Guild, DES, and Katie Hobbs, Sojourner Center.

Ms. Tenney provided plans for the PSA Recognition Event. The event is scheduled for March 5, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. at the Suns-Diamondbacks Education Academy. The top three winners in both categories will be announced and prizes distributed. The program will include Mayor Mary Manross, James Rivas "Manic Hispanic" from MEGA 104.3 and a speaker from notMYkid. Ms. Tenney stated a Save the Date notice has been emailed to Council members and she encouraged them to attend the event. The next steps for this project will include incorporating concepts of the top three winners in a professionally produced product, taking the product out to teens for message testing, and incorporating their feedback. The radio ads will then be distributed to radio stations throughout the region for air time.

Acting Chair Lieberman called for a motion to approve the Youth Empowerment Project activities. Ms. Lynch motioned. Ms. Guild provided the second. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Announcements

Acting Chair Lieberman announced he would share the *System Alert* report with the National League of Cities and Towns at their meeting on March 10, 2008.

Ms. Lynch announced the Peoria Center for the Performing Arts' Black Box Theater will be performing *Extremities*, a play about domestic violence. She asked for assistance in finding counselors to be present at the showings to speak to any audience members who may be affected by the play. She encouraged providers to provide information for placement in the lobby and/or restrooms at the theater. Ms. Lynch asked Council members to consider financial support for the theater as it doesn't receive city funding and performs plays addressing social issues.

Ms. Renae Tenney noted that MAG has seen an increase in email correspondence bouncing back undelivered. This could be caused by increase spam filtering software. She encouraged members to add MAG to their "safe sender list" to prevent this from happening in the future.

Ms. Terri Roza introduced the new Victim Services Manager for Family Advocacy Center. She announced that Take Back the Night will take place at 5:00 p.m. on April 16, 2008 at ASU. This year the event will be joined by the Clothesline Project.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m. The next MAG Regional Domestic Violence Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2008 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the MAG offices.