



## Board Meeting Agenda 10-17-23

**Our Mission:**

Prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

**Our Vision:**

A world free of violence and abuse

- Welcome & Intros- our newest Board Member Stefanie Savory
- Board Development- Legal Responsibilities of our Board
- Executive Team Report Outs
- Committee Report Outs
- Volunteer/Fundraising Opportunities
- Email Addresses & Policy Review
- Board Development Training- Legal Responsibilities of our Board
- Round Table/Open Discussion
- Executive Session



## ***Vera House***

### **Our Mission**

“Prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse”

### **Our Vision**

“A world free of violence and abuse”

## **Legal Responsibilities of Vera House Board of Directors**

### **Fundamental Responsibilities**

The role of the nonprofit board centers on the fundamental responsibilities of providing the organization with sound governance, fiduciary and strategic oversight and direction.

What does the Vera House Board oversee?

- The agency operations
- That public trust is upheld
- Mission driven: Our mission addresses the needs of the community
- That all practices are ethical
- That legal requirements are met.

The board is responsible for assuring the financial integrity and solvency of the organization and establishing procedures to safeguard the organization from fraud and risk.

### **Legal Duties**

Nonprofit corporate law establishes specific standards of conduct for nonprofit board members. These duties are the legal standards which guide all actions taken by the Board of Directors, which includes:

#### **A. Duty of Care—Board of Directors discharge duties in good faith and carried out through:**

- Be familiar with Vera House finances and activities and participate regularly in governance
- Attend all board and committee meetings and actively participate.
- Preparing for all meetings in advance—read prior minutes and current materials; time set aside in every meeting for executive session
- Do not hesitate to make suggestions or corrections
- Board minutes should reflect any dissenting votes
- Ensure Vera House has processes in place for major obligations
- Receive and review all financial statements and critical information, including a comparison of budget to actuals regularly
- Participate in strategic planning
- Ensure Vera House has internal financial controls in place
- Ensure background checks are performed for all potential employees

- Ensure Vera House has Directors/Officers insurance
- Encourage diversity amongst Board members
- Annual review of CEO
- Exercise judgment independently
- Request all information needed to make decision
- Make sure federal, state, and local filings are met annually
- And of course, act in good faith

**B. Duty of Loyalty—board of Directors to act in the best interests of Vera House rather than personal interests. This is carried out through:**

- Must disclose any real or possible conflict of interest.
- Read and understand Vera House COI policy. This is signed annually and kept with Board secretary.
- Disclose all conflict. If conflict arises, simply excuse yourself from voting by leaving the room.
- Never use Vera House information for personal gain
- Maintain all Vera House confidentiality.

**C. Duty of Obedience—Board of Directors ensures vera House complies with applicable laws and regulations, Vera House mission, internal governance and policies. This is carried through:**

- Ensure compliance with all reporting
- Examine all legal and governing documents regularly
- Decision-making is in accordance to mission and law
- Vera House uses its resources to further its mission
- Vera House carries out its purpose and does not engage in unauthorized activities
- Compliance with state and federal laws, including those related to taxes, workers comp and wages
- Vera House provides copies of its Forms 990 to the public
- Enhance Vera House reputation within the community

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Attendees:**

Ebony Pengel	Daquetta Jones
Zachary Bales	Dana Zanders
Dawn Penson	Felicity Hall
Susan Petrosillo	Karen Benenati
Kyle Metzler	
Mitayah Donerlson	
Sapna Kollali	
Nelisha Barron	
Stacy Marris	

**Absent:**

James Branche	Carrie Veley
Dewayne Barkins	Tricia Matthews

The opening of the meeting and introductions was presented by Ebony Pengel.

Motion to call Meeting to order: 1<sup>st</sup> - Zachary Bales – 2<sup>nd</sup> Dawn Penson.

**MINUTES:** Minutes of previous meeting was viewed and approved.

**REPORTS:**

**CEO Report - Daquetta Jones reported as follows:**

- Provided Executive Leadership on how they will be reporting.
- Proposals will be done by Tricia Matthews
- Meetings coming up in person one-on-one.
- North Shelter – almost to open.

## WHAT'S NEW WITH OPERATIONS?

- Proposing restructure in Continuing Education to re-align direct reports, provide cross-training and accountability, and maximize growth opportunities for tenured staff
- Continue to prioritize and fill vacant positions
- Clients still being served timely
- Upcoming County meeting 9/28
  - Finance
  - HR
  - Board
- North Shelter: tidy up loose ends to open
  - Working on list of items that need to be purchased prior to opening
- Agency Mandatory Orientation/Training: October 2023

## WHAT'S NEW WITH HUMAN RESOURCES?

### STAFFING UPDATE

- New Hires/Onboarding:
  - Senior Accountant
  - (2) Advocates
  - Campus Project Coordinator
  - Case Manager
  - PT Care Coordinator
- Internal Moves/Changes:
  - Executive Admin Assistant (from Shelter)
  - Office Coordinator (from Development)
  - Case Manager (from Advocacy)

### WORKING ON

- Agency Orientation training
  - 20 Hours on-site for all staff, volunteers, & board hired after Jan 2020
  - Dates: 10/20, 10/21, 10/28
  - Additional 20 hrs required w/in 1 year
- 30+ Background checks in motion for new hires, volunteers, & interns
- Prep analysis for benefits renewal
- Testing benefit enrollment automated data feeds to carriers
- Finalizing data feeds for 403(b)

# HR PROJECTS IN FLIGHT

## • Recruitment Module

- In testing phase currently with (3) open requisitions
- URL for Career Center on web site and transition open roles to system
- Working on back-end programming, validation tables, communication templates, position/status profiles, etc.
- Need to develop roll-out communications to managers and staff

## • Onboarding Platform

- Uploaded new hire forms/policies; working on back-end programming & electronic I-9 process
- Added document cloud to capture electronic employee files

## • General Ledger Interface (GLI)

- Implementation in progress

## • Benefits Module

- Self-service enrollment in progress (2 profiles: new hire onboarding and annual open enrollment)

### Additionally:

- Staffing open roles
  - filling based on priority.
  - filling roles that are needed
- Positions are opening.
  - receiving request for more hire, will consider as things change.
  -
- Agency Orientation: will be done after hours (time to be flexed).
  - Will check into staff that started before 2020.
- SJ is working on training.
- HR Projects: recruitment module is in process – working fluently.
- The onboarding platform can also be expended to videos.
- Using ADP
- General Ledger Interface
  - not ready to roll out.
- Benefits Module
  - working on enrollments in November and what it would look like.

## WHAT'S NEW IN FINANCE?

### FINANCIAL UPDATES:

#### • Revenue & Accounts Receivable:

- \$119k received in grant billings
- OVS, DSS Onondaga County

#### • Expense & Accounts Payable:

- \$450k in expenses paid out
- \$275k vendor expenses (includes past due items)
- \$176k payroll/benefits

#### • Staffing

- Senior Accountant start date: 9/12
- Primary focus: audit, assisting with A/P
- Remaining open positions: working to schedule interview for next week

#### • Foundation update 9/12

#### • Finance Committee Meeting 9/15

## FINANCIAL UPDATES - CONTINUED

### AUDIT UPDATE:

#### • 990 Required to be filed by 11/15

- 29 items submitted
- 19 items accepted
- 19 items still outstanding
- Working on date for auditors to return to VH for completion of field work

### EFFICIENCY & CONTROLS:

#### • Policy Updates and Process Improvements

- Spend Control Policies:
  - Spending level approvals and workflow approvals (electronically)
  - Online Business Accounts (Amazon/Walmart): move to pay by invoice vs. card usage
  - PO tracking: log, sequential numbering system established for various departments (electronically)
  - Credit Card Policy update with rollout of expense report submission requirement vs PO
  - Dept spending analysis review

### Additionally:

- We are in the process of preparing for the Audit.
- Audit will not be extended.
- Three positions to fill – Interviews are scheduled.
- Use blackboard on agency.

## WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT?

- New Beginnings Gala reschedule confirmed with the OnCenter, **Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024.**
- October DV Awareness fundraiser to begin pre-selling this week; CV will send to EP for BOD to support sales/fundraising (250?).
- Shelter Handbook draft is complete and delivered ahead of last week's site visit. Waiting on final review/approvals.
- Building out sponsorships for December 2023 NBC @ Gilded Club – next planning committee meeting Thursday, Sept 28th, 4:00pm.
- Staff planning:
  - Fran has officially transitioned to her new job in reception and facilities/office support.
  - Development is looking for a fulltime development/marketing assistant/coordinator

### Other:

- Historical information cannot be relocated. Cannot find anything on new beginnings.
  - Impacts Financial, Operations, Development and HR.
  - Meeting to be scheduled with Robert (Bob) Heman, IT and Zachary Bates, Board Member.
  - Troubleshoot - folders deleted, information shared, outsourced and recovery.

### Presentation: Sheena Solomon, Executive Director, Gifford Foundation

- Presentation
  - The Role of Vera House Board Member.
  - Responsibilities of the Board.
  - What to do at Board Meetings.
  - Address different subjects at each meeting.
- Board is the foundation of the organization.
  - Legally and Fiduciary.
  - Financial -understand the finance.
  - Duty of loyalty.
  - Understand the Mission and the Vision of Vera House.
  - Board is the Ambassador of Vera House.
  - Accountability – The Agenda, Minutes; know what is happening.
  - Minutes is public information.
- Confidentiality
  - Everything that happens at the Board Meeting is confidential.
  - Trust base space.
  - Conflict of interest: cannot have a conflict with outside vendors.

## Felicity Hall

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**From:** Ebony Pengel  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5:12 PM  
**To:** Daquetta Jones; Carrie Veley; Dana Zanders; Karen Benenati  
**Cc:** Felicity Hall  
**Subject:** FW: Board Meeting 10-17-23  
**Attachments:** Audit & Finance Committee Notes 10-13-23.docx; Board Development Committee Minutes October 2023.docx; Board Meeting Agenda 10-17-23.docx; Executive Leadership Report Slides Update 10.17.23.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

My apologies! I realized I didn't copy you all when I sent this last night.

**From:** Ebony Pengel  
**Sent:** Monday, October 16, 2023 6:04 PM  
**To:** Dawn Penson <dpenson@verahouse.org>; dmbark87@gmail.com; Kyle Metzler <kmetzler@verahouse.org>; Mitayah Donerlson <mdonerlson@verahouse.org>; Nelisha Barron <nbarron@verahouse.org>; smarris@ccf-law.com; smkollal@hotmail.com; Susan Petrosillo <spetrosillo@verahouse.org>; Zachary Bales <zbales@verahouse.org>; Stefanie Savory <Stefanie.Savory@accesscny.org>  
**Subject:** Board Meeting 10-17-23

Hi all!

There are items attached and some information in the body of the email, remember last month's meeting minutes are in the portal please review them if you haven't already. Please give me a shout if you notice that I missed anything and/or you have any other questions.

### **Questions I received from the team that was sent to Daquetta:**

- Shelter: Would like more info on how accepting clients works to better understand under what circumstances clients are denied.
- Advocacy: Days between crisis call and assigned advocate is getting larger - why? - I believe this is due to staffing, sharing so that Tricia can be prepared to speak to it.
- Development: NBC postponed - why? Does this mean we will be having 2 galas in the same calendar year now (2024) and is that feasible/reasonable for staff/donors/others? - There should be updated slides from Carrie with that information, the committee met last week (after the ppt was shared) and made some changes. The plan is to do something in December as well as change the name.
- Is Daquetta still on track for her strategic plan? (October 18<sup>th</sup>)?
- Update on the grant discovery? This is still in progress, during the discovery process the team realized there was a lot more that they needed to dive into. Daquetta will likely speak more to that.

**NOTE: Daquetta and I meet weekly to discuss agency updates, and I recognize that I need to do my due diligence to make sure I'm communicating the things we discuss timely with the rest of the team. While at the same time not inundating your inboxes with information all the time. So, I'm going to be setting up a folder on the portal that will house all our weekly meeting minutes so that everyone has access to review**

**and hold me accountable for more timely and transparent communication. I'm open to other feedback/suggestions on sharing the information if you have it.**

### **North Shelter Updates:**

There were findings that the state pointed out needed to be addressed prior to opening. Below is a copy/paste from their report and updates from Tricia on where we are at.

Below are the findings of this visit that will need to be addressed prior to opening.

- Fire extinguishers and fire alarm system need annual inspection
- Update site emergency plan with contact info and alarm system information
- Install missing window guards on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows
- Electrical outlets accessible to children will need safety covers
- Emergency/Exit lights for front and rear 1<sup>st</sup> floor exits need repair
- 1<sup>st</sup> floor bathroom ceiling needs to be cleaned and or painted
- Remove extension cord from 1<sup>st</sup> floor staff office
- Remove pieces of loose wood from rear yard play area
- Radiator in dining area and bedroom 3 need protective covers
- Bedroom 3 is missing an outlet cover
- Bedroom 1 has a hole in wall
- Emergency numbers need for 2<sup>nd</sup> floor phone
- Need to add emergency egress map on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Will need to have thermometers in the fridge and freezer
- Address any additional deficiencies in the village fire inspection report

Fire Extinguisher inspection – Complete

Window Guards – Complete

Outlet safety covers – complete

Bathroom ceiling clean – complete

Extension cord removal – Complete

Radiator in dining room cover – complete

Room 3 outlet plate – complete

Fridge/freezer thermometer – complete

Emergency numbers – roll is on the desk at north

Bedroom 1 hole in wall – needs sanded and painted (Will to handle within next few weeks)

Egress maps – printed, just needs mounted

Backyard – scheduled with Emmeline/Tricia to tackle next week.

### **Follow up items from last month's meeting:**

For the training- someone was interested in knowing what the additional 20 hours required within 1 year was about. (Is that every year? B/c we were behind? Does it impact all employees?-

This format meets the standards for 30-hour certification. To be Rape Crisis Certified, an additional 10-hours must be completed within the year.

Within a year of hire, all staff, interns, board, and volunteers must complete:

Call Out training (4 hours)

(a) the dynamics of sexual offenses, sexual abuse and incest;

(b) crisis intervention techniques;

(c) client-counselor confidentiality requirements;

(g) the availability of state and community resources for clients;

(j) information on the availability of medical and legal assistance for such clients.

Shadowing call outs (typically 2-3 shifts until they feel ready to complete solo, not a requirement for those who will not take call out shifts)

Intersectionality training (2 hours)

(h) working with a diverse population;

Ongoing education via internal/external trainings, conferences, and webinars (as available/needed - minimum requirement of at least 4 hours)

This format meets the Rape Crisis Certification requirements of 40-hour training.

Why don't the folks that were hired before 2020 need this training?

The purpose for having all employees that joined Vera House after January 2020 is due to lack of participation in the virtual orientation that took place in the Fall of 2020 and Fall of 2021. All employees that started at Vera House prior to January 2020 thoroughly engaged in the orientation as it was in-person. Out of 58 employees as of this date, 43 of them are required to participate in the orientation. We are getting the headcount for all of our volunteers and interns as well.

Karen to confirm that the new HR platform is accessible.

This is in Karen's queue...

Thank you for taking the time to read this through! I appreciate you all being on this team and helping to support such meaningful work. Looking forward to seeing you all tomorrow!

Ebony

**Ebony Pengel | President, Board of Directors | Vera House, Inc.**

*Pronouns: she/her/hers*

723 James Street, Syracuse NY 13205

24-Hour Crisis & Support Lines (315) 468-3260



# Responsibilities

## **CEO of the organization:**

Lead from big picture perspective  
Set strategic direction  
Build Board understanding of the agency's work on related trends and issues  
Comply with policies  
Report results  
Tap board expertise and contacts  
Build relationship with the board

## **Board of Directors**

Hire and delegate to CEO  
Approve plans  
Approve policies  
Monitor performance  
Assure ethical behavior

## **Individually**

Preparation  
Participation  
Share connections and influence  
Working knowledge of organization  
Three T's  
Be an ambassador  
Consult and Advise

## What boards are **NOT** supposed to do.....

- Go Nite Nite
- Not understanding the mission or vision
- Cause Harm
- Operating with outdated governance documents
- Little knowledge of what makes a nonprofit tick
- Loss of objectivity and accountability
- Breaking confidentiality
- Lack of effective oversight
- Impeding the director or staff
- Failure to cultivate board diversity

**NYS says  
you must ---  
no excuses!**

- **The duty of obedience to purpose-** everything is done in support of the Mission and regularly assessed
- **The duty of care** – providing oversight as if you “owned” the organization
- **The duty of loyalty** – undivided allegiance and accountability for resources

**Additional:**

- **Discussion on follow-ups: what to put on the Agenda.**
- **Look at the By Laws and other Policies – are they updated?**
- **Update documents on Values and Board Positions.**

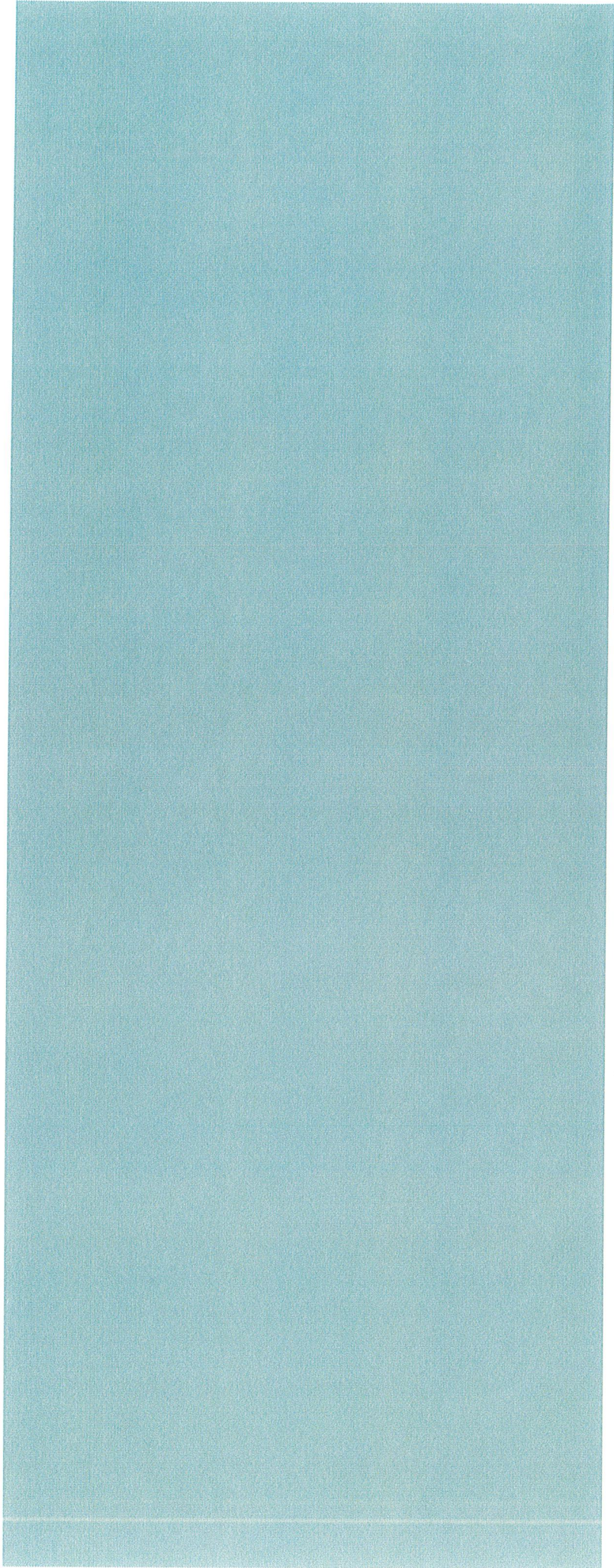
**Board Committee Updates:**

- **Finance Meeting – Zoom Meeting with Susan Petrosillo**
  - **Summary – getting ready for audit.**
  - **There was an urgent meeting regarding “bridge loan” next meeting in October.**
  - **No organization Budget – working on 2023.**
  - **Budget is required by auditors.**
  - **Finance next meeting - October 13<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm.**
  - **Dawn Penson will join the Finance Meeting.**
- **DashBoard – will be implemented in the first quarter of 2024.**
- **Development – March through July will be recruiting.**
- **Onboardings with Dawn Penson**
  - **Create VH application – several different questions – to pull out information.**
  - **Interviews for the Board.**
  - **Sandra Colvacheck – IT person 1/24 – 12/31/26**
  - **Lawyer Stephanie Savory**
  - **Motion to put nominees forward: 1<sup>st</sup> - Zachary Bales – 2<sup>nd</sup> Mitayah Donerlson**
  - **Need more people on Board. Up to thirty people.**

- **Vote on:**
  - **Empower Card.**
  - **Motion to update with CEO name: 1<sup>st</sup> Sapna Kollali 2<sup>nd</sup> Mitayah Donerlson.**
  - **Motion for Dawn Penson to be a member of the Foundation: 1<sup>st</sup> Kyle Eetzler 2<sup>nd</sup> Zachary Bales.**
  - **Yea to all in favor.**
  
- **Date to be scheduled in October 2023 for Daquetta Jones to meet and greet – at the organization.**
  - **Committee agencies invite – invitation to go out as soon as possible.**
- **As of January 2024 – Board Meeting frequency – monthly, quarterly to be determined.**
- **Board Staff appreciation Day**
  - **To be scheduled before holidays.**
  - **Ebony Pengel will send out invite.**
- **Emails – all Board of Directors members will have emails Name@verahouse.org.**

**Meeting Adjourn: 7:43pm**

**Next Meeting Scheduled October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**



**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP UPDATE**  
**10/17/23**



# AGENCY UPDATES

## **Chief Executive Office Update:**

- Daquetta Jones started on Monday, Sept 18
- Departmental Presentations Sept 20-23 and additional presentations scheduled in the coming weeks. An opportunity for departments to meet with ELT and learn about their programs and team members
- Made contact or contact attempts with funders/partners - continuing intro outreach
- ELT Grant Discovery October 3rd and 5th
- Toured Main and North Shelters with COO and Maintenance Manager

## **Board of Directors:**

- Two new board members voted onto board on Sept 19
- Board roles and responsibilities training facilitated by Sheena Solomon, ED, Gifford Foundation
- Board will be hosting a Meet and Greet Vera House CEO on Friday, October 27 at 6pm – 8pm at Vera House. Invitation went out last

# WHAT IS NEW WITH CLINICAL TEAM?

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of separate individuals served	235	214	200	67	219	189	167	180	151			
# sessions completed	512	490	570	171	552	365	447	519	419			
% safety planning	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%			
# of no shows	x	x	73	5	74	59	53	61	60			

## Mission Moment:

- Client reported that for the first time in her life (38 yo) she does not feel shame for what happened to her and understands that it was the fault of the people who harmed and failed to protect her.
- Client who has really struggled with attendance has attended the last 4 scheduled sessions. This was supported by Therapists encouragement and boundary setting.

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE SHELTER?

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Clients Housed	29	33	28	26	32	31	32	29	37			
# clients denied	11	14	9	20	8	4	7	6	2			
AVG LOS				60	75	83	82	81	63			

**Main:**

- 3 new ovens being purchased
- Looking to hire 3 new staff members
- Trying to keep everyone healthy

**North Shelter:**

- Painting
- Hiring staff person
- List of items needed presented to STATE

# WHAT'S NEW WITH ADVOCACY?

Metric	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# Clients served	375	406	489	450	531	467	474	666	548			
# days between crisis call and assigned advocate		44	2	0	0	0	1	10	14			
# of referrals into Advocacy	95	87	41	78	142	126	191	138	80			

# WHAT'S NEW WITH HUMAN RESOURCES?

## STAFFING UPDATE

### Offers/New Hires/Onboarding:

- Staff Accountant
- Advocate (full-time)
- Advocate (part-time)

### Internal Moves/Changes:

- Case Manager (from Advocacy)
- North Shelter Manager (from Main Shelter)

## WORKING ON

- Document Cloud database in ADP for electronic file collection
- General Ledger Interface (GLI) implementation kickoff
- Agency Orientation Training
  - Moved to hybrid model
  - Dates: 10/20, 10/21, 10/28
- Backlog of background checks volunteers, & interns

# WHAT'S NEW IN FINANCE:

## Staffing

- Senior Accountant role filled September 12th
- 3 Remaining open positions:
  - Staff Accountant (AP/AR)
  - Senior Grant Accountant (Billing, etc.)
  - Grants and Contracts Administrator (Compliance)
- Staff Accountant candidates interviewed Sept 27th
- Offer has been extended and accepted

## County Contracts

- OCFS Contracts: 3 awaiting final approval for execution (Contracts Manager to advise when final review/approval is complete)
- DSS Billings: August complete, September to be completed by October 13th

# WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT

\*\*Social Media (FB) has been accessed! FB Post for DV Awareness month went live Monday Oct 2\*\*

☐ October DV Awareness fundraiser in full swing - constant contact email to be used week of 10/5 to connect with pipeline of donors. Carrie and Luz are meeting/speaking with local businesses, schools, supporters for sponsorships.

☐ Westcott Cultural Fair, Sunday October 1, was a success and the soft launch of sales for DV Awareness pins/bracelets.

☐ NBC has been moved to Saturday, January 13th, 2024. Hosted by Gilded Club.

☐ Development is looking for a fulltime development/marketing assistant/coordinator





It is the mission of Vera House, Inc to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

### Virtual Meeting

October 6, 2023, 2:00pm-3:00pm

**Present:**

**Dawn Penson, Chair**

**Ebony Pengel**

**Nelisha Barron**

**Sapna Kollali**

**Daquetta Jones**

**Motion to start Board Development Committee meeting at 2:05 by Dawn Penson**

**Minutes: by Dawn Penson, Board Development Chair**

#### **1. Welcoming new CEO**

- Board Development Committee warmly welcomed CEO Daquetta Jones and is thrilled to have her expertise onboard.

#### **2. Interview questions**

- The committee continued ongoing discussions from last month's meeting regarding structure of interview questions used to onboard prospective candidates. A new document containing numerous interview questions was created by Ms. Penson and sent to the committee via email. The purpose is to have a "cheat sheet" for all to use, however the plan is to continue with follow-up questions. Ms. Penson requested and welcomed feedback and edits from the team and after much discussion, various questions were reworded and eliminated altogether. Ms. Barron edited and sent finalized version to BDC team. In addition, we agreed to move forward with the creation of a new board application before presenting finished forms to entire board.

#### **3. Board application**

- Conversations took place regarding the creation and structure of the planned board application that will be used to replace the VH Questionnaire. Ms. Penson previously sent a sample used from another board she serves on. Ms. Jones did not have current access to application to view since she is a new addition, therefore Ms. Penson mentioned she would re-send to her after the meeting. Further discussions were held and Ms. Jones stated she had a sample we could use, along with other sample forms as well. It was agreed to compare and possibly combine both applications to fit VH's purposes. The committee will table this topic until November's meeting.

#### **4. Recurring meetings**

- A discussion was held to either continue with the current meeting structure or to have recurring meetings on set dates every month. All were in agreement to schedule recurring meetings either one or two weeks before each board meeting with possible Thursdays at 2:00pm in mind.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:06. Next BDC meeting TBA.**

**Next meeting TBA.**



## **Audit & Finance Committee Meeting**

**Date: Friday, October 13, 2023**

**Attending:** Ebony Pengel, President Board of Directors, Daquetta Jones, CEO Vera House, Dana Zanders, CFO Vera House

**Absent:** Zachary Bales, Board Member; Dawn Penson, Board Member

### **1. Current State:**

- a. Still catching-up on recording Vera House financial transactions, both:
  - i. Accounts Payable
  - ii. Billing
- b. Audit: Senior Accountant is providing the Auditors the information they need.
  - i. I will meet the Auditors Grossman St Amour on Wed 10/25. Ebony will attend.
  - ii. Auditors must issue their Report by 11/15.
  - iii. They do not have a draft F/S Report yet from the Auditor.
  - iv. Management Question – Is the Agency at risk as a going concern?**
- c. Foundation continues to fund Agency operations.
  - i. Additional funding requests since last board meeting (from the \$550 that was requested and approved in August.)
    1. I discussed this with Ms. Fitzsimmons at the Foundation
    2. Ms. Fitzsimmons shared schedule of funds requested to date, \$1.4M
- d. Budget
  - i. They will review 2023 budget in November's meeting. – Commitment was October
  - ii. They plan to review 2024 budget in December's meeting.

### **2. Going Forward Recommendations:**

- a. Document and understand Daily Cash Flow
- b. Turn attention & focus on Billing.
  - i. Get invoices out so that Cash comes in (30-90 days)
- c. Prioritize Accounts Payable.
  - i. Discuss and negotiate payment terms with vendors.
- d. Consider freezing non-reimbursable expenses.
- e. Internal Control:
  - i. Requests for Foundation funding come through Board President and Board Treasurer first for review & approval, then to Foundation for disbursement.
  - ii. Audit & Finance Committee review Agency Payroll Register and Check Register on a quarterly basis.
    1. Ms Jones investigating if this is a Board responsibility.

**Administration:** Ms. Dawn Penson, joined the Audit & Finance Committee.

**Respectfully submitted:** Susan Petrosillo, Finance Chair Board of Directors



It is the mission of Vera House, Inc. to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

## Vera House Property Committee

### Agenda

October 9, 2023

- 12:00 - 12:05pm (Kyle): DEI Moment
- 12:05 - 12:15pm (All): Introductions: your role at Vera House, what you do outside of Vera House (other employment, boards, etc.), and a passion/hobby you have outside of work
- 12:15 - 12:20pm (Kyle): Frequency of recurring Property Committee meetings (monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, etc.), best day/time, etc.
- 12:20 - 12:30pm (Ebony/Kyle): Property Committee purpose and expectations
- 12:30 - 12:40pm (Kyle): Property Committee meeting structure: what must have topics should be discussed at each committee meeting? Best practice for handling committee meeting minutes?
  - Mission critical property related issues
  - Updates on construction/renovation projects
  - Property acquisition/disposition updates
  - Need for policy/procedure updates
- 12:40 - 12:45pm (Kyle): Action items, next steps:
  - November meeting: Trish/Will provide an overview for other committee members on current Vera House property portfolio, outstanding issues with any properties, in-progress or planned construction/renovation projects, in-progress or planned property acquisition and disposition, property policy/procedures, and any other topics the COO and committee chair deem relevant and timely.



It is the mission of Vera House, Inc. to prevent, respond to and partner to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

**BOARD PROPERTY COMMITTEE  
DRAFT MINUTES  
Virtual Meeting  
October 9, 2023, 12:00pm-1:00pm**

**Present:**

**Kyle Metzler  
Dawn Penson  
Ebony Pengel  
Daquetta Jones  
Tricia Matthews  
Will Coldsmith  
Felicity Hall**

**Motion to start Board Meeting 12:14pm by Kyle Metzler  
Introductions of Committee  
Minutes: by Felicity Hall**

- 1. Property Committee Perspective/Expectations**
  - **Meet every other month.**
  - **Leases – all property (Will)**
  - **List of Contractors/Vendors (Will)**
  - **Maintenance of Contracts (Will)**
  - **Contract agreements – aware/being in the know.**
  - **List of Property productions. (Will)**
  - **Handbook – Review Policy Procedures.**
- 2. State Agencies**
  - **Revenue**
- 3. Property Portfolio**
  - **Knowledge of Property Portfolio by end of year**

**4. Grants Received 2022**

- **Green Family Grant – to paint**

**5. Project – “New Shelter”**

- **Will to send out the vision plans/blueprint to expand the organization.**

**Meeting adjourned 1:10pm. Next BPC meeting TBA.**



## Vera House Email Accounts for Board Members

This document is intended to provide guidelines for appropriate use of Vera House email accounts. As a Board member of the agency, you will be given access to an agency email account. The purpose of this email account is to protect the agency's privacy, your confidentiality agreement, and provide you with an easy way to access/store Vera House Board information sent via email.

- At no time should you use your Vera House email account to correspond regarding anything outside of Vera House business.
- When your Board term ends, your email account will be deactivated by the agency.
- Board members will not be added to any agency staff distribution lists.
- Board members will not use their email accounts to reach out to any agency staff members.
- All policies and procedures will continue to be followed as outlined in other documents and current bylaws.

The following signature and disclaimer should be added to your email:

**First and Last Name | Role if applicable, Board of Directors | Vera House, Inc.**

*Pronouns:*

723 James Street, Syracuse NY 13205

24-Hour Crisis & Support Lines (315) 468-3260

*\*This email is being sent from a member of the Board of Directors, I am not employed by the Vera House agency.*

