



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 OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES**

January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Attendees BOD:**

- Dawn Penson
- Ebony Pengel
- Kyle Metzler
- Mitayah Donerlson
- Sapna Kollali
- Susan Petrosillo

**Attendees VH:**

- Daquetta Jones
- Dana Zanders

**Virtual**

- Monica Coles
- Sandra Russell

**Absent**

- Stefani Savory
- Nelisa Barron

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

Motion to call Meeting to order: 1<sup>st</sup> – Ebony P. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Dawn P.

MINUTES: Minutes of previous meeting 12/19/23 was viewed and approved by all.

## REPORTS:

### Report - Daquetta Jones, CEO

# AGENCY UPDATES

#### Chief Executive Office Update:

- Scheduled meetings with funders / community partners
  - Met with Laura Dineen, OVS 12/18/23
  - Scheduled to meet with Olive and Beth at Interfaith Works 1/5/24
  - Scheduled to meet w/Janice Green, USDOJ 1/8/24
  - Scheduled to meet with YWCA Frontier 1/12/24
  - Scheduled to meet in January with OCD re: best practices and improve collaboration re: Hud Funded position - 1/30/24 @11am at Vera House
  - Met with Housing and Homeless Coalition of Central New York 12/21/23
  - CVTC in process of scheduling meeting with NYSDOCCS re: PREA
  - Met with Connie Neal, ED, NYSCADV – 12/15/23
  - Met with Tom Griffith, CNYCF 12/28/23
  - Scheduled to meet with Meg O'Connell, Allyn Foundation 1/11/2024
  - Scheduled to meet with Nan from United Way on 1/23/24
  - Participating in the 12 Men Model - started on 12/5 - 5th and final session 1/10/24
  - Scheduled to meet with OCC officials on 1/26/24 re: Prevention Education (signed updated MOU 12/23)
  - Attend HSLC full membership meeting 1/12/24
  - Attending Break Stalking Community Discussion at One Group 1/11/24
  - Scheduled to meet with Stacy Phillips (OVW) DOJ on 1/22/24
  - Attending HSLC New ED Affinity Group 1/17/24
  - Effective Jan – meetings with County is bi-monthly and meeting with State Agencies monthly until Feb.
  - All Advocates Training at McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center 1/17/24
  
- Switch from T-Mobile to Verizon saving over \$1,300k per month
  
- OCFS Renewal Site visit scheduled for December 6, 2023, 10am – 2pm completed
  
- Facility maintenance issues: Boiler at Admin Building and Main Shelter (addressed by EMCOR)
  
- Submitted QUOTES re: fence repair and improved security system and awaiting decision from OCFS.
  
- Advocacy Walk-out December 12/14/23 - returned on 12/15/23
  
- Accepted OPDV Flexible Spending Funds \$35k
  - McMahon Ryan Child Advocacy Center partner
  - Submission due Jan 16, 2024
  
- Debrief meeting post 12/6 site visit and started renewal application and PIP due Jan 25, 2024.
  
- 2024 Onondaga County Contracts (4) in-progress
  
- In-progress of executing Upstate Medical SANE Contract (3 year)
  
- In-progress of completing VH Directors and Officers Insurance due by 2/22/24

## COO Report – Tricia Matthews, COO

- **Department Presentations**

### 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	172	146	128	90
# sessions completed	512	490	570	171	552	365	447	519	419	479	436.5	337
% safety planning	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
# of no shows	x	x	73	5	74	59	53	61	60	43	37	41

- **No-Shows: 41** (20 unique clients engaging in no-shows)
- **# Of clients on waitlist: 23** (as of 1/5/24)
- 8 of these individuals are requesting appointments 3pm or later.
- Clinical used up many PTO days in December. They are ready to heal and start 2024

### 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	489	495	432	517
# days between crisis call and assigned advocate		44	2	0	0	0	1	10	7	7	7	7
# of referrals into Advocacy	95	87	41	78	142	126	191	138	80	107	148	124

# WHAT'S NEW AT THE SHELTER?

Metric	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
# of Clients Housed	27	30	23	24	27	24	25	26	26	24	38	35
# clients denied	11	14	9	20	8	4	7	6	2	10	21	25
AVG LOS				60	75	83	82	81	63	28	36	28

Successful Yearly site visit from OCFS  
 3 new hires in Main Shelter  
 Hired North Shelter staff member

North Shelter Open Date: Tentative 1/15/24  
 Waiting on response from Municipality walk through

# WHAT'S NEW WITH PREVENTION EDUCATION

Metric	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	Nov	December
# of People Reached through Prevention Education Programs	1,122	1,537	1,269	684	504	107	590	656	656	974	1625
# of Direct Service hours	126.5	70.5	61.5	39	27	34	25	34.5	34.5	7	32.5
# of Vacant Positions	2-3	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	4	3

**December Highlights:** Lyncourt Elementary School & West Genesee High School: engaged hundreds of youth to discuss healthy relationships, consent, and staying safe. Engaged with the campus communities at OCC & ESF and did a presentation for Zonta Club around Healthy Masculinity for the 16 Days of Activism. Prevention Education also led the agency's Workplace Sexual Harassment training and are onboarding the NEW Campus Project Coordinator and Engaging Men Project Coordinator!

# SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER - SANE

Metric	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
# of Call Outs	21	20	15	27	21	28	27	32	17	26	21	21
# of Call Outs w/o Exam	3	3	3	8	8	3	8	8	4	9	2	12

## WHAT'S NEW WITH ELDER ABUSE AND JUSTICE (EAJ) PROGRAM – DECEMBER 2023

### General EAJ Activity – Highlights:

- A. Staffing – setting up interviews for the Elder Advocate, Outreach Coordinator, and ALL Coordinator positions
- B. Onboarding and Staff Training – preparing to present training to Advocacy about Elder Abuse in January
- C. Representation – represented VH at Senior Companion Council (IFW) and DOJ meetings
- D. Grant Management – investigating new solicitations; discussing priorities, intentions with community partners in January/February time frame

### ALTC-AGING Grant – Highlights:

- A. Elder Abuse Conference – finalizing space and tech requests with Hotel, preparing sponsorship marketing with Development and making invitations to EAC planning committee
- B. Elder Justice Coalition – represented VH at in-person gathering on 12/21 with EJC partners
- C. Evergreen Network – expanded distribution to over 400 partners, preparing January/February newsletter
- D. Community Outreach – preparing IFW for training partnership and Center for Justice Innovation partnership

### OVC Expanded Community Outreach Response to Elder Abuse (ECORE) GRANT - Highlights:

- A. Christopher Communities – contracted 2024 launch, updated MOU, planning January expansion of services
- B. Center for Justice Innovations - budget talks complete; planning expansion of services with January launch
- C. Case Management - Continued DSP at CC Buildings: 1 new and 4 continued clients accounting for 13 individual counseling sessions and 8 crisis intervention episodes plus 67 informal

# ALTERNATIVE STEPS

## OUTCOMES FOR JANUARY – DECEMBER 2023

- # of men served in Alternatives Program – 325
- # Successfully completed program – 202
- # of women served in STEPS Program – 51
- # Successfully completed program – 36

## REPORT OUTCOMES:

- 1) Client reported that with the help of the program her family has been able to communicate better. There has been less verbal disruptions and no police contact within the past 3 months.
- 2) Client reports that the program changed his life and how he views relationships. He now lives as a role model to his children and only engage in healthy relationships.

## • PREA BOD for the months January 2023 – December 2023

- Vera House Inc. Total is 199 – Total Clients served by Vera House PREA Project from January 2023 – December 2023.

## HR Report – Karen Benenati, CHRO

# WHAT'S NEW WITH HUMAN RESOURCES?

## STAFFING UPDATE

- Offers/New Hires/Onboarding:
  - PT Care Coordinator – waiting on completion of background check
  - Shelter Administrator – waiting on completion of background check
  - 17 approved openings
- Internal Moves/Changes:
  - None to report

## RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed “All Company” 2023 Workplace Harassment Prevention Training
- Enhanced organization and structure of personnel files as first step toward internal audit of documentation
- In process of training new HR team member
- Review of remitted tuition program contracts and provisions

# HUMAN RESOURCES PROJECTS IN FLIGHT

- Agency Orientation / Regulatory Compliance Training Program for 2024
  - Orientation general session
  - New hire Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention training for all Vera House
  - Self-paced, independent learning modules
  - Certification requirements for specialized areas
- General Ledger Interface (GLI)
  - Implementation in progress to supply electronic payroll data feeds to BlackBaud to strengthen efficiency and accuracy
- Time off policy proposal for 2024
  - Evaluate PTO structure, rollover, thresholds, & consider PTO bank
  - Utilize HR systems to automate accrual
- Staff performance review process for 2024

## Finance Report – Dana Zanders, CFO

# FINANCE UPDATES

## Staffing

### Vacant Positions

- Grants and Contracts Financial Administrator
- Senior Grants Accountant

### State and County Fiscal Reporting Priorities

- FVPSA Core, FVPSA ARP DVPI
- OVS - BAR, Q3 and Q4
- DCJS SA, DCJS SANE
- OVW - Q3 and Q4
- County Contracts
  - Adult and Long-Term Care
  - Adult Mental Health
  - Child and Youth Counseling
  - Child Preventative Services

## WHAT'S NEW IN DEVELOPMENT

- Next Chapter Celebration event February 3, 2024.
- Winter Appeal published 12/18/23
- White Ribbon Campaign March/April 2024
- Elder Abuse Conference confirmed for June 2024

### **Additional:**

#### ❖ Audit Finance Meeting

**Dana Z., Daquetta J., Ebony P.**

- Cash Receivable Report
- Audit Report
- Audit Report still in progress
- 17 items being worked on.
- Met with YWCA regarding Financial Assistance
- Two Objectives for 2024: 1) Funds into the Agency 2) Cash receivables
- Foundation to fund payroll and benefits from January '24 – March '24
- Audit to seek out new Grants
- Awaiting information to complete 2022 Audit; 2023 will start when 2022 is finalized.
- Awaiting confirmation letters from Funders
- Seeking support from local small businesses/foundations

#### ❖ Executive Team Report

- Clinical Team – 8 Therapists
  - need more Grant support
  - No shows – discontinue services
- Domestic Violence Shelter
  - Main Shelter 27 beds
  - 30-60 days stay – extend to 90 days (DSS approval after 90 days)
  - Denials: Shelter full; location of DV to Shelter; Client not a fit.  
(Denials due to reasons given are referred to other Agencies.)

North Shelter 9 beds

- Temporary closed in 2022 – due to staff coverage
- Reopen February 2024
- New procedures for client’s access into Shelter discussed

- Preventative Education

- Reach out to Schools and Social Media
- The 12<sup>th</sup> Men Model to be re-circulated
- Open Position – recruitment on Indeed and Social Media
- Possible obtain a Pro Bono Recruiter

- Elder Abuse Conference

- Planning starts in February
- Date June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

- ❖ Board Committees

- Development Committee

- New Beginnings Chapter February

- Property Committee

- Harvey’s Garden February 6<sup>th</sup> 5:30pm (Flyer to be distributed)

**Meeting Adjourn 8:15pm: All approved.**

**Next Meeting Scheduled: February 20<sup>th</sup> 2024.**