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Louisiana Sexual Assault Oversight Commission Minutes
February 26, 2025

1:00pm

Louisiana Department of Justice
Office of Attorney General Liz Murrill
1201 N. Third St. – Claiborne Building
Thomas Jefferson Room 136C
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Board Members/Designees: PRESENT - John Sinuefield, Dr. Randall Brown, Monica Taylor, Rafael de Castro, Beth Mizell, Kellee Dickerson, Dr. Juliette Saussy, Michelle Jackson, Heidi Martin, Erica Sparacino, Amanda Tonkovich, Morgan Lamandre, Greg Waddell, Frank Young and Wanjennia Atkins. Other members or their designees were absent.

Other Attendees: Jeddie Smith, Olivia Boudreaux, Kim Wall, Natalie LaBorde, Olivia Johnston, Jencie Olivier, Kim Young, Kristina Payne, Drew Hawkins, Margo Mikeska, Chad Guidry, Stephanie Henson, Neha Mehta, Natalie Walton, Keith Talamo, Natasha Poe, Monica Quaal, Tonya Suire, Gardenia Crockett, Julie Foret, Maci Lapeyrouse, Brandy Sheely, Shamika Kelley, Mary Symonds, Tammy Smith, Bridget Depew, Ginesse Barrett, Shirley Young, Kim Thomas, Emery Doga, Danielle Lax and Jason Eastin.

- **Call to Order and Roll Call**

- Kim Wall called the meeting to order, made roll call and confirmed a quorum of members.

- **Chairman's Report**

- Chairman John Sinuefield expressed the Commission's thanks to Assistant Commissioner Sonia Mallett and the Division of Administration for the use of the Thomas Jefferson Rooms for Commission Meetings. Further, he noted that he had met with Dr. Neha Mehta and Captain Chad Guidry to discuss issues with the kit instructions for pediatric survivors. Also, Chairman Sinuefield welcomed two new members, Representative Kellee Dickerson, District 64, of the Louisiana Legislature and Mr. Frank Young, for the Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police.

- **Approval of the Minutes**

- Minutes of the November 20, 2024 meeting were unanimously adopted.

- **Topics of Discussion**

- Kit Tracking Update
 - o Captain Guidry reported that the Kit Tracking System is running smoothly with 902 kits in the system and he answered questions from Commission Members as to the number of kit boxes distributed.

- Kit Issues – Adult/Child
 - o Captain Chad Guidry reported that although he had not been present at the last meeting for Dr. Mehta’s presentation about issues with the kit instructions with regard to pediatric survivors, he had reviewed the slides and information that had been presented by Dr. Mehta. He expressed reservations about some of her issues and gave reasons why some of the changes requested may not be possible at this time. Dr. Mehta repeated some of the problems she sees with the kit instructions and made suggestions for changes. Her hope is that in the future there might be separate adult and pediatric kits. Captain Guidry and Dr. Mehta agreed on some changes that can be made now to the instructions and agreed to work together in the future to resolve any disagreements as to the kits.

- Regional Planning Meeting Issues
 - o Morgan Lamandre stated that the meeting held by Region 2 did not meet guidelines for regional planning meetings and that STAR had not received a Region 2 Plan since 2015. She requested LDH to set a Region 2 Planning Meeting that fit the guidelines of Act 669 of the 2024 Regular Session. She read sections of Act 669 which had directives proceeded by the word shall and indicated she believed those provisions were mandatory. She further complained that the Region 2 Meetings have not been recorded as required by the statute and made available on the LDH website. Dr. Juliette Saussy of LDH responded that she believed the Region 2 Meetings complied with the statute and that an attorney for LDH had given an opinion that a record of the minutes of the meetings satisfied the recording directive of the statute. However, she did offer to have another Region 2 Meeting conducted if necessary to satisfy Lamandre’s demands. It was agreed that future meetings of Region 2 would do all necessary to comply with the directives of Act 669. Chairman Sinuefield directed Assistant Attorney General Jeddie Smith, Counsel for the Commission, to review the statute and report as to whether or not he believed producing written minutes of the Regional Meetings satisfied the recording directive in the statute.

- Federal Grant Issues
 - o Commission Members Rafael de Castro, Morgan Lamandre and Monica Taylor discussed problems with Federal Grants and funding for Sexual Assault Centers and other programs for survivors he noted that only 60 parishes have access to the services of sexual assault centers. Senator Beth Mizell pointed out the breakdown for three funding sources and that she needed data and statistics to present to the Legislature for funding requests, especially for rape prevention education. Morgan Lamandre stated we should have a “Denim Day” at the Legislature and invite survivors and supporters to publicize and emphasize the need for funding of the agencies and programs that support Survivors. Ms. Lamandre noted that her idea for this “Denim Day” to draw attention to the need for legislative action came from an a similar protest in Italy where a court blamed a survivor of an assault for contributing to the assault by having worn denim jeans. In protest of the Italian court’s statements a large number of women there wore denim clothing. It was suggested that Monica Taylor might coordinate a Denim Day.

- HCR 103 Issues
 - o Rafael de Castro discussed that the written report required by HCR 103 had been filed, suggesting that an additional 233 Help Line would be redundant and can be handled by existing help lines, without the expenditure of in excess of 2 million dollars for a new 233 Help Line program. He outlined how existing help lines could satisfy the aims of HCR 103.

- Future Projects for the Commission

- Commissioners agreed to continue discussions as to the instructions in the kits and resolve any differences of opinion as to the contents for pediatric survivors.
- Commissioners agreed to continue to support means of funding for all agencies and programs supporting survivors.
- Commissioners agreed to continue to review the progress of the kit tracking system and resolve any issues that may develop.
- Commissioners agreed to review legislation that either supports or detracts from the goal of providing assistance for survivors.

- **Public Comment**

- Public comment was received throughout the meeting on all the issues discussed by the Commission and members of the public in attendance were allowed to ask questions and make comments. Keith Talamo representing the Lafayette Coroner's Office reported on the procedures being used to service Survivors in the Lafayette area. Issues were raised by Commissioners Morgan Lamandre and Monica Taylor. Further issues were spoken by Kim Young of Hearts of Hope. Mr. Talamo responded with reasons for the changes initiated by the Lafayette Coroner's Office.

- **Votes**

- No votes other than for approval of minutes and adjournment were taken.

- **Assign Tasks & Schedule Next Meeting**

- Chairman Sinquefield requested and received permission of the Commission to set the next meeting on April 9, 2025 depending on the availability of the Thomas Jefferson Rooms or any other scheduling problems.

- **Adjourned**

- Motion was made and seconded to adjourn and the meeting was closed.