

**MINUTES FOR THE
BELLINGHAM-WHATCOM COUNTY COMMISSION
AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
Retreat
January 24, 2006**

Members Attending: Cynthia Bauleke, Randy Carroll, Regina Delahunt, Burton Dickerson, Sheri Emerson, Rebecca Johnson, Cheri Kilty, Kathleen Marshall, Dave McEachran, Shannon Meyer, Candy Petersen, Todd Reutlinger, Michael Sledge, Karen Summers, Bruce Van Glubt, Kathy Washatka

Members Absent: Mary Elizabeth Bisese, William Elfo, Nikki Finkbonner, Michael Haslip, Joan Hoisington, Chi-Na Kim, Jon Ostlund, Linda Storck

Staff Attending: Sue Parrott, Domestic Violence Commission Director
Joyce Gertler, DV Commission Program Coordinator
Linda Ward, Administrative Secretary

Randy Carroll, Chair, called the January Annual Retreat of the Bellingham-Whatcom County Commission Against Domestic Violence to order at 8:15 a.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2006 Bellingham Municipal Court House, 2014 C Street, Bellingham, WA.

1. Introduction by Randy Carroll, Commission Chair

Randy welcomed all to the meeting and had the members introduce themselves. He then reviewed the agenda.

2. Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence

Sue Parrott informed the Commission that she would be spending the next few hours sharing and discussing concepts, ideas and trends about domestic violence. In particular, she noted that many of these concepts were discussed at the new grantee orientation she recently attended in Washington D.C. At the orientation, attendees discussed the core principals of a coordinated community response through small group discussions of case scenarios. Sue stated she was impressed by the philosophical underpinning that was presented by OVAW and that she would be “re-creating” the discussions at this retreat.

Sue commented that one of the shifts in the response to domestic violence has been the shift away from the emphasis on “offender accountability” to an emphasis on victim safety. This shift has come from the realization that many of the well-intended efforts and practices emphasizing offender accountability have put some victims at risk. How then, do we as a community, take into account the complex safety needs of victims and weigh those against practices and policies that encourage offender accountability, particularly when the two are at odds?

Both Randy Carroll and Dave McEachran noted that their systems have traditionally focused on accountability, yet, recently, prosecution and law enforcement have understood the importance of balancing accountability with the needs and concerns of victims. Randy noted that this will not happen if the victim is viewed as peripheral, someone who can “fend

for themselves”, or someone that the system only calls on when they need them for case processing.

Sue shared some of the work by Praxis and the Battered Women’s Justice Project on victim safety. Victims are not just concerned about the risks created by their abuser; they are also impacted and concerned about risks that may be created by other factors in their lives, such as physical or mental health, housing, income, whether or not they speak English. In order to understand what it really means to centralize victim safety, it is important to listen to the experiences of victims and understand their unique circumstances. How do we design policies and practices that take this into account?

Many victims do not want to report to law enforcement or be involved with prosecution, and some victims do not want use domestic violence service providers. Historically we have asked, “why doesn’t that victim just cooperate, or why doesn’t that victim want to come to our support group?” If we put victim safety at the center, the question we ask instead will be “what is there about law enforcement or DV service providers that the victim does not want to use?” Is there a gap between what is being provided and what the victim needs?

The Safety Audit is one way that practices and policies are evaluated from the point of view of victim safety.

The Commission reviewed the handout “Coordinated Community Response Core Principles of Intervention” from the Battered Women’s Justice Project. Sue stated that coordination itself should not be a goal, but rather the means through which the core principles are achieved. She also noted that accountability has taken on a larger meaning. Accountability should not just include holding an offender accountable for their actions, but should also ensure that systems are accountable to each other, and that systems are accountable to the victims they are serving.

Commission members divided into three groups and discussed two case scenarios. Sue and Randy led the members in a lively discussion as to the small group recommendations on each case scenario. After each case scenario was discussed, core principles of the CCR that related to the case scenario were reviewed. The case scenarios demonstrated the challenges of responding to the complex needs of victims as well the differences in perspectives and roles.

3. Break 10:15 – 10:25

4. Committee Reports **Education-Outreach Committee**

Mike Sledge gave the report.

Mike reported that the committee addressed the following in 2005:

- Annual report
- Ongoing presentations
- DV Awareness Month – DV Outstanding Achievement Award
- Website Development (almost ready to launch)
- Encouraged attendance at DV Awareness Month

#06-01 MOTION: Dave McEachran made the motion to accept the Education – Outreach Committee Report. Kathleen Marshall seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Law and Justice Committee

Shannon Meyer gave the report.

Shannon reported that the committee completed the following in 2005

- Followed up with the recommendations from the first safety audit
- Completed Benchmark Report
- Conducted a CLE training
- Sponsored a meeting on officer involved domestic violence (law enforcement and DV service providers)

Randy raised some concerns about the Benchmark Report, such as, the time lag and the lack of standardization in data. He asked if it was really an accurate report to share with the councils. Sue stated that part of the Law and Justice Committee’s work plan will include discussing these issues.

#06-02 MOTION: Karen Summers made the motion to accept the Law and Justice Committee Report. Dave McEachran seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Victim and Children Support Committee

Cynthia Bauleke gave the report.

Cindy reviewed the 2005 committee accomplishments, noting the following:

- Sue Parrott served on the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Committee as co-facilitator
- The Health Care Project is completed as originally proposed
- The model domestic violence response protocol with the Meridian School District is currently on hold
- Focus groups for the safety audit were not held, but are in the works for 2006
- A report on arrests of women was completed and distributed
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#06-03 MOTION: Cynthia Bauleke made the motion to accept the Victim and Children Support Committee Report. Shannon Meyer seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Development Committee

Rebecca Johnson stated that she gave the committee’s final report in September and did not have anything new to add.

Executive Committee

Randy Carroll gave the report.

Randy reported that the Commission asked the city and the county for extra funding. The county has released its funding and the city will make a matching contribution in 2006. The Executive Committee also approached the small cities for funding.

The Executive Committee oversaw the installation of the new phone system, the development of the website, and has worked closely with Sue on implementation of the GTEA grant.

#06-04 MOTION: Randy Carroll made the motion to accept the Executive Committee Report. Cynthia Bauleke seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Staff Report

Sue Parrott gave the staff report.

Sue explained the new staff structure. Joyce Gertler is a full time coordinator, whose responsibilities include staffing the Education-Outreach Committee, staffing the Victim and Children Support Committee and working on the audit. Sue stated that these committees will now have more staff time than previously. Sue stated that she has been working full time on temporary basis and will return to .85 FTE in February. She will continue to staff the Law and Justice Committee and the Executive Committee, monitor the grant and take the lead in the audit. Linda Ward's hours have been increased for the duration of the GTEA.

#06-05 MOTION: Cynthia Bauleke made the motion to accept the Staff Report. Burton Dickerson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

5. 2006 Benchmarking Report

Randy Carroll stated that since the Commission will not be meeting again until April, he would recommend that the Law and Justice Committee finalize the Benchmarking Report and send it to Executive Committee for final approval.

#06-06 MOTION: Sheri Emerson made the motion that the Law and Justice Committee finalize the Benchmarking Report and the Executive Committee give the report final approval. Cheri Kilty seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

6. 2006 DV Commission Work (Strategic) Plan

Commission members divided into committees to develop a 2006 work plan.

Education-Outreach Committee

Mike Sledge presented the 2006 work plan.

- Publish the Annual report
- Conduct one presentation at each quarterly Commission meeting on a current DV issue
- Coordinate DV Awareness Month
- Discuss the meaning of education and outreach with emphasis on how to promote the Commission's work
- Submit at least 2 article to local newspapers
- Decide whether or not to publish the DV Resource Handbook – put online?
- Complete and maintain the website
- Bring in a national speaker for a workshop (consider)
- Work with Executive Committee on strategies for the small cities “buy-in”
- Determine with Executive Committee if the safety audit should have a media “kick-off”

#06-07 MOTION: Mike Sledge made the motion to accept the Education – Outreach Committee 2006 Work Plan. Kathleen Marshall seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Law and Justice Committee

Shannon Meyer presented the 2006 work plan.

- Refine content and continue to produce the benchmark report
- Conduct safety audit II and the audit of the criminal justice system of the City of Blaine
- Continue participation in the Coordinated Judicial Response to DV Committee of the Law and Justice Council and the DV and Firearms Workgroup
- Continue participation in the quarterly meeting of probation and DV treatment providers and respond to any emerging issues
- Implement training for law enforcement and jail as per GTEA

Victim and Children Support Committee

Cynthia Bauleke presented the 2006 work plan

- Sue will continue to serve on the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Committee
- Staff will address any final issues from the “arrests of women” portion of the first safety audit
- Research implementing DV screening at Interfaith and Sea Mar Clinic
- Work with Meridian School District on domestic violence response protocol
- Conduct safety audit focus groups
- Discuss the WSCADV Fatality Review Report again
- Participate and stay abreast of work group on domestic violence and child abuse

#06-08 MOTION: Mike Sledge made the motion to accept the Law and Justice Committee and the Victim and Children Support Committee 2006 Work Plans. Burton Dickerson seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

7. Adjourn: 11:55 a.m.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 25, 2006 at St. Luke’s Community Health Center from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.