



NC Human Trafficking Commission: General Meeting
Thursday, October 19, 2023, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Cypress Room (C-1-1225)

10:05 AM – Swearing in of new Commissioners:
Judge Amanda “Amy” Wilson, Chief District Court (16A)
Kindl Detar, Special Deputy Attorney General

Judge Hill

Before officially opening the meeting, Commission Chair Haigwood welcomed everyone and began with the swearing in. Judge Wilson and Kindl were sworn in by Judge Hill.

10:12 AM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance

Jennifer Haigwood

Commission Chair Haigwood opened the meeting and called to order. She then conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Commissioners in attendance at the meeting were Amy Auth, Maggie Brewer, Judge Wilson (exited 10:32 am), Jennifer Haigwood, Judge Hill, Deana Joy, Kindl Detar (exited 11:01 am), Dr. Myers, Tina Pennington (joined 10:14 am), Caitlin Ryland, Billy West (joined 10:30 am), Angelica Wind. Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, Grants Manager, Jacqueline Kehinde, Data Manager, Ashawntee Cabello, Court Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher, and Administrative Secretary, Lauren Amato. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

10:14 AM – Ethics Reminder

Jennifer Haigwood

Approval of the Minutes: 8/24/2023

(See Meeting minutes August 24, 2023)

Commission Chair Haigwood read the required ethics statement. Commissioner Ryland omitted herself from participating in the scoring and discussion of 16.21 applications as her organization applied. She then thanked all in attendance and asked if there were changes to the minutes from the August 24th meeting. No changes were noted. Commissioner Auth made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Ryland seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

10:16 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Jennifer Haigwood

Legislative Committee

Christine Long on behalf of Caitlin Brooks

(See Legislative Committee Update)

Commission Executive Director Christine Long provided a few updates. The state budget has finally passed. Within that state budget, a few things were applicable to the Commission and human trafficking. We received an increase in general operating to allow funding that makes our Administrative Secretary a permanent position. We have permission to create the position and make the position full time now. Our regular recurring appropriation to operate the Commission was \$250,000.00/year. The new recurring budget to operate the

Commission is \$336,336.00/year. It isn't quite enough to conduct an annual conference on our own or some of the contracts we previously had in the past with trainers or presenters, but it is a move forward. We also received a permanent grant appropriation for human trafficking specifically. It will be \$500,000.00/year recurring to go towards grants to human trafficking and direct services agencies. It allows us to establish a time-limited grants manager in this biennium, so we can use a portion of the \$500,000.00 to have a time-limited position to help get them going. The grant maximum per agency in each state fiscal year is \$50,000.00. We've included a few other human trafficking updates found in the budget, too. The NC Council for Women and Youth Involvement was awarded \$450,000.000 recurring operating for human trafficking and can use the money for up to two full-time positions. We've reached out to them and will connect with them to talk about how we can best work together. There were a few directed grants within the budget specific to human trafficking and agencies doing human trafficking work including Changing Destinies; Friend to Friend; NCIHT; The Lantern Project. It is our understanding that these grants will be going through OSBM. In the spring, we worked on a short bill to make some corrections to the human trafficking statutes. There is interest in doing a larger legislative package for next session. The interested legislators have engaged Bill Woolf to help hold those ideas together. Bill will give us a short update later in the meeting.

Public Safety Committee

Christine Long on behalf of Marc Nichols

Commission Executive Director Christine Long shared that we don't have anything new for the Public Safety Committee at this time. Commissioner Nichols is still very committed to the Interdiction for the Protection of Children training and continuing to help with it.

Public Health Committee

Jennifer Haigwood

Commissioner Haigwood announced there hasn't been any movement for the Public Health Committee. It is on hold for now.

Appropriations Committee

Angelica Wind, Committee Chair

Kathy Estrada, Grants Administrator

(See Appropriations Report)

Commissioner Wind reported the Appropriations Committee has been very active. She then handed over the report to Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, for the HTC grant updates. Kathy talked about the 4 grants and monitoring update.

Section 16.20 – Grants for Nonprofit Organizations Providing Services to Victims of Human Trafficking
There are 17 agencies in 16.20A and 16.20B that have received their first disbursement payment, and 2 agencies that have received their second disbursement payment. We have received 15 quarterly financial and progress report packets, and they are currently being processed. Once processed, they can be moved to the next disbursement list. Scoring for agencies has concluded as well with the following results: 14 agencies scored moderate risk and 3 agencies scored high risk. We have conducted 4 site visits to date. The way that the 16.20 monitoring plan is structured requires site visits for both moderate and high-risk agencies. The second HTC report to the General Assembly has been completed and published.

Section 16.22 – Facility Improvement Grants for Organizations that Provide Services to Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

We have awarded 72 agencies through state funding for this section. We're working on processing quarter 4 reports and finalizing close out documents for the remaining agencies. These grants were only intended to last one year. The contracts with the agencies ended on 6/30/2023, but we had requested to extend many of the contracts in the state budget. Now the budget has gone through, we are able to issue extensions and are

working on that through DocuSign. Quarter 1-3 reports are approved and finished. Some of the agencies are ready for close out. Many of the agencies are also 16.23 agencies so the site visits serve a dual purpose. There are 15 agencies that will need site visits before close out. Lastly, there is 1 agency we must initiate noncompliance procedures with and are working with legal for that now.

Section 16.23 – Economic Assistance Funds for Organizations that Provide Services to Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

This was a large section of funding totaling \$15 million; \$7.5 million for domestic violence and \$7.5 million for sexual assault. To date, we have disbursed \$4,695,756.92. A total of 143 awards have gone out for disbursement; 67 awards for sexual assault agencies and 76 for domestic violence agencies. Our grants managers are working to review all reports now, which can be retroactive to 2021. It's reviewed by the grant managers then goes to a second review. The second review is completed by the Data Manager or Grant Administrator. The accounting system at AOC changed to a new system and there was a blackout period from October 9 through October 18, so we were not able to make any disbursements between those dates. It has just reopened, and we can send those disbursement lists to finance, but finance also must learn the new system.

Section 16.21 – Competitive Grants for Nonprofit Organizations Providing Services to Victims of Human Trafficking

This is our newest competitive grant for a total of \$3,800,000. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on August 11, 2023, and closed on September 11, 2023. The RFP is posted on our website as well as on the NC EVP website (formerly known as NC IPS). We received a total of 24 applications; 23 received electronically and 1 received via postal service. We established the minimum grant amount to be \$50,000.00 with a maximum of \$200,000.00. The requirements can be found in the report and on our website. Some of the requirements came from Senate Bill (SB) 105, but we included some of our own requirements as well. There were several required attachments for applicants in this section as well. The applications received on September 11 went through a rigorous review process. First, the grant manager, Mel, uses the checklist to ensure all required documents are submitted. Then the secondary review is conducted by Kathy or Christine. Any applications with missing or incomplete requirements documents are presented to the Appropriations Committee. There were 7 agencies that had issues in their application. The Committee allowed an extension of 48 hours to agencies to address any issues. Agencies that did not submit completed items in time are then excluded from scoring and moving further in the competitive process. Scoring will take place on the remaining applicants on the 23rd and 25th, and the Appropriations Committee will meet to discuss and vote on the actual grant awards. There is a list of agencies that applied within the presentation, but that does not mean that all of these will go to scoring. There were 4 agencies that did not submit the requirements by the extension deadline including Justice Ministries, Jeff Gordon CAC, Safelight, and The Lantern Project. These 4 applications of the 24 will not go to scoring. We used a scoring matrix to score the applications going from what SB 105 listed. The breakdown can be found in the report. We complete a risk assessment and a standard self-assessment based on what they submit from the RFP. Both items are already determined scores that are listed on the score card; however, the Committee members can opt to adopt our score or choose to score it themselves. We also scored the geographic area because it was difficult to score. The same concept applied to this item so the Committee members could use our recommended score or score it themselves. We include the scoring document in the report and how we recommend scoring to happen. The committee member could score the application according to our questions under each section or they could score it based on their own scoring method. We recommended questions, but they weren't mandatory. We have scoring scheduled for 10/23/2023 and 10/25/2023 between 12pm and 4pm with an option of virtual or in person. We plan to have all the scores in by 5pm on 10/30/2023 then schedule an Appropriations Committee meeting to talk about the scores and who will be moving on. Some of the Committee members may have to recuse themselves from some applications if there is a conflict of interest.

Monitoring Update

In section 16.20, 4 of the 17 site visits have been completed. We'll continue with the site visits since we were ahead on the reports, but priority is to get the funds out to agencies first.

In section 16.23, we are planning to schedule site visits for mid to late November. We plan to cover the Eastern, Western, and Charlotte area to complete site visits for multiple agencies. It's all dependent upon how quickly we get the reports reviewed and the disbursements out, though. We are exploring Grants Managements Systems in November as well.

10:48 AM – Update on 2024 NC Conference

Update on Legislative Package

Bill Woolf with the Safe House Project and The Woolf Group Strategic Solutions

Bill Woolf shared some updates with everyone. He came for a 2-day meeting to meet with different stakeholders from varying angles across the state of NC. The mission was to understand where NC needs to go to really enact legislation that would provide for a comprehensive response to human trafficking across the spectrum of the 3 P's – prevention, prosecution, and protection. We started this process and came up with an initial draft document to which the HTC provided some input. Then we met with stakeholders to understand where we stand with trafficking. Bill and his team have been working to build a comprehensive response document. They have the document about 75% done and the goal is to have it completed by the end of October to submit to the HTC for additional feedback. The next steps would be to share the document with the legislators and prepare draft legislation to put up in the next term. The state legislature is really responsive to what the needs are that we are presenting. Hopefully, we can work in additional support to the grant funding side. We plan to communicate that to the legislators as well, so they know that there is good work being done with the funds that have been appropriated, but much of that is because of the leadership that's driven within the Commission. Commissioner Ryland inquired more specifics about the report; what are we looking at – what's been done in other states versus NC or just based on feedback? Bill responded that while working with the legislators, we identify areas in other states where they have been successful in solving these problems. The real focus is on what the specific state level gaps identified in NC are and what the solutions would be. NC has some unique problems, but also has some ability to provide some unique solutions. We want to model off other successes, but also create solutions specific to the infrastructure and responsibilities within NC.

The Safe House project contacted the HTC after hearing that we couldn't hold a conference this year. They felt they had the capacity to host the conference and they have now shared a save the date for their conference. January 24th and 25th, 2024 is the Anti-Trafficking Alliance Conference in Charlotte, NC. There are three tracks/focal areas during the conference including law enforcement, nonprofits/service providers, healthcare professionals, and leadership in any of these disciplines. The structure will be a few plenary sessions and a couple of breakout sessions specific to the previously mentioned tracts. There will be a strong focus on coordination and collaboration across these multiple disciplines, and the techniques will be person-centered, and trauma informed. There is a cost associated with the conference and covers food, but the Safe House Project is working to develop scholarships to help anyone that might be limited due to funding. Commissioner Myers inquired about a virtual option for the conference and Bill plans to look more into that suggestion. The information for the conference is online and can be found [here](#). Commissioner Ryland noted the various disciplines would benefit from engaging each other and collaborating during the conference.

11:04 AM – General Staff Report

Christine Long

Commission Executive Director Christine Long provided some updates. The first is that Nancy Hagan has left the Commission. Her last day was September 22nd. We have not posted anything regarding the position yet, but we think it would be wise to strategically adjust the job description to be more specific to suit our needs

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first. The second is the four trainings we have conducted with the help of Ashey, our Court Management Specialist, and our Sontanna, MSW intern. They have both attended some of the trainings that Christine has given, and Ashley is ready to launch some trainings on her own. We've done trainings with the Department of Labor, Guardian Ad Litem, and a couple others. Appointment letters for Commissioners should have come by now, but they all haven't yet. The appointment offices are close to issuing the remaining letters. We'll be sending out information about ethics education training (every 2 years) and then by April 15th, the statement of economic interests is due. A particular pot of funding, VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) is decreasing again. They are taking a little more than 40% decrease from last year's funding. The past couple years their funding has been cut in half each year, forcing them to only fund half the agencies they used to.

11:15 AM – Public Comment

Jennifer Haigwood

Commission Chair Haigwood opened the floor for public comment. Commissioner Brewer asked about the length of the HT trainings. Christine responded that they are typically an hour to an hour and a half to cover the material, provide examples, and leave room for questions. Commission Chair Haigwood noted the next General Commission meeting is schedule for Thursday, December 14th, 2023. She is not available that day nor is Commissioner Brewer. We may look at rescheduling but keep 12/14 as a tentative hold on your calendar. Christine commented that we are trying a new platform so we weren't sure if it would allow us to hold public comment. We are still working out the details with the new platform but will make sure anyone can comment during public comment next meeting. Commissioner Brewer mentioned Department of Adult Corrections (DAC) has a program called the tablet program. So, all incarcerated offenders have a tablet assigned to them. We are launching a notice that when they turn their tablet on, they have to answer some questions specific to human trafficking. Are they aware? Are they a victim? Do they have any anonymous information? This information will be funneled to their special operations section and will determine where to send that information next. Commissioner Brewer will provide an update on the launch when she can.

11:18 AM – Adjournment

Jennifer Haigwood

Commissioner Brewer moved to adjourn the meeting. Angelica seconded the motion and Commission Chair Haigwood adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is Thursday, December 14th, 2023.