



NC Human Trafficking Commission: General Meeting
Thursday, August 24, 2023, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Hickory Boardroom (A-1-101)

10:02 AM – Swearing in of new Commissioner: Dr. Corinna Myers, DO, MPH

Judge Ussery

Before officially opening the meeting, Commission Chair Haigwood welcomed everyone and began with the swearing in. Dr. Myers was sworn in by Judge Ussery.

10:04 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 Maggie Brewer, Judge Ussery, Jennifer Haigwood, Deana Joy, Kindl Detar (on behalf of Jasmine McGhee), Dr. Myers, Tina Pennington (joined 10:01 am), Aaron Jacobson (on behalf of Caitlin Ryland; joined 10:03 am), Suzanne Mauney-Smith, and Angelica Wind (joined 10:03 am). Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Project Analyst, Nancy Hagan, 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.

10:06 AM – Ethics Reminder

Jennifer Haigwood

Approval of the Minutes: 6/29/2023

(See Meeting minutes June 29, 2023)

Commission Chair Haigwood read the required ethics statement. She then thanked all in attendance and asked if there were changes to the minutes from the June 29th meeting. No changes were noted. Judge Ussery made a motion to approve the minutes and Commissioner Wind seconded the motion. The minutes were passed unanimously.

10:08 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Jennifer Haigwood

Legislative Committee

Christine Long on behalf of Caitlin Brooks

Commission Executive Director Christine Long provided a few updates with more to come in October. Back in June, there was a bill going through where we did some cleaning up with a couple pieces of the human trafficking laws. One of them, for example, was changing our definition of human trafficking. The federal definition of human trafficking has the term 'obtain' in it, so we made some changes to ours to match the federal law. Then a few other changes that some prosecutors on the committee suggested. We had a longer list that we hoped to get through, but we ran out of time. Our conversations down at the General Assembly have continued, and there's interest in doing something larger in the next session. Commission Chair Haigwood commented the budget is still in a holding pattern.

Public Safety Committee

Marc Nichols

Commissioner Nichols was pulled into another matter last minute and couldn't attend. Commission Executive Director Christine Long shared that we are still partnering with the State Highway Patrol on the Interdiction for the Protection of Children training. Commissioner Nichols helps set up those trainings. Attendees of the training receive certificates at the end of the program, and we've requested attendees receive Justice Academy credits as well. We're working with the State Highway Patrol Lieutenant on the best way to obtain these credits.

Public Health Committee

Jennifer Haigwood

Commissioner Haigwood announced there hasn't been any movement for the Public Health Committee.

Appropriations Committee

Angelica Wind

(See Appropriations Report)

Commissioner Wind reported the Appropriations Committee has been very active. The next Appropriations Committee Meeting is this Monday, August 28th at 1pm. 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 16.20A – Grants for Nonprofit Organizations Providing Services to Victims of Human Trafficking

There is a total of 15 applications that have been reviewed and approved by the committee. We are 100% obligated with 9% of funds expended. Minor adjustments had to be made to the original amount to ensure all funds went out to agencies that submitted applications. Of the 15 agencies that applied, 11 have received their first disbursement payment and the remaining 4 agencies have their contracts in DocuSign for signature. Quarterly financial and progress report packets have been sent to agencies. We're currently working on risk assessments and setting up site visits. The General Assembly report is in progress and due on September 1, 2023. The report and schedule will be coming soon.

Section 16.20B– Grants to Develop, Strengthen, or Expand Human Trafficking Victim Service Programs

There are only 2 named agencies- Compassion to Act and North Carolina Institute Against Human Trafficking. We are 100% obligated with 13% of funds expended. The first disbursements have gone out to the two agencies. Compassion to Act is set to receive \$250,000/year for two years and North Carolina Institute Against Human Trafficking is set to receive \$320,000.00/year for two years. Risk assessments are being completed as are in-person meetings. The General Assembly report is in progress and due on September 1, 2023. The report will be coming soon.

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

There are 44 requested extensions out of the 72 agencies awarded through state funding. (Note: 38 extensions were reported during the meeting.) We're working on processing quarter 4 reports and finalizing close out documents for the remaining 28 agencies. (Note: 34 agencies were reported during the meeting.) 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. There is a total of 139 awards with 66 for sexual assault agencies and 73 for domestic violence agencies. There are 115 awards that have gone out for disbursement. The first, second, third, and total

amounts disbursed can be found in the report. We are not 100% obligated at this point. Currently, we are 86.5% obligated with 33% of funds expended. The percentage obligated is likely a little higher than reported here because we have continued taking applications past the deadline. We've been working with agencies on revisions to ensure they receive funding. Our last vote for 16.23 agencies will be in our upcoming Appropriations Committee Meeting on Monday. The committee will meet to discuss how to address any unobligated funds. There are at least two agencies that have denied applying for these funds and several more that did not apply for all their funds. These funds must be obligated by December 21, 2024. There are some agencies to vote on, some contracts circulating DocuSign, and disbursements going out this week.

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 to be disbursed. The Request for Proposals (RFP) was released on August 11, 2023, and closes 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 worked with procurement to post and advertise this grant to reach the masses. A grant manager has been hired for section 16.21 and starts on Monday. Many of the questions received about this grant were about the requirements. The requirements can be found in the report and on our website. There are several required attachments for applicants in this section. The attachments will assist in the pre-award risk assessment and the scoring of the applications. The Appropriations Committee will discuss Monday how the scoring process will work. In the report, there is a breakdown of how the 16.21 competitive applications will be scored. These coincide with Senate Bill 105 and the requirements.

Monitoring Update

We've been working on the internal controls questionnaires and risk assessments. The internal controls questionnaires have been sent out and returned by agencies. The risk assessments help us put the agencies in a risk category and have been completed by our Data Manager. We're monitoring the agencies based on how they scored on their risk assessment and revisit that figure annually. We're setting up site visit schedules. In section 16.20, agencies that score medium or high risk will require site visits. Since section 16.23 is so large, only agencies that score high risk or we feel need site visits will require site visits. The site visit schedule will be released in September for 16.23 and 16.20 agencies. October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time to recognize victims and raise awareness about the devastating impact of domestic violence, so we wanted to avoid site visits this month if possible.

10:21 AM – Staff Report

Dr. Nancy Hagan and Christine Long

(See Staff Report)

Dr. Hagan talked about some of the trainings we've conducted this summer. We try to work with stakeholders throughout various arenas across North Carolina. The first training was a webinar with GAP connections, a membership organization that has all types of growers (primary tobacco) from an 11-state region. We previously did on-farm trainings, but they've transitioned to web-based trainings. The panel presentation was in partnership with USDOL and Polaris. The webinar was hosted in the evening so more could attend. We tried to address the full spectrum of human trafficking in agriculture. The second training was CIT, or Crisis Intervention Training, held in partnership with Sandhills Community College in Montgomery County. There are three counties that host trainings every year that we present with, and Montgomery County CIT is the last week in July. The personnel that were present this year included correction staff, EMTs, law enforcement, local PDs, and Sheriff's departments. The third training was with the State Chapter of the International Association of Forensic Nurses. They held their annual conference at UNC Chapel Hill and invited us to speak. Two members of the Public Health Committee gave presentations including Dr. Hagan and the Survivor Network. Commission Chair Haigwood commented that Dr. Hagan would be training NCDOL in October as well.

Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, noted the last few months have been very grant intensive, and have been a lot of work. The initiatives for human trafficking have been slow going but we hope to be at a turning point to prioritize those initiatives again soon. The 16.22 facility improvement grants are state money so the grants management team can't work on items for that section of funding. The work for these grants has been done by mostly Lauren and me, with Nancy and Ashley helping, too. We're at a point now where about half of those grants are going to close and the remaining are almost at the ends of the grants. This will free up some time to focus on strategic initiatives that the Commission wants to accomplish. We're eager for the state budget to pass to plan out the remainder of the year and move forward with other items as well. Our Court Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher, is on an AOC Grant with Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) for training courts and court communities. This is a grant that the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) had and then moved under the Commission on October 1, 2022. This grant is GCC VAWA money and has been renewed for 2023-2024. Ashley has been working on the Interdiction for the Protection of Children with Lauren helping some too. They did a training in partnership with the State Highway Patrol in July in Jacksonville, NC. It went well and was well attended. There are a few other areas that have requested this training as well. This is the evidence-based Texas training focused on interdiction stops that highway patrol or other officers do. It teaches them to slow down, pay attention to signs/signals and is aimed at helping identify missing or exploited people, and high-risk threats to children. The SHP has created a form and process for collecting information when patrol stops are made, or missing people are identified. It's been very successful in Texas and has rolled out in other states. Our hope is to help get the trainings going and for the SHP to continue the trainings afterwards. Ashley also started working on updating our Resource Directory, intended for agencies doing service or interaction with victims/survivors of trafficking. This is the biggest update we've done since COVID. She's reaching out to agencies already on the directory for updates and any new agencies that aren't on there yet. We have a new MSW Intern from NCSU, Sontanna Cremins. She started yesterday and will be with us until April for 3 days a week.

Dr. Hagan shared that she and Margaret Henderson co-authored several bulletins and articles around human trafficking that are conjoint with the School of Government and the HTC. From that work, they were contacted by the National Institute for Statistical studies and invited to present at an international web-based conference in the spring. From that, there was a desire among the statisticians to issue a special edition of one of their journals around human trafficking and this issue of data. Dr. Hagan and Margaret are now co-authoring an article for a special edition on human trafficking for the American Statistical Association journal, Chance. Margaret Henderson is with the School of Government at UNC Chapel Hill. The chapter that Dr. Hagan and Margaret are writing include the introduction, overview, and raising the issues on the data collection. Some of the other statisticians are writing chapters as well about their area of concern. They'll be providing data analysis tools and research design methods. Dr. Hagan has been a member of the Child Welfare Safety Design team for the last few months. It's a group that meets monthly, and they are revisiting some of the documentation and protocols around safety for children in the child welfare system. Christine noted there are several GCC meetings that we regularly attend as well including Crime Victim Services Meeting, Stop Implementation Planning, and Children's Justice Act Task Force. We ordered books and materials to spend some of our non-recurring funds. Our plan was to find evidence-based programming and specific materials to help the agencies. As the Grants Management team visits these agencies, they can take different material and offer it to them. For example, there's a program calling Seeking Safety that is a substance use treatment model that is trauma-informed and evidence-based. We've had preliminary meetings with AOC's Research, Policy, and Planning division. The division reached out to us and asked if there were projects they could partner on with us. We've just launched the initial plans with them and believe they are going to take a deep dive into our state court data. They would have the ability to extract convictions, cases that were pled down or moved to federal.

AOC has also invited us to partner in a February event at NCCU. Nancy and Ashley are in on those meetings in

their very early stages. This will be in partnership with the Chief Justice and more information will come soon. We are not having an annual conference this year but have been talking with The Safe House Project to target January 24-25th, 2024 in Charlotte. There is a Region IV U.S. Administration for Children and Families group. They met consistently in person before COVID. The meetings have picked back up in person and we will be hosting the January meeting here in Raleigh on January 31-February 1st. The was one last item not on the report worth mentioning. Around the same time the Appropriations act came out, we had a great meeting with National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). They've developed a specialized program within specifically to help children within the child welfare system that go missing. There was a meeting yesterday to pick things up where we previously left off as well as talk of hosting some other virtual trainings.

10:43 AM – Public Comment

Jennifer Haigwood

Commission Chair Haigwood opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

10:44 AM – Adjournment

Jennifer Haigwood

Judge Ussery moved to adjourn the meeting. Commission Chair Haigwood adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is Thursday, October 19th, 2023 (formerly scheduled as October 26th).