



NC Human Trafficking Commission: General Meeting
Thursday, December 7th, 2022, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Hickory Boardroom (A1-101)

10:00 AM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance

Jennifer Haigwood

Commission Chair Haigwood opened the meeting and called the meeting to order. She then conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Commissioners in attendance at the meeting were Maggie Brewer, Judge Scott Ussery (joined 10:10 am), Jennifer Haigwood, Holly Jones on behalf of Jasmine McGhee, Marc Nichols, Tina Pennington, Caitlin Ryland, Suzanne Mauney-Smith, DA Billy West, and Angelica Wind. Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Project Analyst, Nancy Hagan, Grants Managers, Roxana Zelada-Lewis and Kristen Howe, Court Management Specialist, Tara Minter, and Administrative Secretary, Lauren Amato. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

10:05 AM – Ethics Reminder

Jennifer Haigwood

Approval of the Minutes 10/27/2022

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 October 27th meeting. No changes were noted. Commissioner Nichols made a motion to approve the minutes and the minutes were passed unanimously.

10:10 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Legislative Committee

Jennifer Haigwood on behalf of Caitlin Brooks

Commissioner Haigwood reported that the long legislative session will be here at the end of January. The Commission and Ms. Brooks were looking at several technical changes amongst other items for consideration.

Public Safety Committee

Marc Nichols

Commissioner Nichols thanked the hard work and training of law enforcement. He reports that there has been an uptick on cases involving human trafficking thanks to the SBI, leadership, training, and law enforcement across the state. Commissioner Nichols reported that the Justice Academy is working on increasing awareness in addition to more training. There is a new training module put out by the International Association Chief of Police that officers are following as well. That will be taking place throughout the Justice Academy in Edneyville. Commissioner Nichols stated that there are plans to participate in IPC training coming up this year, with more details to follow. Rick Hoffman, one of the contract experts through the Commission, will be doing a training class specifically for law enforcement and prosecutors later in December.

Public Health Committee

Jennifer Haigwood

No public health committee update. The appointed representative, Tommy Bernard, has submitted his resignation to the Commission and Governor's office. Dr. Bernard suggested a few names for potential replacement, and the commission hopes to fill that seat soon.

Appropriations Committee

Angelica Wind

(See PP Slides for Commission meeting 12.7.2022)

Commissioner Wind reported that there are four different sections of money that need to go out. In terms of the Facility Improvement Grant (section 16.22), the Committee has awarded all funding for this appropriation through two rounds of requests for proposals and were able to fund all programs, although not at the full amount requested in the second round. Staff are currently working on contract amendments using DocuSign. The target is for payment of Round 2 awards that have been fully executed to be sent out before December 20th, 2022. Expenses reporting and performance measure forms were sent out to all the grantees as well. A technical assistance webinar has been scheduled for this Friday, December 9th to provide guidance to all grantees on how to complete the reports and what required documentation/information we will need. Staff are currently completing a risk assessment tool to use for monitoring.

The economic assistance funds (section 16.23) are for 88 Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault agencies identified as eligible for NCCWYI (North Carolina Council for Women and Youth Involvement). Economic Assistance Funds can be applied as early as July 1, 2021. Grant Contract end is being suggested as June 30, 2024. The RFP was released on Wednesday, October 26th and applications are due via email on Wednesday, December 14th at 5:00 pm. The commission has only received 18 applications to date and held an information webinar on Tuesday, November 1st that included explaining ARPA funding, reviewing the application process, discussing monitoring, reporting, and answering questions. Grants managers documented the webinar questions and sent them out to the programs.

The next section staff are working on is for grants to named agencies for direct services to human trafficking victims (section 16.20). The legal department at AOC has drafted the terms and conditions. The new grants manager is in the process of being hired for managing these 25 grants. Staff have not issued an RFP yet for these grants. The Appropriations Committee is meeting this Monday, December 12th. Commissioner Ryland suggested future strategic planning around how organizations are funded for more long-term planning. There is a need for multi-year funding that can sustain the work.

10:28 AM – Sneak Peek into Charlotte Data Report on Human Trafficking of Minors

(Release date of full report is January 2023)

Hannah Arrowood and Shawna Pagano,

Charlotte Human Trafficking Task Force Initiative

(See Data & the Story it Tells December 2022)

The goal of the report was to strategically figure out a way to collect data specifically around the victimization of minors. There were several objectives that the task force wanted to do for this project to include:

- Take a close look at the prevalence of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) within Mecklenburg County
- Establish/Continue the collaboration of primary agencies serving minor victims within Mecklenburg County
- Establish a sustainable method for collecting, reviewing, and analyzing data around CSEC
- Provide reliable data to Charlotte Metro Human Trafficking Task Force to equip providers and city leaders to advocate for families
- Shift the narrative around the issue of child sex trafficking to one of facts and not opinions

The team started very basic with four main data element points-

- 1) the age of the child upon CSEC identification: what were they when they encountered that community service agency and were identified as a victim. The age of consent is a big point of contention (it gets harder to prove when they are 16 or 17 years old to prove whether choice was involved) but based on the data found, around 70% of the identified victims in Mecklenburg County were 15 years old or younger.
- 2) the zip code of the child's primary residence (not of trafficking); must be within Mecklenburg County. This may or may not be where the trafficking occurred, but we wanted to look at it. Within Mecklenburg County alone, there were over 30 zip codes impacted.
- 3) what was the interaction with Law Enforcement (Victim only or Criminal Charges also) – involved in the juvenile court system?
- 4) The status of victimization: suspected or confirmed. Along with agency interaction: we confirmed it if law enforcement could confirm it. If law enforcement couldn't prove it, then it was identified as suspected.

The following are the future data elements the team will be working on including:

- 5) Vulnerabilities present before victimization occurred: what were those vulnerabilities/ACES (adverse childhood experiences) that kids were already coming with
- 6) Length of trafficking involvement before identification
- 7) Social autopsies on random cases for a deep dive into vulnerabilities: tracking cases from the first onset of entering a governmental system (doing so right now with 3 cases) and breaking down their life to see how many interactions with professionals there were before it was identified that trafficking was happening
- 8) Prosecution(s) tied to victimization: drive prosecution and get the bad guys off the streets

There are five key members participating in data collection including the Department of Youth & Family Services – Special Victims Unit (responsible for overseeing all sexual abuse cases), Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center, Atrium Health Care – Emergency Room/HT Unit, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department – HT Unit, and Present Age Ministries – Primary Service Provider for CSEC Youth. There are other vetted members of the task force that are often engaged to ensure accuracy of information. These agencies include but are not limited to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Guardian Ad Litem, Council for Children's Rights, and Teen Health Connection. The team has an administrative order that allows for the sharing of information that pertains to the welfare of the child. In that administrative order are specific agencies named so we can ensure that child is getting what they need.

This data is going to drive 3 specific outcomes that the task force hopes to see including educating communities, developing prevention strategies, and closing the gaps. To request a copy of the report or to learn details about the event on January 11th, email info@presentageministries.org to get on the distribution list. To request a copy of the template or to set up a call, contact Hannah.arrowood@presentageministries.org.

10:57 AM – NC SBI Introduction and Update

Casey Fillinger,

Assistant Special Agent in Charge, SBI HT Unit

Commissioner Haigwood welcomed Casey Fillinger, the new Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the SBI Human Trafficking Unit. ASAC Fillinger introduced himself and gave a brief history of the newly formed SBI Human Trafficking Unit. The SBI has been doing operations as liaisons since 2018 and have now received the ability to do so full-time. There are 8 full-time slots and four have been filled. They have been operational since April and have recently added a fifth agent to the team. There are multiple cases going on around the state, most of them have been proactive cases on targets they have been able to identify. They are still assisting local agencies as much as possible. There is a lot they can do to help from intel gathering to insulting. The cases are very intel heavy, and intel driven. It takes a long time to develop these intel packets on targets from everything to open source to closed sources. They are looking for an intel analyst.

11:10 AM – Contractor Updates:

- **Mandatory Reporting Tool (Release date January 2023)**

Sara DePasquale, UNC SOG

*(See **Contractor Update HT Mandated Reporting**)*

Sarah DePasquale provided an update about a tool they were contracted with at the school to create to address mandatory reporting about human trafficking. There was a real need to have a usable tool for people, particularly who are working in the field of human trafficking, working with victims, working with survivors to understand when they're mandated to make a report. Mandatory reporting is complex with all the various laws, what applies to you as a possible reporter, and what you need to comply with. Mandatory reporting applies to both labor and sex trafficking. This tool is designed to help understand which law gets triggered depending upon the client population you're working with. It applies to providers who are working with victims/survivors of human trafficking, DSS, and law enforcement. The tool includes a booklet primer, introduction (including practice tips), definitions, reporting laws for juveniles and agency response, reporting laws for adults and agency response, flow charts, illustrations, and case examples. North Carolina is a universal mandated reporting state meaning it applies to everyone (required to report if you see it). There will be a booklet printed as well as accessibility online (i.e., on the School of Government website).

- **NC Laws and Case Precedent**

Lindsey Lane, Human Trafficking Institute

Senior Legal Counsel Lindsey Lane shared that the goal in the next several weeks is to provide some guides (physical resources) to practitioners in North Carolina to help guide/interpret some of this statutory language and to help streamline some of the processes in the state. The goal is to develop a charging document that would help break down the human trafficking laws i.e., what that section of the code is, what that language looks like, what it would look like in our court information systems to create some consistency across the board for prosecutors and law enforcement. This will be useful in N.C. because what you will see is the more training, the more awareness, the more education you provide across the state, the referral rates (victims are being identified, services are being provided) and arrest rates will go up. There are also some products the HTI is working on to specialize and tailor for North Carolina including Best Practices and Prosecutorial Led Investigations. Lastly, the HTI will be preparing a restitution guide that will breakdown into flow charts what that statute looks like. It is a requirement for prosecutors to seek restitution on behalf of victims and this will make this process very easy for prosecutors, law enforcement, and service providers for those advocating on behalf of witnesses to know what the laws are and to make sure that is done for them.

- **NC Strategic Planning**

The Woolf Group

The Woolf Group provided an update about some strategic planning initiatives. John Freeman talked about building a sustainable model.

12:00 PM – Program Update: Hope for Justice

Kerry Dodson,

Regional Manager

*(See **HFJ RISE Project**)*

Kerry Dodson provided an update about the North Carolina Regional Center for Hope for Justice. Since opening in 2008, they are now operating in 30 locations across 5 continents. The four pillars they operate on are to prevent exploitation, rescue victims, restore lives, and reform society. The work done provides holistic survivor-centered care. They are looking to develop a network of regional centers across the United States, and they are starting to work on opening regional centers in North Carolina, specifically Charlotte. Every regional center will have investigators, trainers, case managers, clinical therapists, and sector experts. The target is to launch in January. One of the key pieces of the program is the RISE program. A federal grant was

recently received to fund the RISE program and RISE stands for restore, inspire, strengthen, and empower. The goal is to contribute to the sustainable improvement of the wellbeing, safety, and self-sufficiency of survivors of human trafficking and support through community engagement and comprehensive Case Management in Charlotte and the surrounding areas. The areas that they plan to serve are 8 counties in Charlotte to include Mecklenburg, Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, and Union over the course of five years. Senior investigator, Bill Loucks can be contacted at Bill.Loucks@hopeforjustice.org or Regional Manager, Kerry Dodson at Kerry.Dodson@hopeforjustice.org for more information.

12:20 PM – Chair Remarks

Jennifer Haigwood

Committee Chair Haigwood shared that this was her last meeting as chair of the commission. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as chair for the last 3 years. She thanked everyone for the opportunity and for all that they have taught her. She plans to remain on the Commission for some time as designee for the department of labor.

12:23 PM – Staff Report

Christine Long and Nancy Hagan

(See Staff Report Dec 2022)

Executive Director, Christine Long and Project Analyst, Nancy Hagan provided general updates. There have been interviews conducted for the Grants Administrator position as well as an open Grants Manager position. January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and there are some great initiatives planned for that month.

12:46 PM – Public Comment

Jennifer Haigwood

Public comment included Pam Strickland with NC Stop Human Trafficking, Brittany Thomas and Amber Burgess-Cox with the NC Justice Academy.

1:00 PM - Adjournment

Jennifer Haigwood

Commissioner Nichols moved to adjourn the meeting and Judge Ussery seconded the motion to adjourn. Jennifer approved the motion. The next meeting is TBD.