MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING
September 18, 2024, 10:00 am - Noon
Summary Minutes
Miami-Dade County Stephen P. Clark Center
10th floor Conference Room 1011

1. Call to Order: Roll Call & Statement of Quorum Cecile Houry, Chair
   Board members present: Cecile Houry, Isabela Corzo, Vanessa Joseph, Marie Etienne, Rosa Kasse, Luis Almaguer, Daniella Pierre. Board members absent: Marivi Betancourt, Migna Sanchez-Llorens, Miguel De Grandy, Elisabeth Espinosa, and Maria Santamaria. Staff: Leigh Kobrinski, Assistant County Attorney, Chief Cathy Burgos, Mayor's Office, Sonia Grice, Director, CAHSD, Tania Avellanet, Assistant Director, CAHSD, Erin New, Christina Garcia, Department of Human Resources, Office of Fair Employment, Griselle Marino, OCA Media Director, Liz Regalado, Executive Director, DVOB. Guests: Marlen Oria. Meeting called to order at 10:08am.

2. Reasonable Opportunity for Public Comment- None.

3. Chair's Report
   a. CAHSD staff allegations: Ms. Houry informed the board she wanted to address the anonymous allegations received by some (not all) DVOB members and others, via multiple emails regarding serious complaints about an employee in the division. Ms. Burgos, Chief Social Services, expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to meet the board and her appreciation for the work of the board. Chief Burgos invited Ms. Erin New, Department of Human Resources, which is now the department conducting the investigation of the allegations. The following is a summary of the discussion:

      1. Chief Burgos and Director Grice ensured they, along with the mayor, take these allegations seriously.

      2. Ms. Grice reminded the board she promised to make needed changes in the department, and she has begun the process of change.

      3. As a result of these changes, the complaints are/may be related.

      4. Ms. New commented it is not uncommon that complaints may keep coming.

      5. Ms. New expressed her office has a very good working relationship with the department.

      6. They are now in the process of interviewing staff.

      7. Ms. New explained they often include training and proactive approaches to change the work environment and culture.

8. Even if there is nothing substantiating the allegations, the desired outcome is a positive work environment and addressing employees' perceptions.

9. The intent is to improve the county work environment through positive approaches for the benefit of employees, ensuring supervisors have the tools and ability to manage staff appropriately.

10. Resistance to changes is a common reaction.

11. Ms. New discussed a possible outcome that may include mediation services, excluding traditional mediation resulting in monetary settlement, but rather a formal agreement that includes behavior change, more effective management and communication.

12. Ms. Houry asked the timeline for this investigation. Ms. New sated typically 90 days. Ms. Houry asked if the board could be provided with an update at the next DVOB Meeting. Ms. New affirmed an update would be provided at the board's November meeting.

13. Ms. New stated that there must be an official complaint of discrimination based on a protected characteristic to trigger a formal investigation.

14. In cases of harassment, based on job classification, the office will review the complaint, and determine what the appropriate next steps might be.

15. One option could be mediation. It could be a workplace, climate assessment, where a more informal process is the action and assisting the department in making recommendations to correct whatever is impacting employee morale, or specific interpersonal relationship between 2 employees.

16. If there is no desire to file a formal complaint, the office will review the nature of the allegations and information obtained to then decide if there is a need to launch a formal investigation.

17. The office has a separate mediation program called "Let's work together" where the employee can request a voluntary mediation, without a formal complaint involved, by indicating there are interpersonal problems. This can be requested by the employee and or the department.

18. There are also cases where more serious allegations involving any form of fraud or criminal activity. The office may involve the Commission on Ethics or Miami Dade Police, or the Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

19. The office also advises the employees of their right to file complaints with the State and Federal agencies that do the same work.

20. In addition, each department has a fair employment practices liaison that is carefully selected, based on that person's skill set.

21. The office also offers certification training for each EPO on a quarterly basis.

22. The office also provides supervisor training, and an entire section devoted to county-wide training and personnel development. This is under the Recruitment Division of the Department, led by Ms. Virginia Washington.

23. This past summer the department launched a supervisory mandatory 2-day training course for all supervisors. This training includes content and information related to all aspects of managing employees.

24. Ms. New stated her office offers training in workplace civility and respect and specialized training at the request of the department and tailored to whatever needs of the work area are at the time.

25. The office also offers separate courses that are mandatory, such as our the diversity matters e-learning required for departments under the mayor's purview is required to take that course, and it deals specifically with preventing harassment, discrimination, retaliation, anti-bullying and then, in addition to that, training on any one of these topics are offered via half day courses, upon the request of the Department.

26. Question posed to Ms. New: What action do you recommend we take if any board members are contacted about these allegations during this active investigation.

27. When there's an ongoing investigation, it is important to ensure everyone maintain confidentiality as much as possible.

28. You may continue to receive complaints. I would recommend that all complaints are forwarded to staff, and that there's no discussion about anything.

29. The integrity of the internal investigations could be compromised by those discussions.

30. Everyone is encouraged to forward any complaints directly to the office, Chief Burgos, or Ms. Regalado, to appropriately distribute the complaint.

31. Ms. Regalado stated that the biggest concern the Chair and the board had was that the emails were not being acknowledged. The emails and concerns have been acknowledged. This has been a very informative report. It has been addressed with the proper Human Resources Division. The board has been provided with guidance on how to handle any further complaints and we look forward to the update.

32. Ms. Kobrinski reminded and cautioned the board about refraining from any discussion about this investigation that could become a sunshine violation that could potentially be something that this Board will act on.

33. She reminded the board that violating sunshine law could result in criminal penalties and undo actions taken by this board.

34. Ms. Kobrinski urged board members to ensure that if a board member calls another board member, you remind that board member that due to sunshine law, you are not discussing matters that may come before the board for action.

35. Board members may discuss personal matters not related to the work of the board.

b. Update Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Leave Policy ** Need a BCC sponsor.
c. Commission on Ethics: Ms. Regalado will invite to present at the board meeting in November.
d. ** Proposed FY 24-25 DVOB Priorities: Taken out of order. See section after CASHD Report.

4. F& B Tax DVOB Fund Report Homeless Trust
   Homeless Trust was unavailable to attend.
   Pro Forma and Budget with Expenditures and Revenues** Ms. Houry expressed her concern shared by other board members at previous meetings that the board has not been receiving complete fiscal information. See section where this was discussed under FY 24-25 DVOB Priorities.

5. Public Engagement Committee Report Vanessa Joseph, Chair
   - ✓ Event Program
   - ✓ Trust Fund Financial Report

   Note: Report and subsequent discussion and action took place following DVOB FY24-25 Priorities under item 9.

6. *Approval of DVOB Meeting Summary Minutes May 22, July 24, 2024, Meetings ** Minutes July 24, 2024 minutes pulled and not acted upon. Motion by Vanessa Joseph to approve the summary minutes of the May 22, 2024 board meeting. Isabela Corzo second. Meeting minutes of May 22, 2024 approved unanimously.

7. CAHSD Report: Ms. Avellanet provided a written report to the board. The following is a summary of the discussion:
   a. Forging new partnerships to bring more services to the division.
   b. Enhancing our outreach efforts, we remain aware that we face challenges. We remain committed to balancing the mission of this division of working on prevention mechanism for victims of domestic violence and enhancing critical services to the population that we serve.
   c. Reviewed a report of those accomplishments.
   d. Met with the department's communications team to revamp the division's website. We have added the domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking and victims' rights sections to the website. Adding graphics relevant to the population that we serve.
   e. We have established a new partnership with Survivors' Pathway to provide psychological services at Safespace North in the evenings to accommodate employed survivors.
   f. Met with the United States Army section in Miami, have developed an MOU for a Family Advocacy Program. They have a strong family advocacy program to assist victims of sexual assault within the army.
   g. Partnered with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office on the child support program. Ms. Avellanet explained that they have had an existing MOU with the State Attorney's Office criminal division.
   h. The services have expanded to include child support services and will be available on Mondays and Thursdays the entire day. Child support is a very technical program. Having child support and DCF at CVAC is added value. If in the needs assessment it is determined the household needs child support, the DCF program is there to assist in the evaluation of the case.

i. We have renewed our partnership with Americans for Immigrant Justice to provide immigration services at CVAC, and we are conversations to bring the services twice a month for victims with immigration needs.
j. Ms. Robinson and Ms. Avellanet attended the trainings just referenced by Ms. New, as well as the supervisory leadership training/program.
k. We have completed the emotional intelligence training which deals with difficult employees and situations.
l. The Division launched the "Violence, Prevention and Intervention Division Training Academy" on October 21. The Division will begin the academy training with the Attorney General coming to Miami to designate the staff /advocates. They've given us space for 50 advocates to be trained at the Miami-Dade County Police Department's Training Bureau. This will be a 40-hr. training course, and division staff will be designated by the Attorney General.
m. The Training Academy will include the career development team for the shelter staff.
n. The division is also scheduling the first training on Emotional Intelligence, offering the trainings to shelter staff with one session in the South, another session in the North.
o. The division plans to include training in customer service, communications, and conflict resolution from a trauma informed perspective.
p. The division has numerous new hires; specifically advocates. Ms. Avellanet emphasized that one does not become an advocate in a couple of months, but rather years after significant exposure to victims and circumstances. Every victim is unique. Every victim brings a unique set of needs and characteristics. The same with becoming trauma informed.
q. Ms. Avellanet stated they are all working very hard (hard is an understatement) to face the challenges in the division and make the programmatic changes needed to benefit victims and the populations it serves.
r. Ms. Avellanet asked respectfully that the board give the division the time to accomplish these goals.
s. Ms. Houry recognized that it takes a great amount of time to implement the changes desired and thanked Ms. Avellanet for tackling so many important functions in such a short amount of time and preparing the report provided. This is the most information the board has received in a long time.
t. Ms. Houry expressed concern over the Safespace Empowerment Center and the repairs needed and related cost of $100K to the exterior brick wall, and the maintenance aspect which seems to be a challenge.
u. This building is relatively new (2020). Ms. Houry would like to discuss this further and soon during a separate meeting, given the business remaining on the agenda.
v. Ms. Regalado informed the board that she has been in touch with ISD leadership to inquire about the bond the contractor was required to post should something like this occur.
w. She has informed Ms. Avellanet to contact Mr. Montero for guidance on the process of exploring the bond covering the costs of repairs. The key to this bond perhaps being able to cover the costs will be evidence of the quality of the maintenance of the facility.
x. Ms. Houry opened the meeting for questions to Ms. Avellanet from the board.
y. Ms. Pierre asked if the services to victims were contingent on the victim wanting to file for child support benefits.

z. Ms. Avellanet explained that the child support benefits falls under the State Attorney's Office. The services offered by VPID are not contingent upon a victim needing or filing for child support services, provided the individual meets the eligibility criteria.

aa. An example: A victim is at the shelter with 3 children, and the father is not paying child support. They can be evaluated at CVAC for child support services. This is a complex, lengthy and tedious process. She reminded the board that they conduct two separate assessments, a needs assessment and a safety assessment.

bb. Ms. Corzo thanked Ms. Avellanet for this information and report and explained that she has been on the board for almost 3 years, this is the first time she or the board has received this amount of information.

cc. Ms. Corzo stated that the board has been very patient about receiving the information it has asked for. Ms. Corzo recognizes that the department is intentionally working on changing the services and the change takes time.

dd. She hopes the department feels supported by the board and understands that when the board does ask for information, it is simply because it is doing its job and attempting to understand and obtain information about operations, services and needs.

8. **FY 24-25 DVOB Priorities:** Ms. Houry discussed the proposed FY 24-25 DVOB priorities Document provided. Motion: Vanessa Joseph to approve the DVOB priorities for FY24-25. Second: Isabel Corzo. Motion unanimously approved. In addition to focusing on the items listed, the following discussion ensued:

   a. Board's BCC and Mayor relations; this includes CAHSD's salary parity; services and fiscal reporting; Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Leave Policy; DVOB's outreach and public engagement work, revised mission statement and a revamp/redesign of the Annual Report.).

   b. Ms. Houry discussed the concern about the fiscal reporting structure. The following is a summary of the discussion:

      ✓ Fiscal Reporting Structure: knowing the financial position of the funding is a core responsibility of this board.
      ✓ The completeness of fiscal reporting and information received has been a challenge.
      ✓ In specific, obtaining up to date actual expenditures, obtaining a cost allocation budget has been a challenge.
      ✓ There was a period where no actuals were received for over six to eight months.
      ✓ This board needs to consider if it wants to make a recommendation /bring this business matter to the attention of the mayor, given she has the authority to determine the reporting structure on the F&B Tax funds for domestic violence.
      ✓ The current structure is that CAHSD sends invoices to Homeless Trust who then submits the invoices to the finance department.

- ✓ One county department reporting to another county department does not seem logical. This seems redundant.
- ✓ This model seems redundant and non-efficient.
- ✓ In addition to the fiscal reporting structure, the board would like to discuss why the two shelters are under the Homeless Trust's portfolio. This also seems redundant.
- ✓ The department receives calls, for example, regarding facility maintenance issues (chiller, generator, roof, wall repairs) through Homeless Trust when the 2 facilities are operated and administered by CAHSD.
- ✓ In summary, Ms. Houry stated it would help if we had a formal motion by this body requesting the mayor look at the current structure of the 2 CAHSD facilities under the Homeless Trust's portfolio, the fiscal reporting structure and monitoring of the contract. In addition, the board asks the mayor's office to appoint a liaison to the DVOB that is not necessarily CASHD to discuss DV/IPV matters not involving CAHSD, such as the DV leave policy.

a. Motion by Cecile Houry to request a meeting with the Mayor to discuss the work of the board and specifically these three issues:

1. CAHSD" s 2 facilities part of Homeless Trust portfolio,
2. Fiscal reporting structure of the expenditures and revenues and other required reports of the F&B Tax for DV, and
3. Mayor's appointment of a liaison to the DVOB.

Second: Marie Etienne. Roll call vote: Rosa Kasse: Yes. Major Almaguer: Yes. Daniella Pierre: Yes. Cecile Houry: Yes. Dr. Etienne: Yes. Motion carries unanimously.

9. **PEC Report** The following matters were discussed and respective action items**.** Note: Ms. Joseph stepped out of the meeting at 11:05 am. Quorum still attained. Rosa Kasse, Daniella Pierre, Isabela Corzo, Cecile Houry and Major Almaguer. Ms. Corzo provided an update on the event. Flyers were distributed.
   Board members were asked to please support the events by way of attendance, promoting and fundraising.
   Ms. Regalado advised the board that the approved budget has changed.
   One of the items impacting the cost that changed was the captions for the film a step and repeat, signage.
   Materials and items that this board did not have related to infrastructure needed for events. We still must fundraise.
10. Discussion on increasing the original budget, Ms. Regalado is confirming with the Homeless Trust on what the budget line item of $5k in the administrative budget of the DVOB can be used for.
11. Marie Etienne suggested to increase the budget to $20k for the event and if the funds are not used, it will be used for future outreach events of the board.
12. Ms. Houry agreed, noting that we need to fundraise for future events as well.

13. Isabela Corzo: Motion to amend and increase the budget for the NDVAM October event up to and not exceeding $20,000, subject to necessary fundraising for the DVOB Trust Fund, and authorize the PEC to encumber the funds, and for the Executive Director to execute the necessary agreements. Second: Dr Etienne: Roll call: Cecile Houry, Yes. Daniella Pierre, Yes. Isabela Corzo, Yes. Major Almaguer, Yes. Rosa Kasse, Yes. Dr. Etienne, Yes. Motion unanimously passes.
14. Ms. Kobrinski stressed that it should be made clear (sponsorship package and discussions with sponsors/donors) for those donating the funds are going to support the DVOB's activities and not the shelters/direct victim relief.
15. Ms. Houry noted that Vanessa Joseph has been doing phenomenal work on the event and overall work of the committee. She has designed a beautiful program.
16. You will receive the program once finalized. The board agreed that the fundraising was initiated by the board and followed by the ED.
17. For the record, our board members/ judges are not included in the program in an abundance of caution in not associating them with any fundraising.
18. All board members have been asked to provide head shots and bio for the program. Ms. Corzo updated the board on her efforts to promote the board and event on the waterways though an in-kind donation by Ballyhoo Ads.
19. Ms. Houry asked the board to consider the amount of work the committee has been doing to accomplish the implementation of the event. We are all very grateful. Ms. Regalado echoed with the same gratitude.

20. Executive Director Report — Liz Regalado
    a. BCC Meetings:

Commissioner Steinberg	May 28, 2024
Commissioner Gonzalez	August 22, 2024.
Vice Chair Rodriguez	September 13, 2024

Pending: Commissioners Bastien, Regalado, and McGhee.

a. Ms. Regalado informed the board that the agenda for the meetings with the BCC members are the same.
b. Commissioner Gonzalez expressed an interest in collaborating with a group of mothers in his district that are active and help raise awareness about DV/IPV. We will get back to him after the film screening events.
c. Ms. Houry noted for the information of the board that April is National Crime Victims' Rights Month. Perhaps we can do something with his district during April.
d. The board asked who was present at the meeting with Vice Chairman Rodriguez.
e. Ms. Regalado informed the board the meeting with Vice Chairman Rodriguez's Chief of Staff, was attended by Ms. Betancourt, Griselle Marino and Dr. Oriental-Pierre.

f. Ms. Regalado was not made aware that Dr. Oriental -Pierre Oriental with Roxy Bolton Rape Treatment Center was attending the meeting.
g. Ms. Regalado was not made aware of the purpose of Dr. Oriental attending the meeting.
h. Ms. Houry expressed her concern over the fact that this occurred.
i. This was a DVOB meeting with the Vice Chair/staff.
j. Ms. Regalado was not informed that a third party /non board member would be attending.
k. Ms. Houry encouraged board members to request a meeting with their appointing commissioners and Ms. Regalado, but asked board members to please refrain from doing something like this.
l. It places staff, the board and the commissioner's and staff in uncomfortable and awkward positions.
m. At best, it distracts and impacts the content and intent of the meeting.
n. It is disrespectful to the commissioner, and the DVOB, and does not reflect well.
o. Ms. Regalado stated she felt uncomfortable for Dr. Oriental as well as she did not know what the purpose of her attending the meeting was.
p. Ms. Marino spoke on the illumination of the edifices in Miami-Dade County. The Freedom Tower is under repair.
q. Ms. Marino asked board members to let her know if there are any other buildings they have contact with so she can follow up.
r. Members were informed of the October 2 kick off event. Chair Houry and Ms. Pierre are on the program. All board members are welcome to attend.
s. Ms. Pierre suggested to consider the CRB model of meeting in the communities.
t. Ms. Houry said she is open to this, but previous attempts to change meeting locations offered pros and cons. Parking, AV needs and location for some board members. She believes it will be difficult for board members to drive to a different area every meeting, but she is open to considering this.
u. Ms. Kasse expressed concern that the board needs to connect more with survivors. She is very concerned that the communities do not know the board exists.
v. Ms. Kasse urges the board to include survivors to learn the reality of what is happening from their perspective. We should go to them and should be considered in our work. She hopes this board can make some changes to how the board is working now. She believes that the board is working outside of that reality.
w. Ms. Houry appreciates Ms. Kasse's perspective and assured her that it will take time to accomplish this.

x. Ms. Regalado pointed out that the program for the film screening will reflect survivors' participation.

Governance

- *Board Vacancies ** Carryover: Commissioner Bermudez, *Commissioner Gonzalez, and SAO.
- Sexual Harassment and Advisory Board Member Ethics Trainings
- Source of Income Statement
- Gift Disclosures Advisory Board Members- Ms. Regalado pointed out the gift disclosure policy for board members and asked them to be cognizant of any gifts received as a member of the board.

21. **Next Meeting: November 20, 2024.** Miami-Dade County Stephen P. Clark Center 10th floor, Conference Room 1011 10:00 am – Noon. Followed by the Public Engagement Committee Meeting at 12:30 pm at the same location. All board members are welcome to participate.

22. Adjournment: Vanessa Joseph: Motion: to adjourn the meeting, Second: Marie Ettienne. The meeting adjourned 12:09 pm.

Legend: *** Action items** **** Meeting package documents**

Meeting minutes prepared and submitted by Liz Regalado and approved by Cecile Houry.

Elizabeth Regalado, Executive Director

March 31 2025.

Date

DocuSigned by:

Cecile Houry

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Cecile Houry, Chair

3/31/2025 | 1:59 PM EDT

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