

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OVERSIGHT BOARD MEETING
November 20, 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

The meeting was called to order at 10:11 am. Board members present Cecile Houry, Isabela Corzo, Miguel De Grandy, Judge Elisabeth Espinosa, Judge Migna Sanchez Llorens, Vanessa Joseph and Maria Santamaria. Board members absent: Major Luis Almaguer, Marivi Bentancourt, Marie Etienne, Rosa Kasse, and Daniella Pierre. Guests: Mr. Robert Thompson, Commission on Ethics, Erin New, Christine García, Office of Fair Employment Practices, and Ms. Tania Avellanet.

2. Reasonable Opportunity for Public Comment: None.
3. Welcome back Marlen Oria: Ms. Oria has been officially reappointed to the board. She has a commitment before being appointed to the board that does not allow her to attend today but will be joining us at the January Meeting. Ms. Houry expressed her gratitude for Ms. Oria's participation in and contribution to the board, even when not appointed, including the work of the PEC and all the planning meetings of the film screening.
4. Welcome Mr. Robert Thompson Commission on Ethics Presentation- Note: Taken out of order after Office of Fair Employment Practices Report.

5. Chair's Report Cecile Houry

- a. Update Community Action and Human Services (CAHSD) Human Resources Investigation- Office of Fair Employment Practices.

Before welcoming Ms. New, Ms. Houry addressed the board about recent continued anonymous emails concerning allegations about the dynamic between employees and leadership/management in CAHSD.

Ms. Houry expressed concern over the recent allegations and comments on a petition opened on Change.org. The link to the petition was included in another anonymous email sent to her the day before this meeting. The petition contains numerous allegations and series of comments about CAHSD employees in the VPID and one of the comments refers to the involvement of a DVOB board member in the petition.

Ms. Houry emphasized that while the comments in this petition are allegations, she urged all board members to:

- Be very careful and ensure they have no direct involvement in what is taking place at CAHSD, as it reflects negatively on the board.
- Refrain from participating in any direct and independent communications with CASHD staff about this matter.
- Refrain from representing themselves as a member of the DVOB in acts or actions not known, discussed, taken, nor authorized by the board.
- Refrain from any involvement in matters activities and interactions that are beyond the scope, authority and role of the DVOB.

Ms. Houry further explained this is why the board has asked HR to officially report on the status of the HR investigation and in addition, today, we have the Commission on Ethics present on the role and authority of advisory board members as it relates to ethics and sunshine law.

Ms. Regalado clarified: The board did not contact Human Resources nor request their involvement. The board asked CAHSD to provide a response to the allegations in these emails involving CAHSD staff and CAHSD contacted the Office of Fair Employment Practices, appropriately triggering the Human Resources investigation into the allegations.

Ms. Joseph:

- Is the board member referenced in the petition is present at today's meeting?
- She finds it concerning that the alleged action of the board member appears to overstep in matters not discussed, acted upon nor within the scope and role of the board.
- She asked counsel if involvement by the board in HR matters of the department subject the board to any negative consequences as a board from a legal perspective?
- Ms. Houry stated the board member is not present. But even the fact that the board and board member is mentioned is very concerning. Again, Ms. Houry strongly urged the board members to raise and discuss any concerns at publicly noticed meetings.

Ms. Kobrinski:

- Advised the board that is not legally implicated but referenced in the comments does involve the board.
- Legally: A matter that could come before this board for a vote would be that this Board write a letter to the Administration or the Mayor expressing displeasure with the situation, if in fact a board member is taking this action independently from the board and representing the board.
- From the perspective of the board, the board would not want a board member acting without authorization and specific directions from this Board asking a member to represent the Board in any capacity.
- The post can be shared with the Board and based on the allegation that one board member (in specifically one of the vice chairs of the Board) is involved, does involve the board.
- If this board felt it appropriate and necessary, it has the discretion to clarify its position on this matter.

General Discussion:

- Board members expressed they have not seen the post and would like to see it.
- A copy of the specific post on the petition related to the DVOB's member was provided to the board.
- Ms. Houry provided background on when these anonymous comments and allegations regarding CAHSD's staff that began in July.
- About the petition: The petition was posted on Change.org and was titled "Demand transparency and fair treatment to CASHD Victim Services".
- There are comments both in support of and against the petition.
- Except for the comment specific to the Board member, the other comments are related to CAHSD and its administration.
- The petition has been closed/taken down.
- Miguel De Grandy: Motion authorizing Ms. Regalado in conjunction with Ms. Kobrinski to develop an email for distribution to all board members describing what is within the board's authority to do and what is not. The communication should specifically note that no action or interaction, including direct interaction by a board member with CAHSD/ county staff and or requests to meet with administration/Mayor, should be taken by any board member unless directed by chair or voted on by the members. Motion Second: Vanessa Joseph. Roll call vote: Ms. Houry, YES, Mr. De Grandy, YES; Judge Espinosa, YES; Isabela Corzo, YES; Judge Sanchez Llorens, YES; Maria Santamaria, YES; Ms. Joseph, YES. Motion unanimously carries.
- Mr. Thompson: Noted that the allegation in the petition referencing the board member appears to have several Sunshine Law violations.

Ms. Joseph asked that the petition comments be made part of the record.

Ms. Erin New: Update CAHSD Human Resources Investigation- Office of Fair Employment Practices

- Ms. New and Ms. Garcia were present and provided an update on the investigation.
- While they have completed most of the witness interviews and talked to the named respondent, there are meetings pending with senior management officials.
- Given the recent complaints received, Ms. New stated they are unable to give specific details as to the findings at this point.
- They will carefully review the information received and compare to what has already been investigated.
- If there are new allegations requiring further inquiry or investigation, that will determine the next steps.
- Assuming there is nothing new or additional in any of the more recent complaints received, after they meet with Chief Burgos and Director Grice, they will probably have a final determination before the next board meeting.
- Ms. New will communicate with Liz and if needed they will return to DVOB in January.
- If the investigation is in fact closed, it does become public record.
- If the board has particular interest in seeing the final report, Ms. New will provide it to the board.
- They will review any recommendations and work collaboratively with the department.
- If there were findings of violations of policies related to discrimination, or harassment and retaliation, the office would be formally involved.
- If the findings warrant further management review from personnel management, they will work with the department as needed.
- Mr. De Grandy asked if they expect a resolution on this investigation by the January 2025 DVOB Board meeting.
- Ms. New stated yes, if not before.
- Mr. De Grandy requested that Liz obtain a copy of the final report when published to share with the board members.

- If board members have any further questions they are to communicate with Liz, who will contact Ms. New directly.
- Ms. Houry thanked Ms. New and Ms. Garcia for the update and their report.

4. Welcome Mr. Robert Thompson Commission on Ethics Presentation- Note: This item was taken out of order, following the Office of Fair Employment Practices Report. Mr. Thompson provided a presentation on advisory board members to be distributed to the board with the meeting recording for board members' reference.

Mr. De Grandy recommended board members keep a folder of all their emails and communications in case there are any public records requests.

5. Chair's Report Continued: Postponement & Rescheduling of DVOB Domestic Violence Awareness Month Events: Due to Hurricane Milton the events were postponed. The Committee will update the board on the rescheduling dates.

- a. Update Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Leave Policy ** Chair Houry thanked Mr. De Grandy for his work on this. She thanked Ms. Joseph for attending the committee meeting where this item passed and addressing the committee thanking the Commissioner and committee members with her. Next step to be scheduled at a full BCC meeting for adoption. Ms. Kobrinski stated it should /may be placed on the agenda for the December 3 BCC meeting. Mr. De Grandy stated it would make a great birthday present. It was noted that several municipalities may possibly mirror their leave policy to this one. Ms. Kobrinski asked if we had the opportunity to discuss the language about certification with Commissioner Higgins staff. Ms. Houry explained that the Ms. Regalado did, but the Commissioner decided to not make any further changes.

- b. 2025 DVOB Board Meetings Calendar ** Submitted and revisions made. Ms. Regalado will Ms. Regalado sent a calendar and will send calendar invites to the board for their calendar. Ms. Kobrinski shows there were two motions made at the July 24, 2024, meeting. A motion to approve the budget and delegate authority to the ED to execute necessary agreements for the expenditure of the funds.

6. *Approval of DVOB Meeting Summary Minutes July 24, 2024, September 18, 2024, Meetings ** Sunshine Meeting Minutes (Zoom) July 18, 2024 DVOB Chair and Vice Chair. Minutes of September 18. July 18, sunshine meetings. July 24, 2024, Ms. Kobrinski discussed her notes from the meeting of September 18, 2024, and July 24, 2024, and there are several changes warranted in terms of who made the motions. This action item was tabled to a future meeting.

7. CAHSD Report

CAHSD

Ms. Avellanet provided an update on the work the department and discussion on trainings and changes implemented to make the services more accessible. The department launched its Training Academy. Trained staff. Attorney General provided designation training 40 hour to 32 employees. Part of the academy is working with emotional intelligence in December. Ms. Tania is training staff on customer service specifically on the hotline response. Meetings with partners. Making a lot of progress. Ms. Houry is pleased with the big emphasis on training.

8. F&B Tax DVOB Fund Report

Homeless Trust

- a. Pro Forma and Budget with Expenditures and Revenues**
- b. Status and information in the six-month report required per amended Ordinance.

Ms. Houry expressed she is not fully satisfied with the reporting structure. Ms. Regalado stated that the amended minutes will reflect the official motion the board adopted at a previous meeting to address this concern with administration. Ms. Regalado informed the board she had a conversation with Chief Burgos about this concern and the fact that the Chair would like to have a meeting with the mayor to further discuss this.

Judge Sanchez Llorens stated she does not remember anything coming before this board on a regular basis. She remembers the board having previous discussions about this and asked when the last time this board received a financial report and presentation. Ms. Regalado did not want to state a date until she is able to confirm. The other issue is the fact that the two shelters operated by CAHSD are under the Homeless Trust portfolio.

Discussion ensued about the participation of the Food & Beverage Tax on the Beach Municipalities. There was a special meeting at Miami Beach that Ms. Houry and Ms. Regalado were in attendance. They did not address the commission but wanted to be there if any questions arose on the DV portion of the tax. Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez passed a motion urging Miami Dade to include 15% towards Domestic Violence. The intent is to ensure we keep reminding and raising awareness that the F&B Tax funding has the carve out for DV. Ms. Houry and Ms. Regalado are meeting with Commissioner Bhatt on Friday.

Ms. Regalado reminded that the split is determined administratively and not by statute. Mr. De Grandy asked Ms. Kobrinski to confirm what the statute says. Ms. Kobrinski the statute states "at LEAST 15%" so it could be more than 15%. Ms. Regalado expressed her concern that when she hears conversations about the tax, it is always referred to as the "homeless tax" and DV is never or rarely mentioned.

Ms. Regalado Commissioner Higgins has been looking for data. Had to pivot to CAHSD for the data for services. Cecile Houry Part of a larger discussion on data.

9. Public Engagement Committee Report

Vanessa Joseph, Chair

Ms. Joseph provided an update on where the committee is on rescheduling the film screening event. Miami Beach is available in February. North Miami Beach is not available in February. We are discussing moving the event to March.

Ms. Houry thanked Griselle Marino and Liz for their hard work. Isabela Corzo, and Vanessa Joseph have been incredibly involved and valuable members of the committee. Ms. Joseph's talent with the design of the program and materials was invaluable.

Ms. Houry appreciates the significant amount of time dedicated in this area. We could not have come that far.

Ms. Regalado expressed her appreciation for the heavy lifting of the committee including the Chair of this board.

Ms. Joseph spoke about the roundtable event in April. In addition, the program for both events were shared with the board. The design of the program has been intentional with a result of branding the materials of the board.

Ms. Regalado explained and reassured the judges on the board that their names were left out of the program because we could not assure that the program will not be used for fundraising. Ms. Regalado also stated that it is the policy of the Office that board members do the first ask in terms of funding and sponsorship and staff follows up.

Ms. Joseph encouraged the board members' participation in helping get word out.

Judge Migna Sanchez Llorens asked if we have plans to promote the events. Should we be inviting our commissioner to attend. The answer is YES.

All board members are invited to attend our meetings. We can also open to the full board for input on the panelists. Thank you, Judge Espinosa, for securing the moderator for the first film screening event.

Ms. Houry: Ms. Marino has been very good at helping us shape the invitations and promotions of the event.

Ms. Joseph explained that while the committee's ambitious plan was to have an event every month, the restrictions on the meetings limit the capacity. We will provide a revised schedule and possibly adjust to quarterly events.

Ms. Joseph asked Ms. Avellanet to discuss the idea of having one major walk /event in collaboration with all the municipalities that organize the walks like the Breast Cancer Walk.

The committee also has agreed to work on getting T-Shirts as part of the branding.

The calendar will be updated at the committee meeting.

- **NDVAM Activities Members were referred to handout.
 - Ms. Regalado recognized Ms. Corzo's securing of the floating ads promoting observance of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
 - Thank you to Major Almaguer for securing MDPD's in-kind through the district.
 - Thank you to Ms. Marino for lighting up the skyline in purple.
 - Senator Garcia has sponsored legislation so that all county buildings are lit up in purple.
 - Ms. Houry also noted that the proclamations have been an opportunity to establish relationships with our municipal partners. Outreach Events 2025 Calendar
- **Trust Fund Financial Report: BCC donations are all recorded. Ms. Regalado is tracking the checks received from the outside agencies. Updates at future meetings.
- Outreach Support
- **Sponsorship Package
- February 2025 Film Screening events
- April 2025 Round Table First Responders and Roxy Bolton Rape Treatment Center.

10. Executive Director Report

Liz Regalado

- a. *2025 Board Meeting Calendar September Board Meeting changed to September 17, 2025.
- b. BCC Meetings: Senator Garcia's Chief of Staff October 11, 2024
- c. Pending: Commissioners Bastien, Regalado, Bermudez, Cohen Higgins and McGhee.

d. Governance

- *Board Vacancies ** Carryover: Commissioner Bermudez, *Commissioner Gonzalez and SAO. Ms. Regalado has informed Commissioner Gonzalez that his vacancy should be a representative from the Public Health Systems.
- Sexual Harassment and Advisory Board Member Ethics Trainings. If not taken, these are mandatory (once only).
- Source of Income Statement. Mandatory yearly.
- Gift Disclosures Advisory Board Members.
- Ms. Regalado discussed the meeting calendar provided. She will follow up with a calendar invite through outlook. Request to change the September board meeting to September 17, 2025. Liz will provide /send a revised version of the calendar and update via outlook calendar.
- Ms. Regalado expressed the recommendation from a survivor and advocate for the DVOB to hold an event addressing the issue of secondary trauma related to those directly in victim advocacy work.
- Liz thanked Ms. Kobrinski for the corrections of the meeting minutes and motions.

11. Next Meeting: January 29, 2025. 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.

12. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn : Vanessa Joseph. Second: Judge Migna Sanchez-Llorens. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Legend:

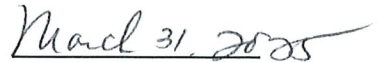
* Action items

** Meeting package documents

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

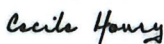


Elizabeth Regalado, Executive Director



Date

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Cecile Houry, Chair

3/31/2025 | 1:59 PM EDT

Date

