

**MEETING MINUTES
ST. CHARLES COUNTY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BOARD**

Tuesday, November 6, 2018, 9:00 a.m.

County Administration Building
201 North Second Street, Room 442
St. Charles, MO 63301

MEMBERS PRESENT:

DiAnne Mueller (chairperson), Andrea Robertson, Dee Wetzel, Joan Koechig, Rebecca Navarro-McKelvey, Brigid Oldani, and Shirley Pecoraro.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

none

OTHERS PRESENT:

Heather St. Peter, Bridgeway Behavioral Health; Jolynn Houchins and Rosie Jones, Turning Point; and Carolyn Compton, ALIVE. Robert Myers and Karen Hutchins, St. Charles County staff.

1. New Board Members Take Oath of Office

Robert Myers, Planning and Zoning Director, administered the oath of office to Brigid Oldani and Shirley Pecoraro as newly-appointed members to the Domestic Violence Board. Dianne Mueller welcomed the new members.

Robert Myers thanked the Board for serving on behalf of the County.

2. Meeting Call to Order

Dianne Mueller called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM with attendance noted above. Ms. Mueller explained the process for reviewing applications and making recommendations to the County Council.

3. Approval of Minutes

Dee Wetzel made a motion to approve the minutes with minor corrections, and Rebecca Navarro-McKelvey seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved with corrections.

4. Agency Presentations

Dianne Mueller thanked the applicants for their service and explained the discussion and voting process for the new Board members and new applicants. The Board would not be able to fully fund the requested amounts but would make recommendations based on the impact and outcome of services presented to the board via application and presentation.

Rebecca Navarro-McKelvey asked Dianne Mueller if voting would take place with applicants present. Dianne Mueller responded that voting would take place at the open meeting with the applicants present.

Bridgeway Women's Center

Heather St. Peter, Director of Domestic Violence Resources, addressed the Board. The Bridgeway Women's Center has been operating since 1979, almost 40 years in St. Charles County. It began with the Bridgeway substance abuse treatment programs and became evident that there was a need for domestic violence support. A large percentage of women and children were in need of domestic violence services and so they opened the first shelter in St. Charles County in 1979. There is still a large amount of crossover from the treatment program in St. Charles County into the shelters.

Bridgeway's shelter currently has 27 beds, down from 33 beds last year. This decrease is due to the re-opening of the Robertson Center, a sister shelter, in Lincoln County. The reduction of beds has alleviated crowding, making the 5 bedroom shelter more manageable, safe, and secure for the women and children.

The shelter in 2017 received 1,800 calls on the 24 Hour Crisis Hotline. This year the hotline is receiving a huge upswing of sexual violence calls, an increase of 66%, tripling each month. A total of 90 SART calls were documented in 2017. From the beginning of the year to September 2018, 58 SART calls were documented. In the month of October alone, the center has received at least 77 SART calls weekly.

Volunteers and two additional staff people have been assigned to manage the influx of calls. The center is proud to have added extra SART counselors to the staff as well. Women who stay in the shelter are required to meet with a case manager once a month to prepare them to move on. The case manager is not the same person as the counselor.

Outreach services are the bulk of the St. Charles County shelter services:

1. Community Support Group which has met daily for 40 years,
2. Supportive Services
3. Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)
4. Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) available 24/7
5. Sexual Assault Advocate

Currently, there is no waiting list at the shelter. Eight women and eleven children are now housed in the shelter. Those who desire services are served immediately. The turnaway rate is decreasing steadily while the shelters still remain full most of the time.

Women and children often come to the shelter without anything and also receive food, clothes, hygiene, counseling, group counseling and court advocacy.

The County's Domestic Violence Board funding is very important as unrestricted fund use which usually help keep the doors open. Funds are used for food, utilities, and other incidentals like laundry detergent necessary to run the shelter.

The youth program is still a major focus for the center. The shelter continues to add hours to the SART and DVRT counseling program for the youth. Treatment programs the shelter offers include healthy relationship groups, anger management, domestic violence and trauma survivor groups. These programs help adolescents and adults understand violent behaviors are not normal. Healthy relationship groups are still being promoted within selected schools.

An advocate is sent out when a call is received from any hospital emergency rooms in the County. The advocate advises the rape and assault victims, offer support services, and walk through for the appointment to the shelter. The Center's sexual assault advocate educated 558 people in 2017. Group sessions are usually four to six weeks long.

Over 2,500 referrals were given out last year to various organizations. Coordinated Entry and St. Joachim and Ann have been very helpful in reaching those who need the center's services. Housing and transportation are still major concerns for the Women's Shelter.

United Way donates to Bridgeway, but their donor-directed funds have decreased, and it is expected that the donation this coming year will be less than previous and eventually go away. Three years ago the center received \$300,000 compared to this last award of \$160,000. This funding source is the only restricted funding source to help with utilities and upkeep of the shelter. Roof repair and tuck pointing this year cost a total of \$50,000. Non restricted funds are also used for cosmetic improvements such as new paint and flooring. No funding comes from the Preferred Healthcare \$200 million budget to fund the shelter.

Rebecca Navarro-McKelvey asked about the average stay of women and children. Ms. St. Peter responded that the average is 22 days, but staying for the full program takes six to eight weeks. Sometimes there are repeat clients. The most successful residents are those that stay twelve weeks and complete the program.

DiAnne Mueller asked about a discrepancy between the proposed and actual budget. Ms. St. Peter responded that she was not aware of the amount in the budget submitted by Preferred Family Healthcare but could explain the actual budget for the Women's Center she submitted. The discrepancy was due to organizational changes within Preferred.

DiAnne asked Ms. St. Peter why no one from St. Charles was listed on Preferred Family Healthcare's Board and why they were anticipating their private donations and individual

donations to decrease by 50%. Heather responded that this number has decreased in the last two years coupled with the changes as the result of the merge with Preferred Family Healthcare and AO (Alternative Opportunities) has contributed to the decrease in donations. Bridgeway is actually being managed by a non-profit in St. Charles County.

Joan Koechig asked Ms. St. Peters to educate the Board on the dynamics of the merge. Heather explained how the merge happened and how it has made an impact on donations.

Shirley Pecararo asked why Bridgeway was taken over. Heather explained that the CEO at the time of healthcare reform anticipated that the small companies like Bridgeway needed to merge to remain in the community.

Shirley Pecararo asked if there were controls in place to insure that the funding Bridgeway receives will remain fully in control by Bridgeway and not Preferred Family Healthcare. Ms. St. Peters stated that Bridgeway is Preferred Family Healthcare, doing business as Preferred Family Healthcare. Preferred Family Healthcare handles all of the billing and accounting functions.

Shirley Pecararo asked if there were any control mechanisms in place to insure that the monies the Domestic Violence Board funds will be used by Bridgeway and not Preferred Family Healthcare. Heather was not sure if any control mechanisms were in place, but acknowledged that she had full monitoring capabilities and access to the funds for the shelter.

Shirley asked that if in next year's presentation control mechanisms could be identified.

Joan Koechig asked if Bridgeway applied for funding from Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Program. Ms. St. Peters stated that they have received funding from VOCA and those funds were being used for staff salaries.

Turning Point

Jolynn Houchins, Executive Director of Turning Point, and Rosie Jones, Programs Manager, addressed the Board.

Rosie Jones introduced herself to the Board. Turning Point, located in Warrenton, Missouri, provides services to six counties: Lincoln, Warren, St. Charles, Franklin, Gasconade, and Montgomery. Turning Point has various service areas such as outreach and shelter.

Turning Point is a 30-bed emergency shelter including 10 recently added beds. It is a community room style set up with bunk beds. The Shelter starts with a 30 day program and the clients are able to request extensions. Clients fill out forms listing past goals, future goals, and how they plan to accomplish those goals. Staff determines the approval of an extension. That process is repeated every two weeks after those 30 days. It is understood that it takes more than 30 days for a person leaving a violent and traumatic situation to overcome quickly, especially when clients arrive without a social security card, a car, or a job. It takes time to recover and stabilize.

Turning Point provides clients with personal hygiene products and new clothes.

Three meals daily is also provided. Each client prepares dinner for the other residents using a revolving list.

The shelter is handicapped accessible, including a hospital bed and ADA-compliant bathtub.

The Well Being Program includes support groups with five different curricula, counseling, substance abuse prevention with one-on-one counseling. Clients have the option to first go to a recovery program and then return to Turning Point.

Two court advocates work closely with Turning Point. They assist clients by filling out orders of protection, attending hearings with them, helping with understanding victim impact statements, and providing lay person legal assistance support.

Economic empowerment programs have workshops throughout the week. This helps clients with financial literacy such as budgeting and opening and managing bank accounts. Most clients have not experienced having a banking account.

The executive director, program manager, and sometimes other staff speak at community events to educate the public.

Jolynn Houchins, Executive Director, stated they have seen steady growth in the number of clients served. Jolynn started with Turning Point in 2013 when the Crisis Intervention Marker was established. The previous executive director officially resigned July of this year.

A total of 384 people were served this year which is a 48% increase over five years. Turning Point is anticipating continued growth by adding another ten beds. Of the 384 people served last year, 15% came from St. Charles County. Historically, the majority of the shelter's clients are from Warren County where the shelter is located. The second highest number served comes from western St. Charles County: Foristell, Wentzville, and O' Fallon areas.

Most of Turning Point's clients are referrals from the telephone hotline. Last year, 16.5% of hotline calls came from St. Charles County. The shelter also receives direct referrals from prosecutors from various Counties. Counselors and advocates will sometimes go to the victim, assisting them with necessary phone calls and forms to help them through the trauma.

Last year, Turning Point turned away 43 adults and 50 children due to a lack of bed space. The shelter is currently undergoing an expansion. It is expected that the turnaway rate will remain high until the expansion is complete. The shelter will continue to operate fully during the expansion. Turning Point received a CDBG Community Development Block Grant to expand the facility.

DiAnne Mueller asked the Board if there were any questions.

Joan Koechig asked Jolynn Houchins if Turning Point was receiving VOCA and VALOR funding. Jolynn stated that VOCA is the shelter's largest funding source providing funding for all staff salaries. The shelter does not receive VALOR funding.

Brigid Olgandi asked if Turning Point assists with children attending school. Jolynn Houchins responded affirmatively. Because of safety issues, parents will sometimes opt to enroll their children in Warren County Schools instead or returning back to the same school district. Turning Point often assists parents with the enrollment process.

Brigid Olgandi asked if Turning Point had a job placement program. Jolynn Houchins stated that Turning Point works closely with the Career Center. Clients go to the Career Center to work on job skills and resumes. This is a well needed resource since many clients may not have worked outside of the home. The Shelter provides computers to help job seekers search for employment opportunities. Each client is assigned an advocate to assist them.

Brigid Olgandi likes Turning Point's do-it-yourself workshops and asked if their workshops included basic maintenance skills. Jolynn Houchins stated that Turning Point provides basic training in home and automotive maintenance and repair.

As the domestic violence judge in St. Charles County, Rebecca Navarro McKelvey shared she has witnessed advocates helping women properly complete and submit applications for a protective order. She asked if Turning Point provided training for their advocates to know how to complete a legally sufficient application.

Jolynn Houchins stated Turning Point does provide training. The shelter receives most calls from the Warren County area for assistance at the clerk's office. Turning Point advocates are trained through the Missouri Coalition of Domestic and Sexual Violence in court advocacy response. In-house training is also provided to insure forms are completed accurately. The advocate helps to prepare written narratives detailing incidents. This helps judges understand the details of the assault so informed decisions can be made.

ALIVE

Carolyn Compton, Volunteer Coordinator, addressed the Board. ALIVE serves as an overflow shelter for four domestic violence shelters in the St. Louis region between the City of St. Louis and St. Charles County. As an emergency shelter program, ALIVE services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Their program includes a network of temporary confidential shelters providing safe shelter. ALIVE has a long standing positive relationship with the shelters that send clients to them on a regular basis.

ALIVE staff also runs a 24/7 crisis hotline. A total of 6,900 crisis calls were received in 2017 between both offices. There were 5,900 crisis calls were from the St. Louis County office. The second office is located in Franklin County.

Crisis calls are the way people are trying to find a way to the shelter services. There are no referral services necessary. Victims can call directly. Sometimes there are referrals from other violent domestic shelters that are full. ALIVE is in contact with the shelters on a daily basis communicating with the Crisis Intervention Specialist regarding any available openings and providing case management services.

As an emergency, overflow shelter, the program is short-term and does not have the ability to offer a 30-day stay. The maximum stay at the shelter is about 14 days. Sometimes a client may have a plan from another shelter and only need a few days before getting to the next

place. Sometimes a client may not have a plan and needs all 14 days until they can get in a shelter that will accompany a large family.

Since ALIVE is not a traditional shelter the agency is able to assist both women with children and men with children. The shelter is not limited by cohabitation restrictions. There are counseling services for both adults and children. These are two separate programs. There are no fees for the services. There are no caps per session. Clients can always come back and they do for various reasons.

Therapists work with adults, individual children, and groups. All therapists stay busy. Interns also assist with intake. Volunteer interns assist with crisis line. The agency is currently recruiting and training volunteers for the crisis line.

Community outreach involves representing the shelter educating and advocating at universities, nursing schools, elementary schools, businesses, religious groups, and other groups that want to know about the dynamics of domestic violence. Last month was Domestic Violence Month and a very busy month for the shelter. Community outreach allows ALIVE to share its impact in the community.

ALIVE has very similar programs in court advocacy as the other shelters. The shelter has an advocate to help clients navigate the system. It is a challenge to navigate the systems with all the municipalities in St. Louis County.

ALIVE's fiscal year is from April 1 to March 31. The clerical coordinator provided numbers from April 1, 2018 to now. The numbers include 69 nights of shelters for adult clients; 34 nights for children; 13 adult clients and 2 children for nights of safety shelter; 13 adult intakes, 20 adults in counseling with 242 sessions; and 9 children in counseling with 48 sessions.

Transportation is an important service. Although there is no funding that comes in for this service, ALIVE spends a lot in transportation. Transportation services are used to help clients to get to the shelter. Sometimes this means sending a cab to pick them up or to assist a client with an exit plan requiring help to travel out of town to stay with a relative. In a case like this, ALIVE will conduct an evaluation asking permission from the client to coordinate with the relative on the other end, connect with supportive services, and follow up to insure they are successful. ALIVE will pay one way for them to reach their destination. There are clients who are passing through the state from another shelter and may be provided gas cards.

Ms. Navarro-McKelvey asked Carolyn Compton for St. Charles statistics. In addition to the statistics presented Carolyn Compton added, historically, the nights of safety program averaged between 10 and 15 adults plus their children. Since February, the night of safety program has served between 20 and 25 people plus their children bringing it close to around 50 people. This year has been intense with increasing need.

Joan Koechig asked if the shelter was receiving VOCA and VALOR funding. Carolyn Compton affirmed that ALIVE receives both VOCA and VALOR funding. In response to Diane Mueller who asked which office location services the St. Charles County clients. Carolyn stated the St. Louis County office helps clients from St. Charles County. There is no

discussion at this time about opening an office in St. Charles County. Currently the ALIVE offices are located in St. Louis and Franklin Counties.

Brigid Olgandi asked if transportation was provided for clients who have need for counseling outside of the shelter. Carolyn Compton responded that sometimes transportation assistance is provided depending upon distance, the number of people needing transportation services, and the need.

DiAnne Mueller asked if any temporary shelter locations in St. Charles County. Carolyn Compton is unsure, but stated that ALIVE have two issue when it comes to adding shelter locations: 1) People wanting to stay closer to where they live and where there children can stay at the same school and 2) Others want to move further away for safety issues.

Heather St. Peter asked if she comment on the question asked earlier about the foundation board. The foundation board for Bridgeway Women's Shelter includes representation from St. Charles County. Although the Preferred Healthcare Board is not represented by St. Charles County, the foundation board is one that works with Bridgeway, a 501c3 organization, that is specific for domestic violence shelter.

DiAnne Mueller asked if Heather could provide a list of the Foundation Board. Heather agreed to provide that list and stated the foundation is always looking for new members as well.

4. Public Comment

DiAnne Mueller asked if there any public comments. No public comment was made.

5. Review of Applications

DiAnne Mueller stated that \$55,000 in funding has been allocated.

For the benefit of new Board members, Robert Myers mentioned that the funds are all local funds that are raised through marriage license fee through the County. This local funding source, unlike most state or federal funding, provides for a critical gap that more flexible than, for instance, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The benefit of the fund being flexible is that you can use it where needed. Robert explained that the funding is 2019 funds and is a budgeted amount forecasted by the Finance Department. So when contracts are signed with organizations, there is a provision that states if funds are different than forecasted the County reserves the right to make adjustments. Procedurally, Mr. Myers stated that the Domestic Violence Board makes a recommendation to the County Council to be placed on the County Council's consent agenda. Normally the County Council accepts the Domestic Violence Board's recommendation.

6. Discussion and Vote on Funding Allocation

Following a brief discussion, Joan Koechig suggested the following for discussion:

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Requested</i>	<i>Funding</i>
Bridgeway Women's Center	\$100,000	\$49,000
Turning Point	\$ 15,000	\$ 4,000
ALIVE	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,000
TOTAL	\$117,500	\$55,000

DiAnne Mueller opened the floor for discussion of the recommendation as she gave her appreciation to the applicants for the services they provide. Dee Wetzel asked DiAnne Mueller what was her recommendation. DiAnne Mueller stated it was close to what Joan Koechig had recommended.

DiAnne Mueller stated that the Board had previously asked the Women Center in St. Charles County to increase their bed space. The Board appreciates that the Women's Center has done that and are assisting more women and children. The Board realizes that the Women's Center can't do it alone and appreciate Turning Point also increasing beds and accepting women and children from St. Charles. ALIVE also, with the flexibility of providing transportation and nights of safety is huge. It is greatly appreciated.

DiAnne then called for a vote to recommend approval of \$2,000 to ALIVE; \$4,000 to Turning Point; and \$49,000 to the Bridgeway Women's Center.

A motion to recommend these amounts for these organizations was made by Joan Koechig and seconded by Rebecca Navarro-McKelvey. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Meeting Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM.