

**Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Advisory Council
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General

313 NE 21st St., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

- i. The meeting was called to order by Myel Solorzano Sutton, in accordance with the Open Meetings Act at 1:33 P.M. Members present included Ann Lowrance, Meagan McCurley, Kristie Chandler, Kelsey Samuels, Matt Levey, Whitney Anderson, Jayra Camarena, Rose Turner, Matt Levey, and Lauren Garder. Absent members included Shelley Miller and Judge Leah Edwards. Non-members present included Tara Tyler, Andrea Fielding, Steve Lewis, LaBrisa Williams Hurling, Leslie Clingenpeel, Sarah Wagoner, Miguel Mojica, Betty Camacho, Mary Wickstrom, Sara Wray, Stephanie Lowery, Laura Russell, Susan Laib, and Myel Solorzano Sutton.
- b. The Council Chair, Ann Lowrance, introduced the Council's newest member, Lauren Garder, as the group's DV Expert.
- c. **ASSURANCE OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETING ACT**
 - i. Myel Solorzano Sutton announced that the meeting was in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. An agenda was posted at the principal office of the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office on April 14th at 9:45 A.M. and on the Oklahoma Attorney General's Office website on April 14th at 10:08 A.M.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 18, 2025

- a. Matt Levey motioned to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Whitney Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried with one abstention.

3. PRESENTATION BY THOMAS SCHNEIDER REGARDING OKLAHOMA PERMANENT RULEMAKING PROCESS

- a. Thomas Schneider presented Oklahoma's permanent rulemaking process to the Council members and non-members present.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON CHANGES TO MAY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND NOVEMBER VASU COUNCIL MEETING DATES AND LOCATIONS

- a. Myel Solorzano Sutton reported that a number of the remaining 2025 VASU Council meetings would need to be re-scheduled due to a few calendar conflicts.

Council members approved to re-schedule May's meeting from May 20th, 2025 at the OKC Attorney General's Office to May 6th, 2025 at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; August's meeting from August 19th, 2025 at the OKC Attorney General's Office to August 5th, 2025 at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; September's meeting from September 16th, 2025 at the OKC Attorney General's Office to September 30th, 2025 at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner; and November's meeting from November 18th, 2025 at the OKC Attorney General's Office to November 4th, 2025 at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. All previously mentioned meetings will be re-scheduled with the Oklahoma Secretary of State as special meetings due to the date and location change.

- b. Whitney Anderson motioned to re-schedule the previously scheduled VASU Advisory Council meetings to the new dates and location agreed upon by the Council. Rose Turner seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MOVING FROM AN INVOICING SYSTEM TO A BUDGET-BASED SYSTEM FOR FVPSA AND STATE FUNDING TO DVSA AGENCIES

- a. Stephanie Lowery stated that there needs to be a decision made as to whether the OAG's Office moves from an invoicing system to a budget-based system for FVPSA and State funding to DVSA programs. At this time, the Office is moving to an online grants system, and a decision will need to be made as it will affect how they create the applications that allow programs to bill. She also reported that, at this time, the OAG's Office has paid over 1.25 million USD that we don't have documentation for and this is a big problem. For the programs who have not sent in billing statements or addendums, it will be requested that they substantiate that their funding has been utilized on allowable expenses. If the program is unable to provide documentation that the funding has been utilized on allowable expenses, it will be requested that they return the funds.
- b. At this time, each DVSA program has been sent 1/12th of their allocated state funds to ensure they get access to their monies. Ann Lowrance asked how many agencies, at this time, may have to return funds. Stephanie stated approximately 12. She also reported that she thinks some of the issues may stem from programs finding it harder to bill for services, newer programs being confused about how to bill, as well as programs interpreting definitions differently.
- c. Stephanie Lowery reported that her and Myel Solorzano Sutton have recently found the OAG's database that was previously unable to be accessed through Lotus Notes; however, it will be shutting down as of August 31, 2025 and if any programs still utilize it, they will lose access on that date.
- d. Rose Turner stated that DVIS is not in favor of moving to a budget-based billing system as their program has invested a lot into their current system. She asked if

more training or effort could be made to train the programs who seem to be struggling with the current billing system.

- e. Stephanie Lowery asked Kristie Chandler how the YWCA OKC feels about changing systems, to which she reported they are not looking forward to it as it will force them to change how they capture and process data; however, she understands how important it is for other programs to have access to spending their funding.
- f. Whitney Anderson asked what training, if any, has been provided to the programs struggling. Stephanie Lowery reported that she, as well as Kelsey Samuels and Renee Clemmons, provided a training last July to five newer DVSA programs, and have engaged in “hand holding” with them. She isn’t sure if the programs just aren’t understanding the process or not able to tie to services being provided.
- g. Ann Lowrance stated that she assumes Stephanie Lowery needs a recommendation from the Council soon, to which she stated yes, as they need to know what direction to go while building the application.
- h. Kelsey Samuels reported that her agency’s preference is to move to the budget-based system. She noted that she also understands the programs aren’t tracking the numbers that are wanted by the legislators who advocated for the increase in funding for their programs. She hopes that moving forward with the budget-based system will allow programs to be more accountable and track the numbers wanted by legislators.
- i. Lauren Garder asked Stephanie Lowery how moving to this system will make it easier for the programs struggling, to which Stephanie reported it will be easier for programs to utilize their funding and show what they are using their money on.
- j. Kelsey Samuels motioned to move to a budget-based system, under the contingency that there will be data collection to be able to satisfy legislative requests. Whitney Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried with one no vote.

6. CHAPTER 25 SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION

- a. Matt motioned to go into Executive Session. Kelsey seconded. Motion carried with one no vote
- b. A question arose whether the Council could go into Executive Session when it was not on the agenda. There are some circumstances under OMA permitting Executive Session without notice. There was discussion as to whether the Council, which is not a statutory body, only offers recommendations, and does not directly receive any funding, is subject to OMA.
- c. Public attendees departed from the room temporarily.

- d. VASU Attorney, Sara Wray, requested to go into recess before the Council discusses anything in Executive Session in order to confirm that it is compliant with the Open Meeting Act. The meeting went into a recess until 2:35 p.m.
- e. Upon her return from meeting with other OAG attorneys, Sara Wray reported that, while the VASU Advisory Council is not a statutorily mandated board and does not meet other factors, the group is likely not subject to the Open Meetings Act; however, because the agenda was published without Executive Session listed, the Council has been operating in the spirit of the Open Meetings Act, and due to the OAG's commitment to government transparency, it would likely be in the best interest of the Council to proceed without going into Executive Session.
- f. Matt Levey withdrew his motion to go into Executive session. Kelsey Samuels seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- g. Public attendees were welcomed back into the meeting, and Sara reiterated the commitment to transparency.
- h. Myel Solorzano Sutton introduced VASU Director, Susan Laib, to report on the agenda item.
- i. Susan Laib reported that recently, OAG leadership made the decision to remove the Council's BIP Expert, Matt Levey, from his position as the Chapter 25 subcommittee chair. She stated that she hopes he continues to lend his expertise to the Council as they move forward. Susan clarified after her statement that Matt is being removed from his position as the subcommittee chair but will remain as the BIP Expert on the Council, as well as a member on the Chapter 25 subcommittee.
- j. Ann Lowrance stated that the Council understands that the AG has the power of appointment for all Council member positions and all serve at his pleasure. She then opened the floor to Council members for discussion and questions.
- k. Council members asked Susan Laib if there is more information that led to leadership's decision to remove Matt Levey from his position as the Chapter 25 subcommittee chair. Susan Laib reported that there were recent reports made to AG Drummond regarding interactions that Matt Levey had surrounding pending alternative BIP legislation at the Capitol, in which he represented himself as an OAG employee and was speaking out against the legislation on behalf of the office. Due to this, leadership believed it would be a conflict of interest for him to serve as the Chapter 25 subcommittee chair. The Council then asked if a formal investigation was completed in order to corroborate the allegations to which Susan stated no. Matt Levey also reported that he was never contacted before the decision was made.
- l. The Council asked if the OAG's Office has a formal process for dealing with or investigating complaints or concerns of this nature. Susan Laib stated no and the complaints were made either directly to an individual on the Executive team or AG Drummond himself.

- m. Kristie Chandler asked with Matt Levey being removed from his position as the subcommittee chair, who would be able to serve in the position that wouldn't have a conflict. Susan Laib reported that she has no answer for that.
- n. The Council asked where the reports about Matt Levey came from, to which Susan Laib reported legislators and those in the community who are working on alternative BIP legislation. Matt Levey stated that he never claimed to be an employee of the OAG's office and that any work he was doing across the street at the Capitol was as a representative of his own program, the Court Assistance Program.
- o. Kelsey Samuels referenced a recent meeting that took place at the Capitol regarding an alternative BIP bill currently making its way through the legislative process and reported that she, as well as Matt and others, were present and he stated multiple times to those attending that he was speaking out as a representative of his own agency and not as an employee of the OAG's office. Kristie Chandler also reported that she was present at the meeting and confirmed Matt stated that he was present for the meeting as a representative of his own agency. Council members who were present at the referenced meeting did state that there were a few times VASU was mentioned, and this may have led to confusion for those who are unaware of the difference between VASU and the VASU Advisory Council.
- p. Kelsey Samuels asked Susan Laib for clarification as she understands the Council members currently serving were brought on as members for their expertise, and since their expertise occasionally brings them to the Capitol for work, she inquired if they are not allowed to exercise their right to advocate for legislation as representatives of their own agencies. Susan Laib stated that they are.
- q. Ann Lowrance asked Susan that if no formal investigation was done, were any other individuals who were present at the referenced meeting, aside from those who made the allegations, talked to regarding the accusations. Susan Laib stated not to her knowledge.
- r. Kelsey Samuels asked how the Council is to proceed with the Chapter 25 subcommittee, to which Susan reported it's important to continue in the way they were previously operating.
- s. The Council noted that it was interesting that there was no representative from the OAG's Office at the alternative BIP legislation meeting given that the agency is over Chapter 25. Susan Laib stated that she wished she would have been present. Kristie also noted concerns as she is the Chapter 15 subcommittee Chair and it would be a bad look to be removed from the position if she were acting as a representative on behalf of her agency, but unsubstantiated allegations were made claiming she was acting on behalf of the OAG's Office. She asked if there is a need for a conflict-of-interest policy to be created that would outline more clearly

the expectations, rules, and how to move forward in a transparent way. Susan Laib said that she believes it would be best to explore that idea further.

- t. Kelsey Samuels stated that as a Certified AVHST and DVSA program, she has heard constant support for the AG's Office and the programs will continue to be strong advocates for the VASU Council, DVFRB, and VASU.
- u. Susan Laib reported to the Council that they will continue to have a voice at this moment, and she will take the questions and concerns presented at today's meeting to OAG leadership.
- v. Ann Lowrance stated that the Council is aware that the AG appointed them and that they are not to represent themselves as employees of the OAG's Office, but they still have the right to free speech. She wanted to highlight this as it is not always talked about when new members are brought on to the Council. She also reported that it is normal to have disagreements, and the programs have and will continue to, but she appreciates the ability to agree to disagree and figure out a way to move forward.
- w. Matt Levey stated that he has always defended the VASU Advisory Council and VASU staff on multiple occasions and that will not change. He will continue to be a friend to VASU and the VASU Advisory Council.
- x. Kelsey Samuels motioned to appoint Lauren Garder as the temporary Chapter 25 subcommittee Chair, pending leadership's response to questions and concerns surrounding Matt's removal from the position. Whitney Anderson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON TITLE 75 ATTORNEY GENERAL CHAPTER 1: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

- a. Myel Solorzano Sutton projected an editable version of Chapter 1 for the Council members to discuss and review the standards and criteria. Subcommittee Chair Ann Lowrance reported that their group had not yet met, but will begin meeting once a month on the first Tuesday of the month via ZOOM.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON TITLE 75 ATTORNEY GENERAL CHAPTER 15: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAMS

- a. Myel Solorzano Sutton projected an editable version of Chapter 15 for the Council members to discuss and review the standards and criteria. Subcommittee Chair Kristie Chandler reported that their group had not yet met, but are scheduled to meet on April 22nd, 2025.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- a. None reported.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Stephanie Lowery announced that she is no longer working under Susan Laib within the Victim Advocacy and Services Unit (VASU), but under Curt McMurphy in the Finance Unit. She reported that this change will not affect how she works with the programs.
- b. Whitney Anderson called on Leslie Clingenpeel with The Spring to announce their program's ribbon cutting ceremony for their new transitional living program. The ceremony is scheduled for May 13th, 2025 from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. in Sand Springs, Oklahoma.

11. ADJOURNMENT

- a. Lauren Garder motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.