



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Violent Crime Coordinating Council

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Sartell Police Chief Jim Hughes, Chair
Ramsey County Undersheriff Mike Martin, Vice-Chair

MINUTES of Violent Crime Coordinating Council Meeting – Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Meeting was held at the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Afton Room

VCCC members and representatives: Jim Hughes, Mike Martin, Bob Jacobson, Drew Evans, Scott Hable, Sara Halverson, Matt Steffens, Jeff Stiff, Jen Corcoran, Hao Nguyen, Jeff Tate, Jim Novak, Andy Dunne, David Voigt, and Mark Koderick.

David Hester and Kent Bailey checked in via phone, but there was not a virtual option.

OJP staff and partners: Rafael Mattei, Christopher Hage Aaron Krenz, , Katie Knutson, Ken Sass, Kristin Lail, Allison Hostrawser and Lucas Dingmann.

Chair Jim Hughes called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed members, partners and staff.

Motion by Drew Evans, second by Andy Dunne to approve minutes from the 12/14/22 meeting. The motion passed.

Motion by Mike Martin, second by Scott Hable to approve the 2/8/23 agenda. The motion passed.

Statewide Coordinator Update

Statewide Gang and Drug Coordinator Ken Sass reported that the Northwest Metro VCET disbanded at the end of 2022. Some investigators joining other Hennepin County Task Forces, so unspent funds will be added to Hennepin VOTF grant for 2023. City of Plymouth following up on joint powers dissolution requirements, distribution of equipment and full audit. They are also extending insurance coverage for a year and will track all pending forfeitures through completion before distribution to member agencies. Rescheduled STORM training was held in February at the St. Cloud Police Department and annual commander conference in March at Camp Ripley. MNSANI planning Can-Am in May and a 3-day undercover school later this summer. Sass reviewed 2022 VCET stats and e-mailed them to members after the meeting.

VCET Grant Update

Grant Administrator Kristin Lail noted that 2023 is the second year of the current VCET grant period. At April meeting the VCCC will review eligibility criteria for the 2024-25 RFP and timeline. She also stated that the 2022 VCCC annual report was completed and forwarded to the Commissioner's Office for Review.

Chair and Vice Chair Elections

While there are no term limits for VCCC members, the Chair and Vice Chair are elected by VCCC members for two-year terms. Statute requires a rotation between representatives from the Metro and Greater Minnesota.

Jim Novak nominated Vice Chair Mike Martin for VCCC Chair, seconded by Hao Nguyen. All members voted in favor.

Sara Halverson nominated Renville County Sheriff for VCCC Vice Chair, seconded by David Voigt. All members voted in favor.

Central Minnesota VCET Presentation

St. Cloud Lt. Luke Dingmann highlighted the operations of the Central Minnesota VCET, serving Benton, Stearns, Sherburne and Morrison Counties and the Cities of St. Cloud, Sartell and Little Falls. He noted that most cases involve fentanyl, meth, cocaine and ecstasy and they are seeing an increase in violent crimes. They have been involved in a long-term federal investigation involving thousands of pounds of meth and fentanyl with millions of dollars sent back Mexico that has resulted in 23 federal indictments. He noted the increased amount of fentanyl coming in through the USPS, reduced prices and increased overdoses. Members discussed options for educating community members and schools and options for testing and identifying fentanyl.

Legislative Update

Drew Evans highlighted BCA proposals in the governor's budget, including reducing crime lab turnaround times and a metro-wide violent crime team. He also noted a catalytic converter theft bill and cannabis legalization bill going through various Committees.

Bob Jacobson agreed it has been a busy legislative season with additional bills for crime victim services and community engagement. The governor's budget also included \$300 million for local police departments, county sheriffs and tribal law enforcement agencies that can be targeted for local needs. David Voigt reported that the Attorney General's funding bill had passed and they were already posting positions. They will be expanding the criminal division and will be able to provide more assistance to county attorneys in non-death, drug and human trafficking cases.

Partner Updates

The VCCC welcomed new DEA SAC Rafael Mattei, and got updates from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Minnesota National Guard Counter Drug Program, HIDTA, BCA and Attorney General's Office and Ramsey County Attorney's Office as well as law enforcement representatives from Minneapolis, Hennepin County, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Shakopee, Washington County, Sartell and Renville County.

Commissioner Bob Jacobson closed the meeting by thanking members for their work and recognizing Sartell Police Chief Jim Hughes for serving as Vice Chair and Chair of the VCCC for the past four years. We all wished him well on his upcoming retirement. Jeff Tate will contact the Chief's Association for a recommendation of Chief from greater Minnesota.

Motion by Mike Martin, second by Jim Novak to adjourn the meeting at 12:30, followed by lunch.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 12, 2022 at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.