



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Violent Crime Coordinating Council

c/o Department of Public Safety, Office of Justice Programs

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Ramsey County Undersheriff Mike Martin, Chair

Renville County Sheriff Scott Hable, Vice-Chair

MINUTES of Violent Crime Coordinating Council Meeting – Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – Noon

Meeting held in-person at the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension

VCCC members and representatives: Jeff Tate, Scott Hable John Gross, Rick Palaia, Derrick Naumann, Rick Palaia, Jeff Stiff, Josh Lego, David Voigt, Mike Martin and Drew Evans.

Chair Mike Martin called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed members and partners. Motion by Jeff Tate, second by Rick Palaia to approve minutes from the 2/14/24 meeting. The motion passed.

OJP staff, speakers and partners: Eric Meyer, Kent Bailey, Rafael Mattei, Mike Hanson, Ken Sass, Kristin Lail, and Allison Hostrawser.

Motion by Scott Hable, second by Jeff Tate to approve the 2/14/24 agenda. The motion passed.

Professional Standards Committee Update

The professional standards committee met that morning at 10 a.m. They discussed VCET training plans and asked for feedback on manual revisions. Ken Sass reviewed and updated the manual section on the complaint process to formalize contacting the Statewide Gang and Drug Coordinator about any internal investigations. All VCET grantees agree to follow the Guidelines manual in application process and Sass reviews provisions with new commanders in an orientation site visit. The VCCC will be reviewing the gang criteria later this year and BCA annually audits the individuals remaining in the Gang Pointer File. Mike Martin reported on a renewed interest in the Midwest Gang Investigators Association and reinstatement of monthly intelligence meetings. He reported that 32 attended the most recent meeting including investigators, analysts and jail staff. The committee plans to meet again before the October VCCC meeting.

Traffic Safety and Cannabis

Mike Hanson provided an overview of the Office of Traffic Safety that has 21 staff, 9 regional coordinators and administers \$47 million annually in federal and state funding for highway safety and impaired driving projects. They are receiving funds from the legislature to support a pilot project asking drivers arrested for drug-impaired for a voluntary oral fluid sample. It can't be used in court and results will not be seen until the pilot is completed. The pilot runs from January to August and they are seeing about an 80% participation rate. They expect pilot results will be used to request legislative approval for the use of oral fluid units as a screening tool. There are currently two other states have gone to using oral fluid samples as evidence. OTS is also ramping up the DRE program. There are currently about 360 DREs across the state. They have three DRE schools of 30 students scheduled this year, estimating an average cost \$27,000 per student. They expect the oral fluid sample results will correlate with impairment to strengthen prosecution.

Statewide Commander Update

Statewide Gang and Drug Coordinator Sass reported that the VCET commander conference in March at Camp Ripley went well and thanked the National Guard Counter Drug program for assisting with logistics. MNSANI is taking nominations awards at the for the Can Am conference for narcotics investigators, teams and prosecutors. It is a great way to recognize the good work being done across the state. They are also planning for a Red Flag training in St. Cloud in December. He noted that HIDTA calculates a return on investment of \$8.50 per dollar of funding and using that mode, the VCETs have an ROI of about \$5.50 and should be continuing to seek additional funds from the legislature to support operations.

Partner Updates

- Scott Hable noted how valuable the work of VCET's are in greater Minnesota and would like them to get more recognition.
- The National Guard has funding to hire additional counter drug analysts this summer.
- Mille Lacs has not participated on VCET since 2016 but they are planning for new partnerships in 2025.
- HIDTA provided an update on awards, funding and training. He noted that Ken is planning incorporate MN threat assessment into the VCET conference next year. They are reviewing applications from Beltrami and Stearns County and have had interest from Koochiching County.
- DEA continues to link fentanyl cases with violent crime. He recommended contacting them if they find pill presses on search warrants.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 followed by lunch for those attending in person.

NEXT MEETING: The 6/12/24 VCCC meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be held from 11:00 – noon on Wednesday, August 14 at the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension with lunch following.