

Minutes

New York State Committee for the Coordination of Police Services to Elderly Persons
September 22, 2021
NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
Alfred E. Smith Building
80 S Swan Street
Albany, New York 12210

Youtube Livestream link: <https://youtu.be/o16GXfNzEQA>

Members Present

Kristen Kane, Assistant District Attorney, Queens County District Attorney's Office
Kathy Davidson, Crime Victims Specialist III, New York State Office of Victim Services
David Staszak, Director, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Shelly Aubertine-Fiebich, Director, Bureau of Adult Services, New York State Office of Children and Family Services
Gary S. Brown, Statewide Elder Abuse Coordinator, New York State Office for the Attorney General
Matthew Renneman, Colonel, New York State Police
Steve Rotunno, Chief of Police, Cicero Police Department
David Catholdi, Chief of Police, Brighton Police Department

Members Absent

Candace Vogel, Assistant District Attorney, Erie County District Attorney's Office
Kenneth Perez, Deputy Inspector, Office of Chief of Community Affairs, New York City Police Department
Julie DeLeon, Assistant District Attorney, Bronx District Attorney's Office
Greg Olsen, Director, New York State Office for the Aging

OPS Staff Present

Johanna Sullivan, Director
Joshua Vinehout, Supervisor, Public Safety Programs
Molly Bates, Associate Training Technician (Police)
Alison Floyd, Criminal Justice Program Specialist 1

DCJS Staff Present

LisaMarie Coppollo, Associate Counsel, Office of Legal Services

Action / Approval Items

#1- Introductory Remarks

The meeting of the New York State Committee for the Coordination of Police Services to Elderly Persons commenced at 9:00 a.m. with Director Johanna Sullivan of the Office of Public Safety welcoming the Committee members and guests. The meeting was held remotely via Webex and Director Sullivan held roll-call attendance.

#2 – Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Director Sullivan noted that a quorum was present to adopt meeting minutes from the previous Committee meeting held on April 13, 2021. Gary Brown made the motion with a second by Kristen Kane. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

#3 –Training Updates- Financial Exploitation Webinar

Molly Bates of the Office of Public Safety provided the Committee with an update of the online webinar titled Financial Exploitation, which is under development. OPS staff drafted an outline of the webinar, which Ms. Bates briefly reviewed with members during the meeting. The outline includes the following sections: Introduction and goal of the webinar, Impact of Financial Abuse on the Elderly Community, Types of Financial Abuse, Scams, Law Enforcement Response, Overview of the Enhanced Multi-disciplinary Teams, Current Resources, and a Question and Answers section. The webinar will last for a duration of approximately one hour. Ms. Bates stated that OPS staff are still seeking a subject matter expert in law enforcement to present the law enforcement response section of the webinar. Specifically, the ideal presenter will address next steps for officers who respond to calls related to financial exploitation.

In response to Ms. Bates' overview, Committee members offered to assist in finding a subject matter expert regarding the law enforcement response to financial exploitation. Chief Rotunno of Cicero Police Department agreed that information sharing between departments is often weak and should be encouraged. Chief Rotunno shared that, in response to a high rate of scams in the town of Cicero, the department created 3x5 cards to distribute to businesses in the area and warn the recipients of possible fraud.

Director Sullivan requested that Committee members review the following sub-sections of the webinar: next steps and communication tips for law enforcement, to ensure the training contains the most up-to-date information. The Committee proposed a tentative timeline of the end of the year for completion of the webinar. Shelly Fiebich of the New York State Office for Children and Family Services also offered to provide updated statistics on financial exploitation for inclusion in the webinar.

#4 –Discussion: Use of Social Media to Increase Awareness of Elder Abuse

Following discussions at prior Committee meetings regarding the use of social media to spread awareness of elder abuse, Molly Bates of the Office of Public Safety asked members to share what their respective agencies may be doing and how the Committee may assist. Staff at the New York State Office for the Aging had previously discussed the use of short Facebook live videos to reach older adults and raise awareness. Chief Rotunno of Cicero Police Department shared that the agency is active on the Next Door

App, where community members can interact and address issues in their neighborhoods. Colonel Matthew Renneman of the New York State Police advised that the agency Public Information Office utilizes multiple social media platforms and is willing to use those platforms to spread Committee messages as well. Chief Catholdi, of the Brighton Police Department, added that his agency forged a partnership with the doorbell company called “Ring”, in which subscribers can receive alerts and safety tips. He offered to send examples of the alerts to the Committee.

NEW BUSINESS

In the topic of new business, Gary Brown, of the New York State Attorney General’s Office, advised the Committee of the increased rate of fraudulent unemployment claims in the wake of Covid. Mr. Brown stated these claims must be treated as identity theft and recommended consumers visit identitytheft.gov. The website provides steps consumers should follow to report and which agencies to contact for additional assistance.

Next, Shelly Aubertine-Fiebich, of the New York State Office for Children and Family Services informed the Committee that the upcoming Adult Abuse Training Institute conference will be held virtually on October 4-6. The conference is an annual collaboration between OCFS and the New York State Office for the Aging to provide employees in social services with updated best practices on assisting the elderly population. Ms. Aubertine-Fiebich also reported that New York State has received additional federal funding of \$10 million through the American Relief Act to allocate to local adult protective services which will alleviate the lack of resources. At the Committee meeting in April, Ms. Aubertine-Fiebich had reported on the first round of funding received. At the state level, OCFS is exploring applying the additional funds to an expansion of the eMDT program. Currently, the eMDT’s assist adults 60 years of age and older. The expansion will include vulnerable adults aged 18 and older.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, Director Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING:

February 15, 2022