



NC Human Trafficking Commission: General Meeting
Thursday, October 24, 2024, 10:03 AM – 11:13 AM
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Hickory Board Room (A-1-101)

10:03 AM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance

Maggie Brewer

Chair Brewer opened the meeting and called to order. Chair Brewer then conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Commissioners in attendance at the meeting were Amy Auth, Maggie Brewer, Judge Wilson, Jennifer Haigwood, Deana Joy (joined 10:15 am, left 11:04 am), Sara Perdue on behalf of Kindl Detar, Dr. Myers, Marc Nichols (joined 10:23 am), Tina Pennington, Caitlin Ryland (joined 10:05 am), DA Billy West, and Dawn Ferrer. Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Grants Administrator, James Melvin, Grant Managers, Kristen Howe, Hampton White, Marcus Melvin and Molly Overholt, Court Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher, and Administrative Secretary, Lauren Amato. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

10:05 AM – Ethics Reminder

Maggie Brewer

Chair Brewer thanked all in attendance and read the required ethics statement.

10:06 AM – Swearing in of new Commissioner

Judge Wilson

Chair Brewer shared the exciting news about Dawn Ferrer joining the Commission as our newest Commissioner. Judge Wilson administered the oath to swear in Dawn.

10:09 AM – Introduction of new Commissioner: Dawn Ferrer (NCCAHT seat)

Maggie Brewer

Chair Brewer announced Dawn is filling the seat for the North Carolina Coalition Against Human Trafficking. Dawn Ferrer talked about her time with NCCAHT and shared some of her background.

10:11 AM – Approval of the Minutes: 10/24/2024

Maggie Brewer

[\(Final Meeting Minutes August 22, 2024\)](#)

Chair Brewer asked if there were changes to the minutes from the August 22nd, 2024, meeting. No changes were noted. Jennifer Haigwood made a motion to approve the minutes and Caitlin Ryland seconded the motion. The minutes passed unanimously.

10:12 AM – Committee Reports and Action Items

Maggie Brewer

Legislative Committee

Christine Long

Christine Long reported there were no new legislative updates.

Public Health Committee

Dr. Corrina Myers

Dr. Myers provided a brief update. She received some responses from people who volunteered to help head

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our initiative with trying to train health care providers and trainees. She plans to collect and compile that information then follow up with those who have expressed interest. The next step is creating a focus group.

Appropriations Committee

HTC Staff

[\(Appropriations Report\)](#)

Christine Long began the report on the committee. Commission staff have been working with a company called Submittable to help develop a grant management system but have run into a few problems. A solution to incorporate other software at no charge was solidified and staff are now pivoting to entering the information. It is still in development.

Section 16.20 – There were 17 grantees in this non-competitive human trafficking grant. One agency has ended their period of performance and is now in the closing process. The reporting is up to date.

Section 16.21 – There were two rounds in this competitive human trafficking grant. Round one awarded 11 agencies; they are up to date on reporting and disbursements. Round two just began the first quarter of the period of performance on Oct 1. The initial disbursement is in process and reporting packages have been sent. The first reports will start coming in January.

Section 16.22 – There were 72 of these grants with no administrative funds given to manage these contracts. All these grant agreements have ended. The grants have either closed or are in the closing process.

Section 16.23 – There were 142 contracts in this section of funding. There are 19 agencies preparing for the closing process with two agencies in closing status currently, however, most contracts stay open until June 30, 2025. We've extended the deadline for quarterly reports due to Hurricane Helene. We're reviewing options for affected agencies in the mountains; it's possible they may need to change their scope of work for their project.

Public Safety Committee

Marc Nichols & Sgt. Nales

Sgt. Nales spoke about the Interdiction for the Protection of Children program. It's a multi-faceted course to teach law enforcement how to identify high risk threats to children and train the officers on the variety of resources available to assist them in establishing the status of a child who may be missing, exploited, or at risk of exploitation and what courses of action are immediately available. The goal is to have 100% of all sworn highway patrol personnel trained in an awareness level of human trafficking; that's roughly 1,500 sworn members.

Commissioner Marc Nichols spoke about some items they are currently working on. One of the items in motion is public safety announcements at airports, and different places. Marc met a contact for Amtrak and is working with them to get PSA announcements to Amtrak stations as well as improving our relationships with their investigators. Amtrak will provide a presentation and update about what they're doing at one of the next meetings.

10:20 AM – Disaster update from Asheville

Rita Sneider-Cotter

Executive Director Our VOICE

Rita Sneider-Cotter gave a brief introduction of herself and her organization. She then went on to share news about the aftermath of Hurricane Helene in Asheville. Some of the hardest hit counties were Buncombe, Transylvania, and McDowell; counties that Our VOICE serves. The hurricane hit on Sep. 26, but the effects didn't start until Sep. 27. Many people lost power, water, and cell reception. The true devastation wasn't known until people were able to drive around or turn on the radio. There was a lot of misinformation going around but she's seen a lot of people come together to provide mutual aid for each other. The City of Asheville/Buncombe County are currently getting water back after going without water for about two and a

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half weeks. Western NC was in a housing crisis before this disaster so this is just going to exacerbate the situation which will unfortunately result in an increase in trafficking. Our VOICE has seen calls that reported trafficking, specifically labor trafficking, though some of it turns into sex trafficking. Our VOICE launched an information campaign to spread awareness. While cell reception was down, Center for Domestic Peace helped answer after hours hotline calls, but Our VOICE is now back up and running again. Rita shared that housing is desperately needed, not only for the organization, but for the greater region. More specifically, safe shelter for men, or families that include men. Rita welcomes any recommendations and information.

10:43 AM – Introduction: NCCWYI’s Anti-Human Trafficking Program Coordinator Lenore Brown

Lenore Brown introduced herself and thanked the commission for the opportunity. She talked about how she started off in this field and how she got to where she is now. Lenore’s work focused on championing those with lived expertise and experiences and creating boards where those voices and experiences were centered in the efforts. Much of her program work done with her training and technical assistance really focused on developing equitable and culturally responsive solutions. Lenore has led development trainings for various stakeholders and is here today to make those strong connections. She looks forward to creating a strong coordinated response to human trafficking within our state.

10:45 AM – General Staff Report

Ashley Tauscher and Christine Long

[\(Staff Report\)](#)

Ashley Tauscher began the report by covering the training and events conducted since the last meeting. There are only a couple training and events coming up in December and January. The North Carolina Housing and Finance Agency released information about a new funding opportunity called the Supportive Housing Safe Program. Their website has eligibility requirements and further information available. Some on-going projects we have include the reviewal of LMS Training for NC Judicial Staff & Resource List, Resource Directory management & updates, and SAMHSA/OIPA and the NC Community Health Center Association one-page report of NC Resources. All human trafficking agencies serving Western NC were contacted to determine status, gaps in service, and response needs. We have several statewide and national disaster resources now posted to the Commission website. Some agencies reported significant loss and/or damage. Ashley passed the report over to Christine Long. Christine announced that we have hired Molly Overholt as Grants Manager to oversee the new competitive grant appropriation. H971v7 is a bill that passed requiring education and awareness for lodging establishments (in addition to posters). We have been working on this with Jennifer at the Dept of Labor; the deadline to rollout the materials is July 1. Part of that same bill included new requirements for child welfare across the state to work with the Commission on training and guidance. Christine brought up some issues with the Debt Bondage Repair Act that have been turned over to the Attorney General’s office, who we are meeting with next month. She mentioned the mandatory posting laws for ABC permittees because of some pushback we’ve recently received; a business requested to alter the posters. Judge Wilson made a motion to not alter the awareness posters; Marc seconded the motion. Christine informed Commissioners of the newly created proxy form for meetings. Other updates include an OVC grant we applied to with Guardian Ad Litem. We were not awarded but intend to continue working them. The application period for GCC’s grant renewal opens next week; we plan on applying to renew Ashley’s grant. Christine has been working with GCC for a victim-centered interviewing partnership. The public records request is ongoing. We’ve got some great presentations and speakers coming for future meetings.

11:03 AM – Public Comment

Maggie Brewer

Commission Chair Brewer opened the floor for public comment. Lauren Amato read some comments from the chat; most were in response to Rita’s update. Caitlin Ryland mentioned Legal Aid as a resource. Niki Miller with Shield NC shared information on the upcoming NC Demand Reduction Task Force webinars. Pam

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Strickland with NC Stop Human Trafficking made a comment about NCCAHT's next meeting on Jan 24. about a few topics including legislative updates, law enforcement trainings, and the revamp of NCCAHT.

11:13 AM – Adjournment

Maggie Brewer

Marc Nichols moved to adjourn the meeting and Dawn Ferrer seconded the motion. Commission Chair Brewer adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is Thursday, December 12th, 2024.