

Vermont Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs

110 State St., Montpelier, VT 05633 Telephone: 802-828-2891

Vermont SIU Grants Board Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2025, 1:00 PM

Remote via State TEAMS system and in-person at 110 State Street Montpelier, VT

**Board Members in Attendance**:

Tim Lueders-Dumont, Chair – Department of State’s Attorneys and Sheriffs

Jennifer Harlow – Orleans County Sheriff’s Department

Gene Nelson – Center for Crime Victim Services

Carolyn Hanson – Attorney General’s Office

Douglas Farnham – Agency of Administration

Nancy Miller – Department of Children and Families

**Board Members Absent**:

Jeremy Hill – Vermont State Police

Ted Brady – Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Peter Mantello – Vermont Chiefs Association

**Other Attendees**:

Annie Noonan, SAS Labor & Operations Director, Barbara Bernardini, SAS Fiscal Manager, Siri Rooney, SIU Grants Program Administrator, all with VT Department of State’ Attorneys and Sheriffs

Lance Burnham – Lamoille County SIU Director

Megan Denny - Caledonia County SIU Director

Stephanie Slayton – representing Windsor County SIU; Director of The Family Place

**Call to Order**: SIUGB Chair, Tim Lueders- Dumont, 1:03 PM

**Introductions**: All attendees and guests introduced themselves

**Review of Agenda**: Chair, Tim Lueders-Dumont, approved by the Board, by acclaim, with no objections or additions

**Overview of FY26 SIU Budget**: SAS Labor Relations and Operations Director, Annie Noonan

$2,292,291 budget approved for FY26, all State General Funds.

FY 26 provided a 2.7% increase for internal service fees and to help fund SIU Grants Program Administrator as a State permanent position (note: historically this was a contractual position).

Budget includes:

* Program Support grants for all 12 SIU programs.
* Law enforcement grants for support of SIU investigations.
* Two smaller, reimbursable grants for Essex and Grand Isle counties, (available to counties where population total is less than 8,000, per statute).
* NCATrak Subscriptions for the 12 programs (data collection).
* Forensic Interview training for SIUs and their Multi-Disciplinary Team members.

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* Salary and benefits and related expenses for the SIU Grants Program Administrator.
* After the expenses detailed above are factored in, there will be approximately $24,000.00 remaining in the SIU budget which can be used for unanticipated expenses of an SIU, or additional training for the SIU programs’ staff and board members.

**Training Needs**:

Noonan reported that the Department (SAS) has been hearing from SIU Program Directors and SIU local program Board members that they want and need training for their roles as board members and fiscal training. For FY26, this training will be a top priority, and contacting potential trainers (local, state, or other) who can provide such training will be explored and reported back to the Board at its next meeting.

**Review of FY25 Awards: SIU Grants Program Administrator Siri Rooney**

A review of the FY25 grant awards (requested and actual allocations) for all 12 programs was presented. In FY25, several requests were adjusted due to math errors in the submissions; several because of vacancies within their programs. Noonan presented information on the percentage increases from FY25 to FY26

Rooney noted that $109,290 in Carry Forward Funds was utilized in FY25. These were funds that the programs had remaining in their accounts from FY24, and were applied to the second installments.

Orange County was funded for Quarter 4 only in FY25 because there was no staff for the first 3 quarters.

**Executive Session**: A motion was made by Sheriff Jennifer Harlow pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313 (1)(A),(D),(E) relating to potential issues within programs (including but not limited to personnel, fund expenditures/contracts, issues relating to pending/prior prosecutions, and/or grievances), to enter Executive Session, allowing non-Board members (SAS Staff) Annie Noonan, Barbara Bernardini and Siri Rooney to also attend. Motion seconded by Douglas Farnham. Motion carried. Executive session lasted approximately 60 minutes.

**Presentation of FY26 Grant Applications: Siri Rooney**

Grant applications for the 12 SIU programs were presented individually, along with recommendations from SIU Grants Program Administrator Siri Rooney. The FY26 funding recommendation included a “cap” of 4 programs at a maximum of $120,000.00 despite their requests for funding above that rate. This recommendation was made due to limitation of the total program funding, which cannot support the total amount of money requested by the 12 programs. The total requested is $1,449,988.50, which is $106,481 over the $1,343,507 FY26 Budget for the SIU Program Support funding. Capping the four “higher ask” counties at $120,000.00 will alleviate the potential cost overage.

Siri Rooney and Annie Noonan discussed a summary of all program costs, noting that when all costs are factored in, there will be approximately $24,000.00 remaining in the FY26 SIU budget, which leaves a small cushion for unanticipated expenses of any SIU, or additional training for the SIU programs’ staff and board members. Douglas Farnham stated that he believes the cap is good to establish a baseline and that the pro-ration style based on available funding works best and is administratively convenient. He supported the capped approach, as did the full Board.

**Program Operational Concerns**:

Carolyn Hanson of the Attorney General’s Office raised the question of how SIU programs are determining number of staff, job titles, staff hours per week, etc., noting the wide variation among the 12 programs.

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A discussion ensued regarding how best to evaluate these questions. The SIUGB will discuss this issue further at a subsequent meeting. Hanson also discussed potential fiscal hardships for programs who have, in prior years, received over $120k. Noonan discussed that the SIU programs receive money from other funding sources such as CCVS: CAC and VOCA money; town appropriations; private donations; and fundraising; and that SAS is aware that some of the programs who had asked for money above $120,000 have funds in their bank accounts from these other sources that should be able to alleviate pressures that this ‘capping’ might cause. Carolyn Hanson added that some of the SIU’s seem to be more efficient in terms of their SIU staff doing more tasks and work than others, and she did not want those programs to be penalized for their better organizational management and efficiencies. Noonan discussed the rise in costs for some SIU rents, with one program having their rent raised from $68K to $90k this year. Noonan will follow up with BGS to try to help this program find more affordable space.

**Program Operational Concerns (continued)**:

Megan Denny, new Caledonia SIU Executive Director, answered questions about her budget, particularly Jennifer Harlow’s concern regarding advocacy services. Denny said she will utilize the SAS Victim Advocates, and advocates from Umbrella, noting that she has a long-term goal of having a part-time victim advocate on her staff.

Discussion regarding the new timesheets being required by SAS for the SIU staff being paid by the State money. Siri Rooney and Annie Noonan advised that there have been a few complaints from the SIU programs but noted that all State employees are required to fill out timesheets except for elected officials, and that CCVS requires timesheets to account for the VOCA and CAC funding (which Gene Nelson of CCVS confirmed to the group). SAS has received complaints from partner organizations – including members of local SIU Boards and MDT’s, about SIU paid staff not being in the office, not answering phones, and some staff working for multiple agencies during the same work hours which would be significantly problematic in relationship to both the State and federal funds. The Board had previously voted to require all the SIU Directors to work from the office and not remotely, but the complaints from the SIU Directors were so significant – with some staff claiming they would resign – that a compromise was reached whereby they were supposed to be working a hybrid of at least half time in the office until such time as the issue could be reviewed by the SIUGB.

Carolyn Hanson discussed not being comfortable approving budgets that have staff working over 40 hours per week for more than one organization. The Board will ask the programs for information about staff working more than 40 hours, and require an explanation regarding the hours being charged, as well as how such practice is feasible. The Board members noted that working over 40 hours per week is not best practice, and the SIUGB decided that they will not disburse funds to programs allowing this practice, until significant follow-up and review is done by SAS, and the Board can then further review what is occurring in regard to any such situation.

**Voting**: A motion was made by Jennifer Harlow to approve all the SIU budgets as a group, as recommended by the SIU Grants Program Administrator, except the Windham SIU Budget, which will be tabled pending follow-up with the Windham SIU Board. Sheriff Harlow also recused herself from voting on the Orleans SIU budget. The motion was seconded by Douglas Farnham, no discussion, approved unanimously.

**Discussion of Auditing Recommendations**:

Tim Lueders-Dumont informed the group that the SAS Department is recommending regular audits of the 12 programs. Annie Noonan has spoken with both State Auditor Doug Hoffer and the State’s auditing firm CLA staff members about analyzing current monitoring of the SIU programs. The Board agreed that this is a good plan going forward. Annie Noonan will present a proposal at the next Board meeting.

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**Public Comment**: Megan Denny commented that Board member training is a good idea, and she looks forward to participating in this.

**Next Steps**: Tim Lueders-Dumont advised that a Doodle Poll will be sent out for the next meeting by the Grants Program Administrator

**Adjournment**: A Motion was made by Tim Lueders-Dumont to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Carolyn Hanson. Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:51PM.