

MEETING MINUTES

SUWANNEE VALLEY
UNSOLVED

*Board of Directors
136 SE Calab Court
Lake City, FL 32025*

Heidi Snipes, Chairwoman
Danny Federico, Secretary



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Meeting Minutes
Suwannee Valley Unsolved, Inc. Board of Directors
Saturday, November 2
6 p.m. (1800 hrs.) at Larry Mason's Residence
Lake City, Columbia County, Florida

Secretary Danny Federico, acting as Chairman, called the meeting of the Suwannee Valley Unsolved (SVU) Board of Directors to order at 6:12 p.m., beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Federico then performed the roll call. The following Board Members were present:

Danny Federico
Jason Futch
Katie Jeffries (via Phone)
Larry Mason
Heidi Snipes
John Szaroleta
Heather Williams
Ricky Williams

Chairman Wayne Kelly (excused), Vice Chairman Chuck Tompkins (unexcused), and Kalesia Brown (unexcused) were absent from this Board Meeting.

Guests in attendance were Tammy Jones, and her mother, Betty and her son, Evan.

At 6:15 p.m., Federico presented the previous meeting's minutes. One correction was noted, which listed Katie Jones's name as "Katie Jeffries." A motion was made by John Szaroleta to accept the minutes with the amendment. The motion was seconded by Heidi Snipes, and passed unanimously.

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At 6:17 p.m., Heather Williams presented the Treasurer's Report. Although the books had not been fully updated, Williams stated that the account's balance was \$4,071.98.

At 6:18 p.m., Jason Futch presented the Executive Director's Report, beginning with updates from a Project Cold Case Symposium he and Victim Advocate Missy Norris attended in Jacksonville. He also noted that the Cold Case Investigators with the Attorney General's Office are planning to begin looking into North Florida's Cold Cases.

At 6:23 p.m., discussion turned to the section outlined for Announcements, during which time Futch informed the Board that Vice Chair Chuck Thompkins is retiring from the Suwannee County Sheriff's Office and decided to take a step back from SVU organizational involvement.

Following his announcement, Snipes announced a recall to strike Item 6A regarding a Recall Vote on the agenda, as Thompkins had chosen to resign from his seat on the Board of Directors. A motion was made by Larry Mason and seconded by Szaroleta. It was then unanimously approved.

Futch also announced that he would be presenting at the White Springs Public Library in Hamilton County on Tuesday, Nov. 26, from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

At 6:26 p.m., Futch began discussing the lone item under the section outlined for Prior Business. He took this time to express the importance of Board members participating in meetings and events. Emphasis was placed on the expectation that Board members attend all meetings or provide valid reasons for absences. Futch noted more discussion on this topic would take place later in the evening.

At 6:27 p.m., the Board moved into the Special Business items, beginning with Board Officer Elections. The only Board member to announce their candidacy was Federico, who was ultimately retained as the Secretary with a unanimous vote. The motion was made by Snipes and seconded by Mason.

As no other Board members declared candidacy, nominations were made at this time for the remaining positions.

Snipes was recommended as Chairwoman by Szaroleta, and seconded by Federico. Discussions addressed potential concerns about conflicts of interest, but were ultimately dismissed as

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manageable. Clarification was also placed by Futch that if any discussion affecting the Executive Director or his business as Executive Director should arise, Snipes would reuse herself and allow the Vice Chairperson to take over. In such a situation, she would also not be part of a vote. Following this discussion, the motion received a unanimous vote.

At 6:29 p.m., Snipes took over the role of Chairwoman for the remainder of the meeting.

Nominations continued with Snipes recommending Ricky Williams for the seat of Vice Chair. The recommendation was seconded by Szaroleta and unanimously approved.

At 6:34 p.m., the Board took a brief moment to discuss Tammy Jones's Board application. Futch noted Jones is "really good at what she does" and leaves "no stone left unturned." He added that he believed her insight would be beneficial to the Board and SVU as a whole. A motion to accept Jones's Board of Directors application was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Mason. The motion was then approved unanimously.

At 6:39 p.m., Chairwoman Snipes continued with the Board Officer Elections. The next position to be filled was the seat of Treasurer. Jones was recommended for the position by Heather, and received a second from Szaroleta. The recommendation was then unanimously approved. With the approval, Jones was given all access to the organization's TD Bank accounts, along with its other financial accounts.

The final seat to be filled was Chaplain. Snipes nominated Heather for the position, and received a second from Federico. The nomination was subsequently approved unanimously.

At 6:41 p.m., Chairwoman Snipes opened discussion and review of Cindy Hines's application to join the Board of Directors. Futch noted her attentiveness and work displayed on the Echoes to Advocacy Committee as being beneficial to the Board of Directors. Additionally, her background as a CPA would offer additional insight and assistance with the financial side of the organization. A motion was made by Szaroleta to approve Hines's application, and seconded by Mason. It was then unanimously approved.

At 6:47 p.m., Futch noted that the Board needs a South Region Representative to begin establishing relationships with local municipalities and law enforcement. As Jones resides further south in the region than others on the Board of Directors, he recommended her to fill

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the position. A motion was made by Federico, which was seconded by Heather. It was then unanimously approved.

At 6:49 p.m., Futch took over to review the State of the Organization. He began by expressing his appreciation for the Board members for getting the organization to where it is now. In an effort to continue the organization's impact, he presented a Five Point Plan for the 2024-25 year.

The first goal is to fill Board vacancies and strengthen participation. All Board members are expected to attend the Board of Directors meetings and participate in a minimum of two events annually. Futch noted an emphasis on the need for consistent and proactive contributions from all members, including sharing SVU content on social media and raising funds via the sale of tickets for auctions, raffles and the Hope and Justice Dinner.

The second goal is to focus on survivors. Futch expressed a desire to renew efforts to build relationships with surviving family members of cold case victims; he acknowledged that some families might prefer not to engage with the organization, but expressed the hope to continue advocating for their cases. Additionally, he hopes to establish a robust victim advocacy program with input from the Echoes to Advocacy Committee.

The third goal is to strengthen relationships with law enforcement and other professional agencies. With this step, Futch hopes the organization will expand its outreach to law enforcement agencies across North Florida, particularly in underrepresented counties like Gilchrist, Dixie, and Levy. One particular project he noted was planning for a two-day cold case workshop to foster collaboration amongst investigators and other parties.

The fourth goal is to increase community outreach. Futch voiced his desire to host public case reviews and participate in community events to increase the organization's visibility. Furthermore, he noted wanting to establish a permanent memorial for missing persons and unsolved homicide victims in the region.

The fifth goal is to place emphasis on the future of the organization. Futch stated the organization should set yearly fundraising goals each year, such as raising \$15,000 by the end of the fiscal year. He added that the organization hopes to appoint a Grant Writer to help SVU acquire additional funding, as well as potentially securing a physical office to conduct business.

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Board members provided feedback following his presentation, primarily expressing concerns about the challenges of fundraising and soliciting sponsorships. However, they committed to attempting to do their best.

At 7:52 p.m., the Board moved into the discussion and possible action on expanding to a 13-member Board of Directors. Snipes added that she felt a 90-day probation on new members. A motion was made by Mason and seconded by Szaroleta. It was then unanimously approved.

At 7:53 p.m., the Board began to discuss submitted Board of Directors applications. As the Board had already approved Hines's application earlier in the meeting, the only other application up for discussion was from Beafaithful Coker. At this time, some board members acknowledged Coker's background in community advocacy, particularly her experience in navigating civic challenges and raising awareness for underserved issues. This was seen as a benefit which could provide visibility to the organization's mission. It was also suggested that she could fill the future role of Volunteer Coordinator.

However, others expressed concerns with her reliability and ability to work cohesively with the group. Previous interactions with Coker were described as contentious, and concerns were raised about her willingness to collaborate and prioritize organizational goals over personal interests. The Board debated whether her strong personality would detract from the organization's unified message and focus on cold cases. Additionally, potential conflicts of interests from her other civic roles were raised.

Ultimately, no formal action was made to accept Coker's application. Rather, a motion was made by Heather to move the discussion to the January 4 meeting. The motion was seconded by Szaroleta and unanimously approved. Additionally, Federico was tasked with drafting a nondisclosure agreement for up to five years for new Board members to sign.

At 8:17 p.m., Snipes opened discussion on the Officer Attendance Policy. However, as the policy's language does not describe what a "reasonable" excuse constitutes, a motion was made by Federico to move the item to the January 4 meeting to provide time for Federico to add further definition. The motion was seconded by Heather and subsequently approved.

At 8:20 p.m., the Board began discussion on the Board and Executive Staff Separation Policy, which outlines that "individuals serving in executive or administrative positions, including the Executive Director and any staff reporting to or governed by the Executive Director, shall not

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concurrently serve as members of the Board of Directors." A motion was made by Heather to approve this policy, and was seconded by Federico. It was then unanimously approved.

At 8:21 p.m., the Board discussed the potential inclusion of Sgt. At Arms and Chaplain positions. A motion was made by Federico for the approval of the Sgt. At Arms position, which was seconded by Heather. It was unanimously approved. A motion was then made by Federico for the approval of the Chaplain position, which was seconded by Szaroleta. It was also unanimously approved.

Following these approvals, Snipes opened up nominations for the Sgt. At Arms position. Snipes nominated Mason for the position. A motion was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Jones. It was then unanimously approved.

At 8:25 p.m., Futch opened discussion on the Financial Responsibility of the Board policy, stating he will be required to present a budget to the Board of Directors at the January 4 meeting. He stated the policy would help maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all organizational financial transactions. A motion to approve the policy was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Heather. It was then unanimously approved.

At 8:26 p.m., the Board began discussing with possible action the approval of a \$500 expenditure for Victim Advocate Norris to attend VSP Training in August. A motion for approval was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Federico. It was unanimously approved.

At 8:31 p.m., the Board began discussion with possible action the approval of a \$190 expenditure for Hope Narrative gifts (5 sets) for missing persons families. A motion for approval was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Ricky. It was then unanimously approved.

At 8:35 p.m., the discussion turned to the 2025 Hope and Justice Dinner. The next date for the event was set for November 8, 2025, with the doors opening at 4:30 p.m. for mingling and dinner beginning at 6 p.m. Additionally, a motion was made by Mason to bring back both Charlie Schunick and Aphrodite Jones. The motion was seconded by Szaroleta and unanimously approved.

A motion was also made by Szaroleta for the event to once again be held at the Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranch in Live Oak. The motion was seconded by Ricky and unanimously approved.

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The final item under the discussion was the approval of the formation of a Hope and Justice Dinner Committee. A motion was made by Ricky and seconded by Szaroleta. It was unanimously approved.

At 8:48 p.m., Snipes opened discussion on the potential approval to seek an Assistant Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Community Engagement Coordinator, and Grant Writer. A motion was made by Szaroleta and seconded by Heather. It was then unanimously approved. The item was recommended to be placed as Old Business at the November 4 meeting.

There was no other business.

At 8:49 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

The next Suwannee Valley Unsolved Board of Directors meeting will be held on Saturday, January 4, at the Suwannee County Emergency Operations Center, located at 617 SW Ontario Ave., Suite #200, in Live Oak, Fla., at 6 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and certified on Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024, at _____ p.m.

x *Pammy Federico*
Board Chairman
Acting

x *[Signature]*
Board Secretary

u. kelly
witness