

Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB)
June 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes
12000 Government Center Parkway, Conference Rooms 232

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

Tapan Banerjee, Chair, Dranesville District
Linda Collins, Braddock District
Alexandra Dixon, At Large
Harriet Epstein, Secretary, Providence District
Chester Freedenthal, Lee District
Tim Lavelle, At-Large
Leeann Alberts, Vice Chair, At-Large
Mark Farage, City of Fairfax
Donald Kissinger, Jr., Springfield District
Barbara Johnson, Sully District

FA-DSB Members Excused from the Meeting:

Michele "Cookie" Hymer Blitz, Hunter Mill District
Deborah Hammer, Mt. Vernon District

Others Present: Matthew Barkley, Jill Clark and Carl Varner-Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Disability Services Planning and Development; Sulayman Brown, Sandi Fox and Ursula Kiel-Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management; Doris Ray-ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV).

Minutes and Agenda: The June agenda (as amended) and the May minutes were both adopted unanimously.

Public Comment: Doris Ray emphasized that the lack of affordable and accessible public transportation continues to be a barrier for people with disabilities navigating the Fairfax area. She invited FA-DSB members to come to ECVN for a workshop with the Virginia Disability Rights Law Center on June 30, and to participate in the National Council on Independent Living's annual conference and rally on July 26. Doris said that there is a national, nonpartisan endeavor to help people with disabilities to register, and to vote on Election Day. She volunteered to work with the FA-DSB to implement this voting initiative throughout Fairfax County.

Office of Emergency Management (OEM) - Fairfax Alerts Functional Needs Registry: Personnel from OEM responded to a series of questions presented by the FA-DSB in advance of the meeting about how the county makes sure that people with disabilities are adequately supported during an emergency. The questions were regarding the Fairfax Alerts Functional Needs Registry, the now defunct Medical Needs Registry, and the proposed Pre-Notification 911. OEM clarified what the various systems are intended to do, when they are likely to be utilized either by OEM or emergency first responders, and how OEM and the FA-DSB can collaborate to make sure that information about them is accurately conveyed to the disability community. Unlike other proposed or obsolete programs that proactively assist people with disabilities in an emergency, Fairfax Alerts is a tool to get information out to people who self-identify as having a functional need so they will be better informed about self-preparedness and how to get specialized assistance during an emergency. Alexandra Dixon expressed the need for people with disabilities to get priority service in an emergency, a sentiment she shared with Chairman Bulova. Chester Freedenthal spoke with the director of the Department of Public Safety Communications and was told that the 911 Center would like to have a system where more information about medical needs would be available when 911 calls are received, however they have been unable to secure the funding for such a system despite numerous attempts spanning several years. The FA-DSB should continue to advocate for the additional resources needed to have sufficient emergency management and response funding so that older adults and people with disabilities are adequately served in an emergency. OEM invited the FA-DSB to make proposed changes to promotional language for Fairfax Alerts so the board can help OEM clearly communicate emergency services to the disability community. They will revisit the topic during the next Emergency Preparedness committee meeting at the end of June

FA-DSB Strategic Planning and Proposed Community Forums: Tapan Banerjee shared a progress report indicating he is very pleased with the FA-DSB's series of community forums designed to connect board members with the people with disabilities they serve, and to develop an effective strategic action plan for FY 2017. 9 forums have been held so far hosting more than 100 participants. Two more public forums and four more partnership forums are scheduled. A report on the public forums will be compiled over the summer and used to establish the FA-DSB's advocacy priorities for the coming year during the September meeting.

Committee Reports:

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Chester Freedenthal distributed a picture of a service dog employed by a chain of home improvement stores in Canada. The dog helps people with disabilities maximize their independence by enabling them to overcome a variety of barriers while shopping at the store. FA-DSB members agreed it is a great idea that should be replicated in other areas and venues.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Harriet Epstein said that the next committee meeting will be on June 27 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the OEM headquarters. She invited everyone to participate to get a better understanding of the county's various emergency management and response programs for people with disabilities.
- **Housing:** Carl Varner gave a briefing on behalf of Housing Committee Chair, Michele 'Cookie' Hymer Blitz who was excused from the meeting. The Housing Choice Voucher waiting list will not reopen at the end of 2016 as originally hoped, but there will likely be an opportunity for people to sign up in early 2017. Cookie also wants to ensure the county's homeless shelters are accessible for people with disabilities.
- **Mobility and Transportation (M&T) Committee:** Don Kissinger reported that the M&T Committee continues to focus on Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), and how they can successfully collaborate with existing taxi and paratransit services to fill unmet transportation needs for older adults and people with disabilities. He suggested that many aspects of this contested issue may have to be resolved through legal action or through the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly.

Chair's Items: Linda Collins presented the Nominations Committee's slate of nominees for the FY 2017 Executive Committee. They are: Chair-Tapan Banerjee, Dranesville District; Vice Chair- Leeann Alberts, At Large; and Secretary- Harriet Epstein, Providence District. The nominees were adopted unanimously and will take effect July 1, 2016. Tapan, along with the rest of the board praised Michele 'Cookie' Hymer Blitz for being crowned as "Lady Fairfax" for Celebrate Fairfax 2016. Leeann Alberts, Linda Collins and Alexandra Dixon volunteered to serve on the FA-DSB's 2017 Legislative Committee, to help establish the board's 2017 legislative priorities. FA-DSB members expressed an interest in emphasizing home and community based services, especially the Community First Choice Act. The FA-DSB also supported Tapan's backing of the national initiative to encourage people with disabilities to register, and to vote in the 2016 general election.

Member and Staff Reports:

- Alexandra Dixon reported that the display tables at ServiceSource's community resource fair could make it difficult for a person using a wheelchair to navigate the event unimpeded, and the use of latex balloons could be a barrier for people with latex allergies or sensitivity. Leeann Alberts noticed the same barriers. A motion that these issues be communicated to ServiceSource was adopted unanimously by the FA-DSB.
- A letter from the Long Term Care Coordinating Council asking for the FA-DSB's support for the proposed "meals tax" along with a recommendation that a percentage of the revenue collected be dedicated for services for older adults and people with disabilities was discussed at length. Since a consensus couldn't be reached and no immediate action will be taken on the item, it will be revisited at a future meeting.
- Leeann Alberts will represent the FA-DSB at the Department of Family Services Boards, Authorities and Commissions meeting at the end of June.

Adjournment: 9:10 p.m.