

Monday, February 14, 2022

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

- Deborah Hammer, Chair, Mount Vernon District
- Brandis Ruise, Vice Chair, Hunter Mill District
- Judith Turcott, Secretary, Fairfax City
- Deborah Cohen, Braddock District
- Lindsay Harris, Falls Church
- Courtney Cezair Mayers, Dranesville District
- Diane Monnig, Providence District
- Mary Pauline Jones, Springfield District
- Jamie Lynne Bruen, Sully District
- Benjamin Gibbs, At-Large
- Andrew Magill, At-Large

FA-DSB Members Absent from the Meeting:

- Sarah Graham Taylor, Lee District- Excused
- Melandee Jones Canaday, At-Large
- Mason District- Vacant
- At-Large- Vacant

Others Present: Claudia Vila (DFS staff), Karen Kelly (DFS staff), Delali Osei-Boateng (DFS staff), Trina Mayhan-Webb (Adult & Aging Division Director, DFS), Courtney Arroyo (OEM)

The board conducted a wholly electronic meeting because the COVID-19 pandemic made it unsafe to physically assemble a quorum in one location or to have the public present.

Board members and staff support accessed the meeting via the Zoom web platform. All board members stated calling from their home district.

Members of the public accessed the meeting via Zoom.

Minutes and Agenda:

1. **Call to order.** 7:03 p.m. Roll call was done to establish that a quorum was present and that all could hear. A script was shared about the state of emergency necessitating a virtual meeting. A quorum was present for this meeting.
2. **Approval of Previous (November 2021) minutes.** Judith Turcott moved to approve the November minutes. The motion was seconded and approved.
3. **Public Comment.** No public comments were made this evening.

Meeting Items:

Welcome New Board Members- Welcome to Jamie Lynne Bruen, she introduced herself and spoke about her reason for joining. Welcome to Benjamin Gibbs, he introduced himself and spoke about his reason for joining.

Annual Lobbying Memorandum- Claudia spoke about the annual county memorandum and explained the highlights about state and federal regulations for lobbying for board members. If you are lobbying on behalf of the Disability Services Board, you need to make sure that it aligns with the Fairfax Board of Supervisors' Program. Please contact Claudia if you have any questions in relation to this policy. Deborah reinforced this policy with the members.

County Services Update- Delali Osei-Boateng provided the board with a presentation regarding the various COVID-related services the county is offering residents. This was a follow-up presentation to what staff presented at the start of the Pandemic. The presentation was sent to members as part of the board packet. It contains active links and responses to frequently asked questions.

During the presentation Deborah asked that staff explain what the Functional Needs Registry is for new board members. Claudia explained this is a registry where residents in Fairfax County can sign up to receive alerts in real time in the event of an emergency. Courtney Arroyo, (OES) stated that the 911 services tool the county is now using also includes a health profile that is part of the Functional Needs Registry.

Courtney Cezair Mayers asked for clarification on meeting the mental health needs for students not currently receiving services, and who are not on the DD Waiver or DD+ Waiver waitlist. Delali will reach out to the CSB and ask what type of services they are providing children with physical disabilities.

Action Items for FY 2022:

Items 1 and 2: Courtney Cezair Mayers provided an update regarding an educational campaign they would like to conduct to educate persons with disabilities as to their rights regarding breaking their lease on account of their disability. Claudia recommended that Courtney consider reaching out to the Equal Rights Center, who has a contract with the County and has put out similar toolkits for the Fairfax County's Office of Human Rights and Equity. She further stated that she had created a Fair Housing Toolkit, which included a sample reasonable accommodation letter that the group might be able to use.

Item 3. Increased employment opportunities by the county for people with disabilities and putting needed supports in place. Diane Monnig wondered if this initiative should be attempting to connect individuals to county government and/or if the focus should be on private businesses. She was also wondering what the DSB's role was in this initiative. Deborah Hammer explained the role of the board and what we might have influence over.

Deborah suggested a proposal to present to the Board of Supervisors. Deborah spoke regarding the program in existence in Prince George's County and the supports they have in place in that jurisdiction to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Judith Turcott told the group that Disability Rights and Resources had managed an internship for college students with disabilities in the past. Claudia reported that the John Hudson internship program will be returning this year. There will be two paid positions available for summer internships for college students and/or recent college graduates. Claudia and her unit are currently exploring a partnership with Public Assistance and Employment Services (PAES), which would create additional paid opportunities with federal funding. If successful, they might be able to make that particular internship model year round. This internship would also be for individuals with disabilities, ages 17-25, but not necessary in-place college students.

Benjamin added additional information regarding internships and that he would be willing to share his experience with Claudia.

Item 4. Improved Regional Transportation options public and private rideshare for people with disabilities. Mary Pauline has worked as the DSB representative within the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC), with the commission and various rideshare groups and is trying to research accessibility options with these groups. Mary Pauline has been working on behalf of the DSB and TAC when speaking to Uber. The goal of TAC is to create partnerships with the US government and rideshare groups, to add more accessible vehicles to their inventory and make sure they are available to people with disabilities.

Item 5. Ensure all county buildings and facilities meet ADA requirements. Deborah Hammer reported that some county buildings have not fully met ADA accessibility guidelines in the past. She asked that members bring any concern from constituents regarding accessibility in county facilities to future board meetings

Item 6. Ensure that the needs of residents with disabilities are being met during the pandemic. Brandis reported that Delali's presentation this evening along with the PowerPoint used and included board packet provided a comprehensive overview of this board priority.

Item 7. Accessibility of all county websites and online services. Debbie would like input from the board regarding accessibility issues they might come across on the county's site. She hopes to have more of an update next month. Deborah stated that a few years ago she and a former board member met with a group called Accessib- B. This group provides services to assist in making websites and online experiences accessible to a wide variety of people. Deborah let Debbie know she'd share their contact information with Debbie. Claudia stated that there was a county task force in existence prior to the pandemic with the goal to meet and discuss web accessibility issues within the county. Claudia has

recently reached out to the individual who staffed that taskforce. He was very glad to hear that the DSB is taking on this issue as an initiative and would be happy to speak with the board in the future. Claudia suggested inviting him to an upcoming board meeting. Debbie stated that the county's website contains language that the county consults with the DSB on web accessibility issues, and that if that's so, the board should truly provide the county with input on this issue.

Item 8. Accessibility education for area businesses. Deborah reported that she and Andrew looked at doing an educational campaign, particularly around physicians' offices and medical providers. Claudia shared that her unit had written a few articles on this topic for the Department of Family Services' Golden Gazette Publication. She said she'd be happy to share those with the board so they could forward them to their networks. Andrew reinforced that face masks made it difficult for people with hearing impairments to understand speech during the pandemic. Claudia stated that the county provided many of its staff members with masks that contained a clear plastic panel to aid in accessibility for people with hearing impairments, and that Adult & Aging Division partnered with Northern VA Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC) by donating the group clear facemasks. Claudia further mentioned an upcoming training opportunity, a training conducted by NVRC, on assistive technology and communication tools for Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients. She mentioned that DFS board members are welcome to attend. Delali will resend the information regarding this training to the board in case they are interested in attending.

Item 9. Deborah asked that board members consider looking at the Member Roster document included in their packet, and to volunteer for seats on other boards that are currently vacant.

Item 10. Training other boards. Judith stated she has developed an information list for groundwater training but has not yet read or investigated any of this information. Claudia also provided Judith with a non-profit contact that might conduct this type of disability training.

Item 11. Outreach to parents and families. Courtney stated that she would like to research the possibility of doing listening sessions but wanted to reach out to Claudia to discuss options for these sessions. Additional resources were recommended such as the Fairfax County Special Education PTA and the disability liaison through Fairfax County Public Schools. Jamie agreed to assist Courtney in this outreach priority area.

Updates:

Claudia provided information regarding the Inclusive Community Engagement Steering Committee. A former DSB member, Cookie Blitz, stated that she thought there needed to be disability representation as part of this committee. Claudia is exploring participation on this committee and will report back further when she has additional information.

Claudia reported that there is a part-time, non-merit, position available within the Disability Rights and Resources unit. Information regarding this position can be found on the Fairfax County website and also on Indeed.com. The county is hoping for some strong applicants. Claudia asked that the board refer any interested individuals to those sites. Karen will provide the board with the link to the job posting.

Ben stated that he may be interested in applying for this position and was wondering if it would be a conflict of interest to apply. Deborah stated that it likely would be a conflict of interest but that he should apply should he really be interested in the position.

Diane Monnig was contacted by her District Supervisor regarding a concern around voting accessibility at the Government Center. The constituent needed a wheelchair and apparently the wheelchair that was provided was not large enough. Courtney further expanded on voting challenges and stated that at the Government Center there appeared to be only three accessible parking spots available, whereas the County website stated there would be sixteen. She further stated that the person helping her vote seemed not to understand the rules and availability of supports for people who required assistance in the voting process.

After further discussion the board decided to make voting accessibility a priority and Ben and Lindsay agreed to staff the initiative.

8:55 Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned by Deborah.