

**Fairfax Area Disability Services Board
Full Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 9, 2022**

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

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

FA-DSB Members Absent from the Meeting:

- Judith Turcott, Secretary, City of Fairfax – Excused
- Sarah Graham Taylor, Lee District – Excused
- Melandee Jones Canaday, At-Large – Excused
- Mason District, Vacant
- At-large, Vacant

Others Present: Claudia Vila (DFS staff), Karen Kelly (DFS staff), Delali Osei-Boateng (DFS staff), Moriah Kitaeff (OEM staff), Courtney Arroyo (OEM staff), Rose Asuquo (Libraries staff), Bonnie O’Leary and Eileen McCartin (Northern VA Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing).

The board conducted a wholly electronic meeting as 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 also accessed the meeting via Zoom.

Minutes and Agenda:

1. **Call to order 7 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. We did have a quorum for this meeting.

2. **Approval of Previous (March 2022) minutes.** Courtney Cezair Mayers made a suggested change to the existing minutes. Brandis Ruise moved to approve the March minutes to include the change. The motion was seconded and approved.

3. **Public Comment.**

Courtney Arroyo provided an update regarding the Office of Emergency Management's (OEM) Functional Needs Registry. Courtney stated that the system had recently gone through a clean-up to ensure its information is up-to-date. She will provide a further update at the June meeting.

Bonnie O'Leary from Northern VA Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVRC) brought a concern to the board. She explained that a new recreation center, Audrey Moore Recreation Center, is in the process of being designed. Bonnie stated that other recreation centers have been built in the past with very poor acoustics and that she has been trying, unsuccessfully, to provide input to the project manager and architect of this center. She was hoping that the DSB would be willing to assist by speaking with officials and request for greater input from the disability community about the center's design. Deborah Hammer agreed to assist with this endeavor and asked that Bonnie email Claudia Vila the contact information for the individuals she has been speaking with. Claudia will then provide that information to Deborah.

Eileen McCartin (NVRC's Executive Director) introduced herself and asked if Artificial Intelligence (AI) captions could be turned on for the duration of the meeting. Claudia apologized and explained that the Zoom account being used did not have the AI caption feature enabled, and that only the county admin would have permission to turn it on. Claudia and her team members, nevertheless, attempted to see if they could manually turn this feature on, but were unsuccessful. Claudia explained that when they receive accommodation requests for captions, they normally provide a live stenographer to ensure accuracy in the captions being provided but that, unfortunately, she did not receive an accommodation request prior to the meeting, therefore a live stenographer was not present. Claudia apologized once again and asked that Eileen reach out to her in the future with any similar requests and that the county would gladly accommodate.

Meeting Items:

Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed Budget Testimony

Deborah Hammer provided the update that Budget Testimony took place in April and that she testified on behalf of the board. She let the board know that an update would be provided once the budget was finalized.

Nominations Committee- Nominees

Mary Pauline Jones updated the board that she received confirmation from the following individuals regarding the executive committee for fiscal year 2023: Deborah Hammer would like to stay on as Chair, Brandis Ruise would like to stay on as Vice Chair, and Judith Turcott would like to stay on as Secretary. No other nomination was made. Deborah thanked Mary Pauline for her participation in the committee and stated that voting would take place in June.

Celebrate Fairfax:

Deborah Hammer let the board know that she and Claudia had met with an employee of Celebrate Fairfax several weeks ago. This individual explained that this year the celebration would be staggered between districts so that everyone might be able to participate in the festivities more easily. Deborah thought it might be a great way to increase the board's connection and visibility with constituents throughout Fairfax County. Deborah is waiting for the individual to send her a list of future events that she believes might be good ones for the DSB to attend. Claudia offered to follow up with them. Deborah stated that it would be nice to have two board members per event taking notes of any resident concerns that come up, as well as to share information about the board and what it does. Diane Monnig pointed out that you can go to the Celebrate Fairfax for a current list of all events slated to take place but agreed that it would be nice to have a list of events recommended by Celebrate Fairfax employees.

Web Accessibility Observation Results

Lindsay Harris found the way the data was aggregated to be very helpful and thanked Delali Osei-Boateng for her work on putting together the document. She stated that a common theme is that Alt Text is not always available and that this can be one recommendation that can be made to the county as a way to improve website accessibility. Deborah Hammer stated that she looked at four county pages and agrees that this issue is one she observed. Deborah thought the color contrast was good, overall. Moriah Kitaeff, county employee, asked for context regarding this initiative and Deborah explained that the board came up with several items it wanted to look for within the county website, based on standard web accessibility guidelines, and that members then reviewed county pages for any accessibility issues.

Deborah stated that fifteen county pages were reviewed in total by the board and asked if that would be enough of a sample to engage the county in a conversation about this. Lindsay thought it might provide enough of a snapshot to start engaging. Lindsay said that she doesn't have a screen reader so was unable to access if that aspect of the site was working well. Ben Gibbs agreed that it would be very useful if someone who utilized a screen reader could provide feedback to the board. Lindsay wondered if it would be appropriate for Claudia to reach out to the chair of the county's internal web accessibility workgroup with this information. Claudia explained that the group has not met since the

start of the pandemic, but that she'd be happy to reach out to Mike Smuland, who is the county's Web Content Editor and the person who was leading up this effort. Lindsay suggested that Claudia share the document with its findings with him as a starting point. Claudia agreed to contact him and include Deborah Hammer in the communication. Deborah also stated that the way in which members reviewed the webpages (by phone, computer, or tablet) might be relevant as to whether or not the pages were deemed accessible. Claudia suggested that members provide that information to Delali, and that Delali could include it in the spreadsheet.

Action Items for FY 2022

Deborah would like to move the Action Item document to Google Doc. Claudia was unsure whether the county would permit it, as it does not allow employees use of that program. She will verify whether it can be used. Deborah then explained that she would like to add various sections to the Action Items document so that members could regularly update things like dates, contacts, and/or general notes of work conducted to the document. Courtney was concerned about this, given that she has her own way of organizing data. A discussion ensued around ways in which updates could be added to the document. It was agreed that any updates would be sent to staff to include in the document. They would be sent approximately two weeks in advance of each board meeting and would be sent in bullet point formatting. Brandis stated that a common document would help to reduce silos and better capture the impact of all the work being done by the board.

Lindsay and Ben provided an update regarding their accessibility and voting polls initiative. Lindsay stated that the Virginia website, www.Elections.Virginia.Gov, has done a good job at explaining the various accommodations that the state can provide residents when voting. She did not feel that the county's site did a thorough enough job and suggested education around this. Ben was surprised at the number of accommodation examples the Virginia site illustrated and was very impressed by their efforts. Ben and Lindsay would like to provide the county with this website as an example of what could be included in the county's voting page. Deborah recommended they reach out to the county's Office of Elections' Director and General Registrar, Eric Spicer, as a way to begin this conversation with their office.

Courtney provided an update regarding her educational campaign initiative. She shared that she was working on a webinar that was very close to being completed. She plans on sending it to Deborah and Claudia for feedback, prior to sharing it with the full board. The ultimate goal is to then decide who the audience should be. She also provided an update on the LIHTC property she had mentioned at the last meeting. The Arden is scheduled for occupancy August 2022. It will have fourteen accessible units, all of which will have roll-in showers. The rent will range between \$1220-\$2500 per month, depending on the number of bedrooms. There is currently a leasing preference for anyone that is part of the settlement agreement population. Leasing preference should be verified via an individual's CSB support coordinator. Courtney stated that there is a similar building

planned in Herndon that will have a similar preference. Both buildings seem to have a good number of two-bedroom units, which will allow individuals to move in with their live-in aids.

Ben provided an update on his work in adaptive sports. He shared that he had spoken with the owner of an organization called Adaptive, which focuses on recruiting persons with disabilities interested in adaptive sports. Ben volunteers for this organization. The owner would be happy to assist with DSB outreach and asked that the DSB share its programs with the disability community. Diane offered to put up their information on the Arc of Northern VA's website, and Claudia will look into whether it can be shared in the Access Fairfax newsletter.

Diane Monnig provided an update regarding her employment initiative. She specifically asked for some background information around past DSB efforts. She asked if the board had ever considered asking the county take up a goal of hiring a specific percentage of persons with disabilities. Claudia asked if she meant something similar to the federal government's Schedule A program. Claudia then explained that Virginia is bound by the Dillan Rule, which does not allow counties to enact hiring practices that supersede those currently available at the state level and that, unfortunately, the state did not currently have a similar program in place. Diane then suggested that the board consider asking the county for a program whereby the county works with DARS, and other similar groups, to provide situational assessments to persons with disabilities and their job coaches. Delali stated that similar programs had existed in the county in the past, but that she was not aware of current available funding to support it. Claudia said that she could see if this is something her unit can assist with or adopt in some way. Deborah will speak with Diana about past initiatives and provide context, then will attempt to contact Cathy Spage, Director of Human Resources, for a future meeting.

Updates:

Deborah stated that the ReelAbilities Film Festival is coming to town May-June of this year. Claudia asked Karen Kelly if she could look into possibly advertising it on Access Fairfax.

Courtney provided an update regarding a recent meeting she attended, hosted by the LTCCCC, with the county's ADA coordinator. In the meeting she offered to assist the ADA Coordinator with a future training for ADA representatives and asked if the DSB would be interested in her doing so in her official capacity as a board member. Deborah said that would be wonderful.

Andrew Magill stated that he attended a recent policy-based meeting focused on ways to improve parking for persons with disabilities. He found it useful and inquired as to whether a representative from that group could come present at the June meeting. Deborah said that he could have a few minutes at the June meeting.

9:06 p.m. Motion to adjourn was made by Brandis Ruise and seconded by Ben Gibbs and Andrew Magill. The meeting was adjourned by Deborah Hammer.