

**Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB)**  
Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 7:00pm-8:30pm  
Zoom Virtual Platform due to COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency

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**MEETING NOTES**

**Attendees:**

Members Present:

- **David Jonas (Chair)**, attending virtually from the Mason district.
- **Nancy Hall**, attending virtually from the Mason district.
- **Alice Foltz**, attending virtually from the Sully district.
- **Karen Darley**, attending virtually from the Braddock district.
- **Stephanie Sedgwick**, attending virtually from the Dranesville district.
- **Andre Lee**, attending virtually from the City of Fairfax.
- **Amrita Banerjees**, attending virtually from the Springfield district. (Joined late)

Members not Present:

- **Sarah Newman**, Hunter Mill district.
- **Saud Hasan Shah**, Lee District

Staff:

- Melanie Fenwick, DFS Senior Policy Manager
- Michael Becketts, DFS Director
- Alycia Blackwell, DFS Deputy Director
- Kristina Jordan, DFS Documentarian
- Julie Bowman, Foster Care & Adoption-Resource & Support Program Manager
- Kamonya Omatete, Foster Care & Adoption Program Manager
- Sandi Slappey Brown, CYF Quality Programs Manager
  
- **This meeting was held via Zoom Virtual Platform due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.**
- **The public was able to access this meeting by dialing 888-270-9936 and then entering the conference code 371526.**

**Meeting Opening:**

- David Jonas called the meeting to order at 7:03pm
- David Jonas read the electronic meeting script as authorized by FOIA and performed roll call establishing that each member can hear each other.

**Approval of Minutes:**

- Minutes from 5/17/2021 were approved by ASSB Chair and Board.

### **Welcome New Members:**

- Andre Lee, member from City of Fairfax.
- Moved to Fairfax City three years ago.
- Employed as an advisor at AARP.

### **Director's Announcements**

- Michael Becketts and Melanie Fenwick presented.
- Guidelines for Electronic Meeting and Remote Participation:
  - Effective July 1, 2021, remote participation will be allowed when:
    - Sick
    - Family member needs care
  - As long as Fairfax County's local state of emergency is in place ASSB can continue to meet electronically.
  - A member can be remote 25% a year.
  - Should ASSB return to in person meetings?
    - Take it month by month but remain remote for now.
- ASSB Member Orientation:
  - Review orientation packet
  - Orientations would be under two hours.
  - What would be helpful?
    - Know what the role of the ASSB is.
    - Know what the role of each member is.
    - Knowing what the time commitment
  - DFS to offer an orientation refresher to current members.
    - DFS will get together some dates and present them at the next meeting.

### **Update from Children, Youth, and Family:**

- Kamonya Omatete, Julie Brown, and Sandi Slapppy Brown presented.
- Safe & Connected Integration Project
  - Purpose: Fully implement the Safe & Connected Practice model throughout CYF
  - Method: Engage Accenture to help us identify strengths and gaps and develop a roadmap to guide this work
  - Status: Roadmap is complete; entering Implementation Phase
- Child Welfare Institute Redesign
  - Purpose: Strengthen professional development for new hires, current staff, and supervisors
  - Method: Engage Butler Institute from Denver University to help us assess needs and develop curricula, simulations, transfer of learning activities, supervision framework, and coaching plans
  - Status: Work began in late April to set up project structure, adjust workplan, provide foundation and conduct needs assessment
- Equity
  - Purpose: Ensure that an equity-informed approach anchors every interaction with peers and every intervention with families as well as the delivery of services to the community

- Method: Integrate and Equity Plan into all major initiatives, including the Safe & Connected Integration Project and CWI Redesign. Use data where available to inform actions.
- Status: Charter approved in May; work is beginning on equity planning for Safe & Connected Integration Project.
- IT projects
  - FROST: Database to help maintain compliance and track and report on work with children in foster care, resource families, and adoptive families. Partial launch in Feb. 2021; full launch expected summer 2021.
  - OpenText: Design new electronic case file system to replace Documentum. Project began in early May and will last 8-12 months.
- Other significant efforts:
  - PIP: Participate in the statewide Program Improvement Pan coming out of the last federal Child and Family Services Review. Helped VDSS achieve 9 out of 10 outcomes.
  - Strategic Plan: Sunset current plan and develop new two-year plan focusing on Safe & Connected practice, professional development objectives, and strengthened focus on engaging relatives.
  - Timely Adoption: Increase percent of children adopted from foster care within 24 months. Study factors contributing to this. Already seen improvement from 12% to 39%.
- Fairfax County Foster Care & Adoption Demographics Fiscal Year 2020:
  - Removal Region (76 total)
    - Reston: 12%
    - Fairfax: 20%
    - Falls Church: 42%
    - South County: 26%
  - Race of Children in Foster Care
    - Hispanic: 31%
    - African American/Black: 23%
    - Multi-race: 19%
    - White: 18%
    - Asian: 6%
    - Middle Eastern: 3%
    - American Indian: 0%
  - 189 total children in foster care. 49% male and 51% female.
  - Age of Clients in Foster Care
    - < 2: 25%
    - 3-5: 11%
    - 6-8: 6%
    - 9-11: 10%
    - 12-14: 8%
    - 15-17: 25%
    - 18-20: 15%
  - Reasons for Leaving Foster Care (108 children)
    - Return home: 24%
    - Adoption: 40%

- Custody transferred to relatives: 11%
  - Age out: 23%
  - Other: 2%
- Steps to Becoming a Foster Parent:
  - Information meeting
  - Participant is still interested AND matches needs of the Foster Care and Adoption Program
  - Initial home visit
  - Participant is still interested AND meets requirements.
  - Attends PRIDE Training (5 sessions in person and 4 sessions online: 15 hours in person and 44 hours online)
  - Home study/interviews/home visit
  - Approval and certification
  - Await placement.
- New Generation PRIDE Pre-service Training for Resource Parents:
  - Duration: Approximately 44 hours online and 15 hours in classroom.
  - Trainers: A Fairfax County Department of Family Services Social Services Specialist and a Resource Parent.
  - What will you learn:
    - The challenges and rewards of being a resource family.
    - The skills necessary to meet the needs of children in foster care.
  - Visuals:
    - Videos depicting real life situations to help you better understand what children and their families are experiencing.
    - A panel made up of individuals with various experiences in the Child Welfare System: young adults who were in foster care as children, adults who were adopted, current foster parents, and children of current foster parents.
  - Our goals:
    - To deepen your understanding of how you manage trauma, change, attachment, and children with self-esteem issues.
    - To develop the skills necessary to:
      - Protect and nurture children.
      - Meet their developmental needs and address their developmental delays.
      - Support the relationships between children and their birth families.
      - Connect children to safe and nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime.
      - Work as a member of a professional team.
- For more information:
  - Website information: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption)
  - Monthly information meetings: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption/information-meetings](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/children-youth/foster-care-adoption/information-meetings)
  - Email to learn more: [BeAFosterParent@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:BeAFosterParent@fairfaxcounty.gov)

**Chair's Announcements:**

- David Jonas presented
- Nomination for ASSB secretary: will go over next meeting.
- Human Service Issue Paper:
  - Comments on issue paper are due by July 21, 2021.
  - Sub-committee established to review paper. Sub-committee includes Nancy Hall, Alice Foltz, and Andre Lee.

**Adjourned:**

- Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

**Next ASSB meeting:**

- Wednesday, July 21, 2021, from 7:00pm-8:30pm