

**Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB)**  
Wednesday January 19, 2022, 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 (Secretary)** attending virtually from the Mason District
- **Alice Foltz (Vice Chair)** attending virtually from the Sully District
- **Joe Koszarek** from Hunter Mill District
- **Laura Martinez** attending virtually from Providence District
- **Mary Wilcox** attending virtually from the City of Falls Church
- **Saud Hasan Shah** from the Lee District
- **Raymond McGrath** from Mt. Vernon District
- **Ben Zuhl**, from Dranesville District
- **Amitra Banerjees** from the Springfield District
- **Andre Lee** attending virtually from the City of Fairfax
- **Karen Darley** from the Braddock District.

Members not Present:

- None (!)

Staff:

- Michael Becketts, DFS Director
- Kristina Jordan, DFS Documentarian
- Melanie Fenwick, DFS Senior Policy Manager
- Amy Carlini, Director of Communications
  
- **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 7:01 pm
  
- 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 December 15, 2021, were approved by ASSB Chair and Board.

### **Director's Announcements:**

- Michael Becketts, Department of Family Services (DFS) Director, yielded the floor to Amy Carlini, who presented the “almost final” 2021 Annual Report. It will be formatted with usable links and printed. Alice Foltz complimented her on the good work on the Report. One change was not made: “awed” to “impressed” in the third paragraph of the Chair’s letter. Hasan asked about which platforms are to be used to promote the report. The Board Member are encouraged to use their personal media to “tell the story.” The representatives from the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church will need to know with whom to share it (the Fairfax County representatives share it with their Board of Supervisors supervisor). Ben offered to do a program on the “Inside Scoop.” It is a Board decision, not staff. The Board agreed to the proposal, and thanked Ben for the opportunity. The final report will be ready by the third week of February, in advance of the FY2023 Budget presentation.
- New Member orientation is February 9<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 – 8:30 pm. All new and returning members are encouraged to participate. Topics will include: FOIA; Bylaws; the DFS; funding; the Department’s mission, vision, and values; other Boards, Commissions, and Authorities (BACs); the cadence of our meetings; and the Board Member’s responsibilities.
- Dir. Becketts spoke about the continuing challenges of the workload created by the ongoing pandemic. DFS has 160 employees currently, either with the virus or attending to someone who does. The department is being flexible with extending telework. The Department is experiencing staff issues in some areas and is reaching out to recent retirees, offering an employment commitment through the end of this fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>). They are bringing on temporary hires, focusing the process on competencies and interviewing with realistic expectations. Dir. Becketts reports that all data show that DFS is still getting the job done. The job descriptions changed to reflect **the core responsibility to protect children and families**. The goal of DFS is modified to answer, “what do we want to do to succeed?” They are trying to limit in-state poaching, as the success measurements are statewide, not by county.
- Dir. Becketts spoke about affordable housing and homelessness. He will arrange for the Board meetings to include experts from the County offices, March – October. The Board hopes to have a product to present after that time.
- DFS was highlighted for its excellence in redesigning child welfare and community engagement in a recent article, “Succeeding Differently.” Congratulations to DFS and Dir. Becketts!

### **Nominate and Elect Vice Chair and Secretary:**

- Vice Chair Alice Foltz was elected by acclamation for another term as Vice Chair.
- Joe Koszarek was elected by acclamation as Secretary.

### **Chair's Announcements:**

- Chair Jonas agreed that housing and homelessness will be our concentrations this year. All Board Members are encouraged to review the attached report: “Chairman’s Task Force on Equity and Opportunity Recommendations.” Items 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 20 relate directly or tangentially. Our results should be reported to Dir. Becketts and copied to the Board of

Supervisors, with a tag note “looking forward to your response.” We should be looking for **gaps** in service that the County structure can remedy.

- Chair Jonas opened the floor to remarks. Alice Foltz asked us all to show our support for the Governor’s Budget, being presented now in Richmond. Dir. Becketts mentioned the Youth Survey and the collapse of the mental health system under the stress of COVID. **Housing is the foundation of mental health; it is not just a place of shelter.** Lack of housing is the root cause of many inequities. We can have the Chief Equity Officer, Carla Bruce, address the Board and counsel us on the intersections of what DFS is tasked with and housing inequity.

**Adjourned:**

- Meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

**Next ASSB meeting:**

- Wednesday, February 16, 2022, from 7:00pm-8:30pm