

Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB)
Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 7:00pm-8:30pm
Virtual Meeting

MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

At-Large – Chairman’s Office, Noah Abraham
Mount Vernon District, Raymond McGrath, Vice Chair
Braddock District, Karen Darley
City of Fairfax, Andre Lee
Sully District, Jose Garzon
Springfield District, Hillary Hogan
Mason District, Julian De Phillips, Secretary

Absent:

Providence District, Laura Martinez, Chair
Dranesville District, Ben Zuhl
Franconia District, Latriece Prince-Wheeler
Hunter Mill District, Joe Koszarek

Positions Vacant:

City of Falls Church

Staff Present:

Michael Becketts, DFS Director
Melanie Fenwick, DFS Staff Support
Alycia Blackwell, DFS Deputy Director

Guests:

Kristi Dooley

The meeting was held virtually. The public and members who could not access the Zoom platform could participate by dialing 888-270-9936 and entering conference code 931538.

Meeting Opening

Vice Chair Raymond McGrath called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and performed the roll call. A quorum of members was confirmed, and the voice of all members could be heard by every other member. Moved by Jose Garzon and seconded by Julian De Phillips. Vice Chair Raymond McGrath moved that the meeting could be held.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January 17, 2024, meeting approved with no changes.

New Member Announcement

- Hillary Hogan, Springfield District, a current employee of Arlington County introduced herself.
- Members of the public were given an opportunity to comment before or after the meeting agenda as stated. Both opted to wait until after.

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Director's Announcements

- The new member orientation has been postponed and will be rescheduled for a date three months from now.
- The Annual Report has been distributed electronically for review by the Board of Supervisors and made available on the ASSB website. Dir. Becketts will distribute the report to the heads of the departments for reference.
- Member Karen Darley, Braddock District, has announced her resignation after serving on the ASSB since 2016.

Election of Vice Chair and Secretary

- Due to the absence of the Chair, and the action to elect the Vice Chair, the member with the longest tenure is asked to preside over the election. Vice Chair McGrath moves to yield the floor to Andre Lee. At the January 19 meeting, the Chair nominated Vice Chair McGrath and Secretary De Phillips to continue their service. Both were reelected unanimously.

Strategic Planning

- Dir. Becketts introduced Kristi Dooley to comment on her role in directing strategic planning.
- Kristi Dooley from True Purpose Leadership based in Reston, VA. She works with teams, elected bodies, boards, and commissions in the DMV area. Ms. Dooley has worked with DFS for nearly 10 years in some capacity.
- Vice Chair McGrath provided an overview of ASSB's current posture of receiving information as an advisory board and the goal to move from this posture to a more active advisory role. Information gathering, strategic planning, and communication are potentially within our purview and ASSB could be more useful and effective in these areas.
- Ms. Dooley references the code for the establishment of the ASSB and indicates that helping to interpret the duties of the ASSB in such a manner to be more useful to DFS and the communities represented.
- Dir. Becketts highlighted some roles and responsibilities distributed between organizations with similar areas of responsibilities but with a different set of capabilities and funding, such as the Human Services Council.
- Jose Garzon comments that separating the changes in the county from external sources and those from policy and service changes is difficult.
- Karen Darley highlights the need for specificity on the outcomes of ASSB advice to DFS through its current functions.
- Julian De Phillips suggests the use of enabling documents and structured agenda items to collect District input more actively during the 11 annual meetings.
- Ms. Dooley comments that she is hearing a need for clarity on purpose and impact for ASSB.
- Andre Lee states that he agrees with Karen Darley, it would be helpful to have clarity on how we add value.
- Ms. Dooley asks about the capacity for time availability and opportunity to rely on subcommittees.
- Raymond McGrath addresses some of the challenges with subcommittees and spending the time.
- Dir. Becketts adds the option of an extended focused session outside of the monthly meeting agenda.

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- Karen Darley comments that a focus session could be effective for ASSB strategic planning.
- Dir. Becketts addresses some of the challenges with the current constraints of the ASSB meeting cadence with driving strategic planning. Additionally, highlights the requirement for a motion and vote on the intent to pursue strategic planning.
- Julian De Phillips moves to pursue strategic planning, seconded by Jose Garzon. All members voted yes.
- Dr. Becketts will work with Ms. Dooley to facilitate a questionnaire for a format and set of requirements to be established before the next meeting, targeting distribution by March 8th.

Legislative Updates

- Alycia Blackwell introduced herself and described the legislative cycle and noted the number of bills that may impact DFS that require review. Ms. Blackwell will provide resources to research bills impacting our county. Additionally, there will be resources posted that are supported by the districts and county. There are a notable number of kinship bills that may enable kin to care for relatives in need more easily. HB 27 is an example of this. Another bill is related to easing barrier crime when related to drug offenses over 5 years ago, HB 454.
- Attorney compensation has been discussed by ASSB, which is addressed in part by HB 893, which allows counsel representing families to be compensated differently. Dir. Becketts does call out that his communication previously was related to this legislation and there was an indication that this is being considered positively.
- For Domestic and Sexual Violence, there are firearm bills related to protecting victims after the fact of abuse. For SNAP benefits, Fairfax had waived in person interview requirements under emergency, but this may remove the in-person interview statewide. Adult and Aging, there are bills related to long term care and disability rights, such as accessible voting and remote meeting attendance.
- Dir. Becketts comments that DFS will review and provide impact statements for bills that may be relevant.
- Vice Chair McGrath asks about the likelihood of the bills passing. Ms. Blackwell refers to the uncertainty but notes many bills have bipartisan support and the support of the governor, while others are less well supported or understood.
- Links provided to look up legislation:
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/legislative-committee>
<https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?241+men+BIL>

Public Comment

- Dr. Erica Winslow introduced herself and described her background with family medicine and family issue nonprofits. She states an ongoing problem with the handling of child abuse reports where good faith reporters are punished, potentially in violation of other jurisdictional statutes. In some cases, she states reporters have lost unsupervised custody of their children. Dr. Winslow states that federal law protects reporters, but reporting to DFS has resulted in negative outcomes for reporters. Dr. Winslow states that a steering committee was recommended, with a training module for how to respond to these cases and does recommend an investigation of judges in these cases.
- Mary Ottinot introduced herself as involved in policy work at the state and county level, specifically a domestic violence accountability workgroup. Ms. Ottinot recommends that we

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consider creating a citizen advisory town hall work group so that members of the public can drop in and communicate their needs. Ms. Ottinot does find this effective at the state level. There was an example of county service providers creating issues like fraud, but there are several cases where we can solicit input directly.

District Updates

None.

Adjourned:

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Next ASSB Meeting:

Wednesday, March 20, 2024, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm; Government Center