

Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB)
Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

City of Fairfax, Andre Lee, Secretary
City of Falls Church, Sue Armstrong
Franconia District, Marilyn Nevy Cruz
Hunter Mill District, Marcia McDevitt
Mason District, Julian De Phillips, Chair
Mount Vernon District, Raymond McGrath
Providence District, Melissa Hochberg
Sully District, Jose M. Garzon, Vice Chair

Absent:

Braddock District, Jakelin Soriano Lake
Springfield District, Hillary Hogan
At-Large, Andrew Fischer

Positions Vacant:

Dranesville District

Staff Present:

Michael Becketts, DFS Director
Tina Spurlock, Senior Policy Analyst and Project Manager/Appeals Hearing Officer
Arielle A. McAloon, Human Services Legislative Liaison
Jennifer Van Ee, Legislative Director

Meeting Opening

Chair Julian De Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and conducted a roll call. A quorum of members was confirmed. The meeting was held virtually, and all board members could be seen and heard by all participants. The public was provided with a link and phone number to join the virtual meeting.

Approval of Minutes

The meeting minutes for May 2026 were reviewed and approved.

Overview of Government Relations and Legislative Process

Liaison McAloon and Director Van Ee provided an overview of Fairfax County's legislative process.

- Liaison McAloon explained that the Office of Government Relations supports the development, articulation, and advocacy of policy positions set by the Board of

Supervisors. The office staffs the Board's legislative committees, coordinates across county agencies, and prepares both state and federal legislative programs.

- During the General Assembly session, the county's Richmond team works full-time in Richmond. They are registered lobbyists and meet with legislators, coordinate testimony, read bills, attend meetings, and work with other stakeholders.
- The office also relies on a legislative team of more than 90 county staff across agencies who help review legislation and provide subject-matter expertise.

Liaison McAloon reviewed the development process for the county's state and federal legislative programs.

- She explained that the state program will be aligned more closely with the countywide strategic plan. Key components of the legislative program include:
 - County initiatives – specific legislative proposals that Fairfax County may work with members of the General Assembly delegation to introduce.
 - Position statements – broader guidance to the county's Richmond team across multiple bills. For these, she advised reviewing the existing legislative program before proposing new language, because many issues may already be covered by existing broad statements.
- Important timeline dates discussed:
 - Requests for program updates were sent in mid-May.
 - Submissions are due July 10.
 - First Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for September 1.
 - Board work session with the General Assembly delegation is scheduled for October 6.
 - Public hearing on the program will occur in October.
 - Final program adoption is expected in December.

The Board discussed why having an issue included in the legislative program matters.

- Director Van Ee explained that when an issue is included in the program, her team can advocate on it without needing to return to the Board of Supervisors for formal permission.
- Broad position statements give the Government Relations team flexibility to respond to related bills during session. For example, broad language about preserving the state-local partnership could allow the county to engage on bills affecting SNAP, TANF, or other programs, while overly narrow language may limit that flexibility.

Director Becketts later noted that language related to CPS centralization is already included in the legislative program in two places, including Human Services and a county priority area. He said the ASSB does not need to submit a new proposal on that issue but could support the existing priority.

Ray McGrath asked whether Fairfax County ever proposes specific legislation to the General Assembly.

- Director Van Ee confirmed that the county does propose legislative initiatives. Recent examples included:
 - Authority for an acoustic monitoring pilot to address noisy mufflers.
 - Adding park authorities to code provisions to ban sex offenders from certain park facilities.
 - Expanding an urban public-private partnership redevelopment fund to include housing.
- She explained that when considering whether to propose an initiative, the county considers:
 - Why Fairfax County should be the lead.
 - Whether Fairfax has a unique program, perspective, or issue.
 - Whether the topic has traction statewide or regionally.
 - Whether now is the right time to advance the proposal.
- Director Van Ee noted that for some social services issues, organizations such as the League of Social Services Executives may be a better lead, with Fairfax supporting the effort through a position statement.
- She described Government Relations as the “mouthpiece” for county departments, while departments provide subject-matter expertise.
- Additionally, Liaison McAloon explained that during session she meets regularly with the DFS senior policy team to review bills, discuss feedback, identify strategy, and determine what may need to go to the Board or require additional information from legislators.

Chair De Phillips asked how ASSB’s past advocacy efforts, such as letters of support or annual priority memos, are used.

- Liaison McAloon and Director Van Ee explained that submissions from Boards, Authorities, and Commissions are reviewed and shared with the Board of Supervisors.
- Sometimes the issues raised are already covered by existing legislative program language. In those cases, the county may note alignment rather than add new language.

Director’s Announcements

Director Becketts joined later in the meeting and provided two main updates.

- He discussed the Planning District 8 meeting and reiterated the importance of Social Services Boards and directors aligning on education and advocacy around child welfare changes and CPS centralization.
- Second, he announced that the Pennino Building is scheduled to reopen on July 6. Staff will return on June 29 and 30 to check their spaces, dispose of trash, retrieve plants or old food, unpack boxes where needed, and prepare for normal operations.

Marilyn Nevy Cruz raised concerns about HR1 and possible impacts on health care, SNAP, and federal funding, especially for a large county like Fairfax.

- Director Becketts explained that administrative cost funding is included in one chamber's budget bill but not the other, so the issue will need to be resolved in conference.
- He said benefit dollars for the next two years are included in the budget bill, meaning localities are not expected to have to cover SNAP benefit payments directly.

Legislative Priorities Discussion

The Board discussed potential ASSB legislative priorities. Jose Garzon reviewed prior legislative priorities and highlighted three areas:

- Child care costs, especially as a burden for ALICE families
- Medicaid
- The Children's Services Act

Sue Armstrong suggested possible language around program preparedness and resilience in response to sudden changes in funding levels or federal priorities. She described the concept as ensuring that programs are ready to respond to sudden adjustments without framing it simply as opposition to specific federal actions. Chair De Phillips summarized this as potential language around "programmatic resilience in the face of changing funding levels and federal priorities."

Sue Armstrong and the other ASSB members were encouraged to send legislative priority ideas to Tina Spurlock by the end of the month, especially if they identify gaps in the existing legislative program. The July 10 deadline for formal proposal submissions was noted.

District Updates

Providence District: Melissa Hochberg reported that a recent blood drive was successful. She also shared that Supervisor Palchik is focusing on housing and holding meetings or town halls to hear from residents across the district.

She also noted that summer programs are underway, including events such as Nottoway Nights and other music and arts programs throughout the county.

Franconia District: Marilyn Nevy Cruz reported visiting the new government center and described it as a major improvement, with strong meeting spaces and a much better overall facility.

She also expressed continuing concern about potential impacts of federal and state policy changes on green card holders, refugees, and social services programs in Fairfax County.

Adjourned

Chair De Phillips adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm.

Next ASSB Meeting

Wednesday, July 15, 2026, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm.