

**Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)**  
**Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, April 5, 2022, 7:30pm**  
**Meeting held electronically due to the COVID-19 pandemic**  
**By ZOOM video/audio platform**

The electronic meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Vice Chair Heather Thomas, who proceeded with doing the member roll call.

**Members in attendance with locations:** Nermin AbdelWahab, Fairfax, VA; Matthew Bell, Mount Vernon, VA; Alicia Doe, Lorton, VA; Jim Edwards-Hewitt, Mason District, VA; Kevin Hickerson, Centreville, VA; Caroline Hockenberry, Providence District, VA; Michele “Cookie” Hymer Blitz, Herndon, VA; Morgan Jameson, Fairfax County, VA; Hari Karup, Falls Church, VA; Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso, Falls Church, VA; Michael Mahrer, Falls Church, VA; Michele Menapace, SE Fairfax, VA; Isaac Orea-Montero, Fairfax County, VA; Phil Rosenthal, Fairfax Station, VA; Heather Thomas, Centreville, VA; Alice Yam, Herndon, VA; Shari Zamarra, Fairfax, VA; Ben Zuhl; Dranesville, VA.

**Absent:** Hawa Hassad, Michelle Jefferson, Whitney Richardson, Holly Seibold

Chair made the requisite VA FOIA motions governing virtual meetings, motion was moved by Michele Menapace, was seconded by Phil Rosenthal, and was carried without objection.

**Minutes - past meeting March 1, 2022**

Phil Rosenthal moved to approve the minutes, Ben Zuhl seconded, and was carried with three abstentions (Michele Menapace, Matthew Bell and Morgan Jameson).

**Return to In-Person Meetings**

The Board discussed returning to in-person meetings. It is uncertain whether the meeting rooms in the Government Center will accommodate remote access for those Board members who are not able to participate in person. A motion was made by Michele “Cookie” Hymer Blitz to table the return to in-person meetings discussion until the May Board meeting. Michele Menapace seconded the motion and the motion carried with no objection.

**Information Sharing**

Jim Edwards-Hewitt shared that his current term as the CAAB representative on the Consolidated Community Funding Pool Advisory Committee (CCFAC) will be ending at the end of April, 2022. He is willing to serve another term but believes this may be an opportunity for another CAAB member to serve on the CCFAC.

Ken McMillon attended the Affordable Housing Advisory Council meeting where it was shared that the Board of Supervisors will be increasing the number of units of affordable housing that will be made available by 2034.

Shari Zamarra recommended CAAB members read the book “Shelter Theology: The Religious Lives of People without Home”s by Susan Dunlap.

Michele Menapace shared that the Human Services Council did a presentation to the Board of Supervisors in late March on the FY 23 Advertised Budget. The Board of Supervisors had a number of questions that they deferred to other Boards, Authorities and Commissions, among them the CAAB, as being more informed and involved (e.g. issues of childcare and workforce development.) She suggested these may be good issues to include in the CAAB testimony to the Board of Supervisors. The BOS also seems to be interested in contract rates to private providers.

Heather Thomas recommended the book, "Gimme Shelter: Homelessness and the Efforts to End It by Deno Seder and Anita Semjen." An interview with Heather is included in the book.

#### **Update on CAAB Staffing and Transition to NCS**

Patricia E. Arriaza, new Community Action Manager and staff to the CAAB, provided a brief introduction. Ben Zuhl requested that staff from Neighborhood and Community Services be included in an upcoming agenda to provide information on the agency. John Ruthinoski shared that Ramona Carroll, Program Manager for the Community Impact Unit, has been invited to the June CAAB meeting to speak about NCS.

#### **Membership & Elections Committee Report**

Shari welcomed two new CAAB members, Kevin Hickerson and Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso.

The Membership & Elections Committee met virtually on Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. There are 3 vacancies in the private sector. The committee developed an outreach plan to fill the positions. For the representative sector, a regional strategy has been used in the past. It would be good to have representatives from the north and south parts of the county but that is not a requirement. The committee discussed whether requiring new members to collect 25 signatures is an undue burden; however, at this time, the committee is not looking to remove this requirement. Will be asking the two newest members for their input and experience. Isaac Orea-Montero shared his experience using online tools to collect signatures and offered to share more information with the Committee to as they consider the recruitment process. The Membership & Elections Committee will be meeting monthly.

#### **May 2022 Meeting Rescheduled**

The May 2022 Community Advisory Action Board meeting is scheduled for May 2<sup>nd</sup>, a week before the Board of Supervisors will be deciding on the County Budget. The Board will not be able to make decisions on CSBG contractors until after the BOS approved the FY 23 budget on May 10. A survey will be sent to CAAB members to help determine that best alternate date for the May CAAB meeting.

#### **Review of FY 24-25 Community Services Block Grant Priorities**

John Ruthinoski shared data compiled by the NCS Coordinated Services Planning division – including information on emergency food, rental assistance and utility assistance for the period covering the COVID-19 pandemic. He also shared the Fairfax County COVID-19 Vulnerability Index and Poverty Among Children Under 5 in Fairfax County data. This information may inform the CAAB as the Board makes funding decisions at the May meeting.

Previously, the CAAB voted on funding priorities with the rankings being: 1) Housing Services; 2) Health and Socia/Behavioral Development; 3) Support Services; 4) Education & Cognitive Development Services; 5) Employment Services; 6) Civic Engagement and Community Involvement; 7) Income and Asset Building Services.

The motion to reaffirm the funding priorities as presented was made by Phil, seconded by Matt and carried with no objections. Following discussion, the CAAB allocated 40% of funding towards Housing Services, 25% to Health and Social/Behavioral Development, 20% to Support Services and 15% to Education & Cognitive Development Services. A motion was made by Matt to accept the allocated amounts as discussed. The motion was seconded by Michael and carried with two objections (Michael Mahrer and Michele Menapace).

#### **Public Comment**

A member of the community asked to provide public comment. She was recognized and expressed concerns over what she perceived to be a lack of oversight over county funding.

#### **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn was made by Phil Rosenthal and was carried without objection. Meeting adjourned at 10:01 pm.