

**FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)  
FINAL MINUTES**

**VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING**

**Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82601319794>

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**Or**

**Telephone: 888-270-9936 (US Toll Free) or 602-333-0032**

**Conference code: 231525**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, March 17, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Commissioners Present:**

Carolyn Sutterfield, (Chair), Mike Perel (Vice Chair), Tom Bash, Cathy Cole, Martha Cooper, Sharron Dreyer, Joe Heastie, Kathy Hoyt, Phyllis Miller Palombi, Diane Watson, Kay Larmer

**Commissioners Absent:**

Cathy Muha (Secretary) (excused)

**Staff Present:**

Tara Turner, Trina Mayhan -Webb, Jacquie Woodruff, Hilda Naranjo

**Call to Order**

COA Chair Carolyn Sutterfield called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting**

Carolyn explained that, in order to conduct the meeting electronically in compliance with the emergency procedures authorized by FOIA, the State of Emergency, and the Emergency Ordinance, certain findings and determinations are required for the record. Carolyn called the roll, and all the commissioners participating stated their name and the location from which there were participating. Commissioners present were:

- Carolyn Sutterfield from her home in the City of Fairfax
- Mike Perel from his home in Braddock District
- Sharron Dreyer from her home in Springfield, representing Lee District
- Tom Bash from his home in the Springfield District
- Kay Larmer from her home in Florida, representing Dranesville District
- Diane Watson from her home in Lorton, representing Mount Vernon District
- Martha Cooper from her home in City of Falls Church
- Cathy Cole from North Carolina, serving as the At-Large Representative
- Kathy Hoyt from her home in Alexandria, representing Mason District
- Joe Heastie from his home in Providence District
- Phyllis Miller Palombi from her home in Reston, representing Hunter Mill District.

Carolyn motioned that the COA had a quorum present via remote connection and that each member's voice could be adequately heard by all participating members of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging. Vice Chair Mike Perel called for a second and a vote. Martha seconded. The COA voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Carolyn motioned that the State of Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic made it unsafe for the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging and the public to physically assemble. She further moved that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging conduct the meeting electronically through a dedicated audio-conferencing line that the public could access. Mike Perel called for a second and a vote. Diane seconded. The COA voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Finally, Carolyn motioned that all agenda matters would address the Emergency itself, were necessary for continuity in Fairfax County government, and/or were statutorily required or necessary to continue operations and the discharge of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. Mike Perel called for a second and a vote. Cathy Cole seconded. The COA voted unanimously to approve the motion.

#### **Additions to Agenda; Approval of the Agenda; Approval of the Minutes**

Carolyn asked that "Possible speakers for April or future meetings" be added to the agenda. Sharron motioned that the amended agenda be accepted. Kay seconded. The COA voted unanimously to accept the amended agenda.

Carolyn asked that the name of the item in the minutes pertaining to roll call be changed to "Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting." She also asked for the following amendment to the last sentence in the summary of Mr. Descano's conversation: "closing with advice, "If it feels wrong or rushed, it's probably a scam."

Tom motioned that the amended minutes be approved. Kay seconded. The COA voted unanimously to approve the amended minutes.

#### **Public Comment**

Allegra Joffe Farhinger announced that Let's Connect and the Millennial 50+ Ambassadors, have finished their 52 TV fundraiser for the Fairfax County Lincolnia.Senior Housing residents.

Bonnie O'Leary asked if a Zoom captioning platform might be possible. She stated that this captioning option is fairly accurate and can be read at the bottom of the screen. Tara stated that we will explore that option.

#### **Presentation: Department of Family Services Communications Team - Older Adults Webpage – Amy Carlini, (DFS Communications Director), Kim Clark, Peggy Harter**

Amy Carlini introduced Kim Clark as the website administrator and social media coordinator for the Department of Family Services (DFS). Peggy Harter is celebrating 20 years with Fairfax County, Adult and Aging. Amy led the COA in discussion about the older adults website. In the past, the Golden Gazette has been available in print and as a pdf document. Individual articles are now being posted on the website, making them more accessible and easier to share. Archived issues are also on the website. Articles that have been posted as pdf documents on Senior

Navigator will be moved to the DFS website. The print version of the Golden Gazette is scheduled to be delivered the first week of the month. The website version will be posted sooner. The website search tool is powered by Google, so searches are possible using key words. An automated translation option is available on the website, making the articles and information more accessible for those who speak languages other than English.

Carolyn complimented the visual presentation of the COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults and other reports on the website. The COA provided suggestions about website category titles, colors with greater contrast, minimizing the need to scroll, size of phone numbers, listing services at the top of the webpage, more succinct descriptions of services, and amount of information displayed on the page.

Mike shared the websites of the Area Agencies on Aging in Cape Cod and Southeast Michigan. He highlighted the friendly photos and the “How can we help you?” title with links on one page.

Cathy Cole stated that when the COA commissioners interact with the community, they most often hear that people didn’t know about all the services the County offers. She asked if the services could be moved to the top of the webpage. Amy asked that the COA help the communications team prioritize the many good programs the County offers to support older adults.

Tom stated that people most often seek information from the website because they are going through a change in life and are looking for help. The website offers valuable information, but the best way for residents to find out about services is by calling the Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources (ADCR) line (703-324-7948). Trained ADCR social workers are experts who guide callers through the maze of situations, services, and options.

Tara agreed with Tom. She stated that Adult and Aging intentionally doesn’t include all information on the website because each person’s situation is different. ADCR experts may be able to help callers consider a direction they hadn’t considered.

Kay stated that the virtual assistant feature might become useful with development. She requested that adult day health care and other older adult services offered by other departments be linked on the older adults webpage.

Martha requested photos of individual commissioners and mention of the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, as well as Fairfax County, when programs are available to both County and City residents.

Cathy Cole stated that DFS Communications team has a gem in Peggy Harter and that Peggy is the go-to person who has provided years of support.

Amy thanked the COA for their suggestions and said that the team is excited to implement some of them right away.

**Presentation: Equity Impact Plan Update – Linda Hernandez-Giblin, 50+ Multicultural**

### **and Community Planner**

Linda Hernandez-Giblin presented an overview of the Department of Family Services (DFS) Equity Impact Plan. Fairfax County and the Fairfax County Public Schools adopted a One Fairfax policy that focuses on addressing racial and social inequities in Fairfax County. The policy includes expectations for using an equity lens in decision making and in development of policies and delivery of programs. Fairfax County is looking intentionally at barriers that may be creating opportunity gaps. The One Fairfax office asked all departments to create an equity impact plan. The DFS Equity Impact Plan is DFS's commitment to advance tangible steps and actions in key areas, following the One Fairfax model to normalize, organize, and operationalize. The DFS Equity impact plan includes three goals:

- 1) Lay foundation on the concepts and language of equity and One Fairfax among staff and Boards, Authorities and Commissions.
- 2) Build capacity within leadership to apply an equity lens to policies and practices.
- 3) Improve and build upon interdepartmental stakeholder engagement.

DFS has mobilized staff from all levels and divisions. Trina Mayhan-Webb guides the DFS equity work as an active member of the Senior Management Team. Tara Turner serves as the sponsor for the Adult & Aging Equity Team. Linda serves as the Adult and Aging Equity Lead of the staff workgroup.

Tom asked if DFS will also present a Groundwater training related to people with disabilities. Tara stated that the training is to address inequity of all kinds.

Sharron stated that one of her concerns has always been for those people who work two jobs but only have the option of County appointments during "regular" working hours. She asked if equity can be looked at in terms of access to services offered during evening and weekend hours for those working.

Mike asked how success will be measured. Linda stated that a measurement component is being developed.

Diane, Kathy Hoyt, Kay, and Carolyn plan to attend the April 17<sup>th</sup> Groundwater training offered by DFS for members of boards, authorities, and commissions.

### **Old Business**

Commissioners shared the following updates:

- Cathy Cole encouraged Think Tank proposal submissions by the April 18 deadline.
- Diane attended the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN) meeting. Diane reported that Karen Hannigan gave a good presentation on older adult bullying in a congregated setting and suggested the presentation for a COA meeting. A synopsis was presented about General Assembly.

Diane attended a South County town hall meeting. The issues of direct care worker salaries and staffing ratios in long-term care facilities were discussed at both the NVAN and town hall meetings.

Dementia Friendly Fairfax (DFF) met in April. Diane and Allegra Joffe-Fahringer have

served as leads on trainings for 125 Dementia Friends. Dementia Friendly Fairfax has trained 153 dementia friends.

At the LTCCC COVID-19 Impact and Response Committee meeting, Linda Hernandez-Giblin presented about the 50+ Community Ambassadors. Phyllis Miller Palombi will speak on Monday with ambassadors regarding mental health during the pandemic

- At a Ventures in Community meeting, Dr. Ben Schwartz discussed equity issues related to vaccine registration and transportation to vaccination sites.
- Carolyn reported about two Human Services Council meetings. Sarah Allen, then Acting Director of Neighborhood and Community Services, reported that Coordinated Services Planning has handled 5,000 calls a week during the pandemic, up from 1,200 pre-COVID-19. The Board of Supervisors has authorized hiring more staff to assist that call line. Dean Klein, now Chief Strategist for the County, presented on eviction prevention efforts and a new landlord portal.

The Human Services Council oversees the Innovation Challenge grant funds. Chris Leonard and Karla Bruce encourage consideration of support of the Family Independence Initiative, a community led approach to boosting and sustaining economic and social mobility for people who live at or below the poverty line.

Chris announced that Lloyd Tucker has been selected to serve as the new Neighborhood and Community Services Director.

- Sharron and Carolyn attended the Fairfax County Affordable Housing Symposium (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/2021housingsymposium>). Sharron reported that this was an excellent gathering of diverse presenters who were using data and not just anecdotal evidence about the impact of affordable housing. All presenters stressed the critical importance of housing in the lives of individuals and families. Sharron and Tom served on the task force for the Affordable Housing Strategic Plan. That group recommended construction of 5,000 affordable units in five years. The symposium included a report that 1,000 new units have been or are scheduled to be built in 2020 with an opportunity for 2,000 more in 2021.

### **Director's Report**

Tara Turner encouraged the COA to participate in the Racial Equity Institute's Groundwater training on April 17. Tara plans to attend. The training will benefit the COA's advocacy for services and program by providing an understanding of the equity focus.

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) paused the planning of the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan in order to address immediate needs reflected in the COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults. The SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan will be developed separately from, but informed by, the Countywide Strategic Plan. The development of SHAPE the Future of Aging will resume upon direction of the BOS. The supporting behind-the-scenes work hasn't stopped. Tara and Jacquie will meet with the Office of Strategy Management to discuss data, and commissioners continue to explore best practices.

Tara provided an update on Adult and Aging communication initiatives. The 50+ podcasts and Channel 16 Mature Living shows were temporarily paused due to COVID-19 restrictions. The department has reviewed the focus for future podcasts and videos. DFS will share in resource planning with other health and human services programs. In order to ensure equitable practices,

commissioners who present on shows or write for the Golden Gazette will do so on behalf of the COA, but may not do so in a professional capacity outside of the commission. The intent is to provide excellent information to the older adult community without specific business endorsement.

**New Business**

Jacquie reported that the County Executive’s Advertised Budget doesn’t include any proposals that would adversely affect older adult services. As in past years, DFS reserved a block of budget hearing testimony slots for DFS boards, authorities, and commissions. The COA won’t need both slots, but Carolyn will use one slot to thank the BOS for not cutting any funding for older adult services and for the BOS direction to develop the COVID-19 Response Plan for Older Adults. The numbers and needs of older adults continue to grow, and future budgets should reflect those needs. Carolyn will send a draft testimony to the COA. Commissioners can provide individual comments to Carolyn.

The BOS deferred the vote on the zoning modernization (zMod) proposal and will consider that item next Tuesday. Some of the proposals related to administrative processes for accessible living units were included in former 50+ Community Action Plan recommendations. The COA discussed accessible living units and affordable housing. Sharron stated that both preservation and new construction of affordable units are needed.

Carolyn read Eileen McCartin’s comment: “We hope that the topic of hearing health will be addressed as a topic of important concern related to people who are deaf and have hearing loss.” Carolyn stated that the COA will certainly be promoting this issue in the future.

The County Attorney’s Office has provided additional FOIA training related to commissioner communications and public meetings. The Governor is considering legislation related to electronic meetings. Jacquie will update the COA with relevant information.

**Announcements**

Carolyn reviewed the announcements about the Advisory Social Services Board meeting this evening, the advertised budget hearing on April 14, the Racial Equity Institute training on April 17, and the Think Tank submissions due on April 18.

Carolyn stated that commissioners appointed in odd years, are up for reappointment this year.

**Adjournment**

Diane motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Martha seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04.

Minutes prepared by Jacquie Woodruff, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging.

Approved: April 21, 2021

DocuSigned by:  
*Jacquie Woodruff*

05/03/2021 | 12:53 PM EDT

Jacquie Woodruff, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Date

DocuSigned by:  
*Carolyn Sutterfield*

05/03/2021 | 4:27 PM EDT

Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Chair

Date