

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

**VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING**

**Zoom:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82120540888>

**Password:** COA-m1234!

**Or**

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

**Conference code: 231525**

**MEETING AGENDA**

**Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**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 McLean, 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 her home in Springfield, 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.
- Cathy Muha from her home in Sully 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 Cooper 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 Watson 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. Kay Larmer seconded. The COA voted unanimously to approve the motion.

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

Martha Cooper motioned that the amended agenda be accepted. Phyllis Miller seconded. The COA voted unanimously to accept the amended agenda.

Carolyn requested two changes to the draft minutes. She asked for a correction of the typo in the spelling of "Cape Cod." She also proposed that the wording of Martha's request to the Communications team be amended to read: "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."

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

#### **Public Comment**

Richard Chobot is an Annandale resident and former Chairperson for the Commission on Aging. Mr. Chobot asked the Commission's assistance in advocating for the review of gross income thresholds to qualify for real estate tax relief for seniors and persons with disabilities. These thresholds have not been changed in fifteen years.

#### **Presentation: Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources (ADCR) Supervisor, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging – Older Bullying in Congregate Settings—What can be done to reduce it? – Karen Hannigan**

Karen Hannigan presented about older adult bullying in congregate settings. A low-income tax credit senior housing building staffed by the county reported staff conflict over the handling of residents' behaviors. Karen was asked to research and create a presentation for staff. Her research was predominantly focused on the book *Bullying Among Older Adults* by Robin P. Bonifas. Bullying behaviors and the target must be defined and identified. Some behaviors in senior housing are the result of cognitive functioning deficits and not bullying. Bullying behaviors require advanced cognitive skills. Interventions are generally focused on the bystander or individuals who are present but not participating in the bullying. This population is where the

most change takes place. Specific groups that are potential targets in senior housing are members of the LGBTQ community. These residents came of age at a time when the LGBTQ community was thought to suffer from mental health issues, and they may not be received well in the congregate setting. This is particularly true in facilities affiliated with particular religious affiliations. The book *Bullying Among Older Adults* provides detailed assessments, anti-bullying strategies, advocacy, interventions and activities geared toward changing individual bullying behaviors as well as modifying facility culture.

### **Presentation: Feedback from the ADCR Hotline's Pandemic Experience**

Karen Hannigan reported that half of her intake line staff has been present in the office during the pandemic. The number of walk-ins dropped dramatically in the first two to three weeks of the pandemic. Call lines and intake returned to normal thereafter. Ongoing cases dropped off initially as clients struggled to determine if caregivers should be in their homes. Calls increased requesting assistance with meal delivery and grocery pick-up. The Adult Protective Services team remained stable. Under an Emergency Order from Governor Northam, no negative actions may be taken against a current Medicaid recipient as a result of COVID-19. This order remains in place until next year. As of April 1, the Governor lifted an existing immigration rule that requires a five year waiting period and ten years of work for green card holders before applying for services.

### **Old Business**

The Commission earlier received a copy of Carolyn's budget testimony presented at the budget hearing held April 14, 2021. No budget cuts are planned for programs that serve older adults.

Tom Bash has represented the COA on the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee (CCFAC) for two years. He has decided to resign from this role and would like a replacement from the Commission. The county provides about thirteen million dollars for 501(C)3 projects in a two-year cycle. CCFAC sets policy to advise on needs but does not select projects. The committee meets about eight times per year.

Commissioners shared the following updates:

- Carolyn reported on the virtual Groundwater Training from the Racial Equity Institute. Director Becketts has asked to speak at the Commission on Aging May meeting regarding the training. Carolyn attended the Human Services Council Meeting. The meeting focused on the Health Department relinquishing the management of vaccine registration to nationwide vaccine finders. There was also discussion about youth mental health metrics, but the Council was unable to survey youth due to virtual learning. Some of the Innovation Challenge funding might be earmarked for a Family Independence Initiative in Fairfax County. A committee has been formed to investigate this possibility.
- Cathy Cole reported that Dementia Friendly Fairfax has formed two groups. She is working with the Restaurant Committee to identify ways that restaurants can be more welcoming to patrons with dementia.
- Diane Watson reported on Dementia Friendly Informational sessions. Allegra Joffe-

Fahringer and Diane held three more sessions since the last Commission meeting, bringing the total number of attendees to 174.

Long Term Care Coordinating Council Covid Impact and Response Committee meeting focused on communication and social isolation.

The Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN) subcommittee providing input to the Joint Commission on Health Care, met on March 30, brainstorming topics related to supporting aging in place

The Springhill care team met with County Health Department staff to discuss Springhill “homebound” residents’ difficult experience in receiving vaccines at home. The county definition of homebound is stringent, and some residents are not eligible.

- Phyllis Miller presented at the 50+ Community Ambassadors meeting with good response and open discussion. Phyllis is planning another meeting in July.
- Mike Perel attended an NVAN meeting focused on brainstorming proposals for legislation and budget recommendations. Suggestions included paid sick days for caregivers, technology related topics and nursing home staffing. The next NVAN meeting will consolidate and select topics to include in the program for the legislative session.

Jacque Woodruff provided information regarding Virginia FOIA restrictions as they pertain to Commission meetings and communications. The State of Emergency has highlighted guidelines and restrictions related to electronic meetings, but Jacquie assured the Commission that the changes are minimal. She will keep the Commission updated on any modifications to the Virginia FOIA law.

Jacque reported that the Joint Commission on Health Care has initiated three studies related to older adults. NVAN is providing input.

### **Director’s Report**

Tara Turner reported that there is anticipated funding to the Area Agency on Aging designated for vaccine support and the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

Tara stated that the DFS Communications team has incorporated some of the website changes suggested by the COA. The older adults homepage provides a concise welcoming message with clear directions to a more prominently displayed Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources (ADCR) hotline phone number while reducing scrolling. Staff updated words, terminology and phrasing to make things more easily understood and accessible. Presentation of information in general is more concise and presented with less clutter. The Golden Gazette web page has been updated with a header title preceding articles. The Commission on Aging web page now prominently displays Fairfax County, Falls Church and the City of Fairfax. The communications team is willing to discuss the addition of photos and biographies of commissioners on the web page. Modifications are similar on all platforms to enhance the user experience.

### **New Business**

The theme of this year’s Older Americans Month (May) will focus on Communities of Strength. Mike Perel will represent and respond to the Proclamation on behalf of the Commission on

Aging. Because the Board of Supervisors will resume in-person meetings in June, Supervisor Herrity will determine how the proclamation plaque will be shared.

**Announcements**

Carolyn announced that Diane Watson was selected as Chairmen McKay’s 20-21 Community Champion. Diane epitomizes how one person can make a huge difference.

Mike Perel reported that the Park Authority agreed to build two additional pickleball courts at Wakefield Park.

Diane announced two Dementia Friendly Information sessions: May 4 at 1:00 and May 19 at 6:00.

Let’s Connect is sponsoring an outdoor and virtual Falls Prevention Seminar on May 1 from 10:00-12:00.

The National Council on Aging is holding an Older Mental Health Symposium.

Allegra Joffe-Fahringer announced that on May 20th Let’s Connect and Dr. Cate will have a support group for children with grandparents who have dementia. Children should attend with a parent.

Carolyn announced that the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program will resume in person advocacy. Carolyn reported the Fairfax County Health Department will no longer offer registration for vaccine appointments. Eligible residents should register at vaccinefinder.org.

**Adjournment**

Phyllis Miller motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Diane Watson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Cathy Muha, COA Secretary.

Approved: May 19, 2021

DocuSigned by:  
*Cathy Muha*  
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Cathy Muha, COA Secretary

05/24/2021 | 7:57 AM PDT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DocuSigned by:  
*Carolyn Sutterfield*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Chair

05/24/2021 | 8:54 AM EDT

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Date