

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

**APPROVED MINUTES OF VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING**

**Zoom:** <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86012440028>

**Password:** COA-m1234!

**Or**

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

**Conference code: 231525**

**Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**

**COA Commissioners Present:** Cathy Cole (Chair/At Large), Cathy Muha (Vice Chair/Sully), Carolyn Sutterfield (Secretary/City of Fairfax), Tom Bash (Springfield), Martha Cooper (City of Falls Church), Sharron Dreyer (Lee), Joe Heastie (Providence), Kathy Hoyt (Mason), Kay Larmer (Dranesville), Phyllis Miller Palombi (Hunter Mill), Mike Perel (Braddock), Diane Watson (Mount Vernon)

**Fairfax County Staff Present:** Tara Turner, Jacquie Woodruff, and Hilda Naranjo, Area Agency on Aging; Kathleen Thomas, Communications Specialist, Division of Adult & Aging Services, Dept of Family Services; Theresa Brown, Supervisor, Volunteer Solutions; and Linda Hernandez-Giblin, Planning Coordinator, Volunteer Solutions.

**Call to Order:** Chair Cathy Cole called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting:** The Chair called the roll and passed the virtual gavel to Vice Chair Muha so the following motions could be made to establish VFOIA compliance:

- Cathy Cole motioned that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging had a quorum present via remote connection and that each member's voice could be adequately heard by all participating members. The motion was seconded by Diane and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Cole 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 and that the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging was conducting the meeting electronically through the dedicated telephone line listed above. The motion was seconded by Joe and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Cole 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. The motion was seconded by Martha and unanimously approved.

**Approval of the agenda**

Carolyn requested brief discussion of the survey article in the Golden Gazette, which refers to

the “SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey coming in Early 2022.” Tara said she would address that in her AAA report. Cathy Cole motioned that the agenda be approved. The motion was seconded by Kay and unanimously approved.

### **Amendment and approval of the minutes**

Carolyn had two corrections to the November 17 minutes:

- Fairfax County staff attending the meeting also included Jay Doshi, Director, and his assistant Justin Nejad, from the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration.
- The COA heard from Volunteer Solutions that the number of animatronic pets expected to arrive for the Volunteer Solutions pilot program is 12, not 200.

Joe motioned that the amended minutes from November 17 be approved. The motion was seconded by Sharron and unanimously approved.

**Public Comment:** Mike introduced Emily Braley, the new director of NVRides, who expressed her enthusiasm at joining the successful 50+ Community Action Plan transportation initiative. Staff assistants to Supervisors Storck, Walkinshaw, and Palchik were also introduced.

### **AAA Director’s Report: Tara Turner**

- **Commission on Aging Endorsement and Acknowledgments Policy.** The AAA sought guidance from the county attorney’s office and the DFS Communications team on how COA members should present themselves in public with regard to their professional roles and their status as commissioners. The following policy language was approved: “Commission on Aging Members should not, when representing the COA, make statements that endorse private opinions and/or businesses. Commissioners acting in their individual capacities should not use their titles or positions in any manner that would create an appearance that they are speaking on behalf of the County in an official capacity.”
- **Meals on Wheels:** Tara shared additional information from the MOW Pulse Check survey conducted in November to assess client satisfaction with the weekly vendor-delivered model instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The new model, which replaced the previous system of meals delivered by volunteers at varying intervals, was designed to be effective, sustainable, efficient, and equitable. Launched in March 2020, it was implemented on a permanent basis in August 2021. A survey conducted at the three-month mark after implementation specifically assessed
    - Overall client satisfaction with meals
    - Model-provided flexibility for clients to schedule appointments without missing meal delivery
    - Client satisfaction with the check-in by the MOW vendor delivery driver
    - Interest in participating in connecting with volunteers to address social isolation.

- 344 out of 541 MOW clients responded to the November 2021 Pulse Check survey, a response rate of 65%. Survey results included the following:
  - 97% of respondents reported being satisfied with the vendor delivery driver check-ins that are performed at the time of meal delivery.
  - 85% of respondents reported being satisfied with the meals themselves. Of those who reported being unsatisfied with the meals, some common themes included a desire to decrease the amount of beans, onions, bell peppers, and cheese in the meals, as well as interest in “more variety.”
  - 96% of respondents felt that the weekly delivery model does provide them with the flexibility to make appointments without missing their meals.
  
- 59 MOW clients opted to connect with programs that address social isolation, such as social visiting, phone call check-ins, and mealtime visits. For clients who opted NOT to connect with additional opportunities, common reasons included:
  - Desire for privacy
  - COVID-19
  - Too busy with medical appointments
  - Family/friends/church members are already providing social support
  - Uninterested/felt they did not need or want any additional supports.
  
- Responding to commissioners’ questions, Tara reported that (1) translators were available to assist survey respondents; (2) the agency does reach out to resolve clients’ problems with meal delivery, preparation, and storage; (3) there is no way to know how many older county residents are eligible for Meals on Wheels since the agency has no data on “homebound” status; and (4) there is a previous benchmark survey for meal satisfaction but not for the delivery model, since that is new.
  
- **CASOA Survey.** AAA staff met with Communications staff to ensure that future mention of the new survey in the *Golden Gazette* (GG) and elsewhere will include formal language identifying it as an NRC Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA), as well part of planning for SHAPE the Future of Aging. Kathleen Thomas said a January article in GG will clarify the history of the two CASOA surveys. COA representatives will be able to review the article in advance. Cathy Cole asked that commissioners receive official talking points for the survey before January.
  
- **General Assembly session.** AAA Legislative and Policy Supervisor Jacquie Woodruff will devote most of her time from mid-January to mid-March to tracking the 2022 General Assembly session in Richmond, identifying pending legislation relevant to older adults and soliciting departmental input. Staff assistants Beth Ann Margetta and Kristen Helfer Koester will help support the COA during this time.

## OLD BUSINESS

- **Addressing Social Isolation and Loneliness among Older Adults**—Fairfax AAA initiatives through Volunteer Solutions (VS). In a continuation of last month’s presentation, VS supervisor Theresa Brown returned with planning coordinator Linda Hernandez-Giblin to answer questions from commissioners.
  - Linda spoke about her outreach with groups that tend not to be connected to services provided by Fairfax County. At a literacy club event organized by the Vietnamese business community at the Eden Center, the most popular item she distributed was a VS flyer featuring a listing of AAA services in multiple languages on the back. A nonprofit group requested flyers to distribute afterward. Everyone was grateful for the translated materials.
  - Linda detailed new VS plans for reaching out:
    - Multigenerational housing is common among some groups; speaking to school students could be a useful way to connect elders with services.
    - VS is networking with outreach colleagues from different county agencies to promote the older adults survey.
    - Virtual extension of in-person services: Intake workers used to match new clients with volunteers who could visit, play games, or just talk on the phone. Many of those relationships have continued virtually or by phone during COVID.
    - 50+ Community Ambassadors are ready to be more involved. Information on scams presented at the last Ambassadors meeting was shared with more than 20 different organizations.
    - Dementia is an area where personal communication can make a difference. Support materials are needed for outreach workers.
  - Commissioners’ Q & A:
    1. *Query re in-person services:* Theresa said many clients remain reluctant to let people into their homes, and some volunteers prefer not to provide vaccination information, so virtual contact remains useful. The Mealtime Visitors program doesn’t launch officially until January, but some volunteers have already been matched to clients.
    2. *Query re coordination with county mental health service providers:* Theresa said the AAA, Neighborhood and Community Services and other county service providers have been meeting during the pandemic to talk about their programs and what they are able to do in outreach for clients. Through a connection with the Health Department, VS was able to provide support for older Afghan refugees. Case managers can coordinate with mental health resources and arrange check-in calls by volunteers.
    3. *Query re placing grip cards at doctor’s offices or pharmacies to reach people with isolating disabilities:* Tara said it will take new partnerships to do that. We also need to contact HOAs, villages, and other community groups about reaching out to people. One target might be frequent-return hospital patients who need help when they go home. Linda reported that the One Fairfax office has been mapping county “islands of isolation.” Mike said USPS trains its carriers to be alert for isolated older adults.

- **Long Term Care Standards Human Services Position Update.** Jacquie Woodruff reported that the Supervisors approved the position on standards proposed by the Health Care Advisory Board, Commission on Aging, and Long Term Care Coordinating Council and will support legislation to improve the quality of care in nursing homes.
- **Film Club.** After discussion with Jackie Rich, Phyllis Palombi and Mike Perel settled on January 19, at 7 p.m., for the first session. Dementia awareness is one aspect of the event, but it will also focus on the quality of the production and the acting. Participants will watch “Still Alice” on their own and then meet to discuss. This first session could not be advertised in the Golden Gazette, so commissioners are encouraged to invite their friends.

*Commissioner discussion:* Cathy Muha suggested finding positive examples of aging for the future, not just focusing on illness. Kay suggested offering a list of resources to participants. Carolyn suggested publicizing the club through the Fairfax 50+ Facebook page. The group asked Mike and Phyllis to provide a blurb for promoting the film club.

- **Commissioner Updates**
  - Kay: GrandInvolve is working with the Health Department’s Robin Waldon to communicate to volunteers.
  - Reminder from Cathy C. to let her know what your liaison groups are.
  - Diane: Connection with Dementia Friendly and the Villages

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **COA Interim Workplan: SWOT Analysis to support SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan Development**

- Cathy C. distributed a blank chart on which commissioners could list topics important to shaping the future experience of older adults in the Fairfax area. Each listing would identify associated Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
- The following topics were identified in discussion: housing, aging in place, food insecurity, technology, mental health, last-mile transportation, domestic and other abuse/violence against older adults, involvement with Dementia Friendly Fairfax, the One Fairfax vulnerability map, pre-guardianship panels, Adult Protective Services, social isolation, homeowners’ fees, equity in housing, healthcare, etc., for underserved groups, and partnering with the villages.
- Carolyn noted that most of these topics track directly with categories and subcategories identified for SHAPE the Future and approved by the Board of Supervisors. She suggested that we focus on researching any or all in advance of the survey data. Cathy C. wants to identify potential speakers to address these topics at future meetings. Kay suggested that we find a facilitator to help us brainstorm and define an action plan.
- With the meeting running long, Tom moved and Mike seconded that we allow an option to go to 3:15 if discussion is continuing. Motion was tabled till the January meeting.

**Announcements:** January 19 COA meeting will be hosted by Falls Church.

**Adjournment:** Carolyn motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Diane seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 pm.

Minutes prepared by Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary.  
Approved: January 19, 2022

DocuSigned by: <u>Carolyn Sutterfield</u>	01/24/2022   11:34 AM EST
Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary	Date
DocuSigned by: <u>Catherine Cole</u>	01/24/2022   12:42 PM EST
Cathy Cole, COA Chair	Date