

**FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)
FINAL MINUTES OF VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING**

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85798205264>

Password: COA-m1234!

Telephone: 888-270-9936 (US Toll Free) or 602-333-0032 Conference code: 231525

Wednesday, May 18, 2022, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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

Commissioner Absent (excused): Martha Cooper (City of Falls Church)

County Staff Present: Tara Turner, Jacquie Woodruff, Kristin Helfer Koester, Hilda Naranjo, Area Agency on Aging; Karen Hannigan, Supervisor, Aging, Disabilities & Caregiver Resources; Laura Nichols, Director, Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program; Marla Zometsky, Wellness, Health Promotion, and Prevention Manager, Fairfax–Falls Church Community Services Board; Karen Albers-Froehlich, Director, Lincolnia Senior Center

Call to Order: Chair Cathy Cole called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m.

Roll Call and Motions to Proceed with Electronic Meeting: Chair Cathy Cole called the roll and read the motions. Vice chair Cathy Muha conducted the votes.

- Cathy C. 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. Diane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Cathy C. 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. Sharron seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
- Cathy C. 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. Phyllis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of the agenda: Sharron motioned and Carolyn seconded that the agenda be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the minutes: Cathy Cole motioned to approve the minutes from April 20, 2022; Tom seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public comment: Gwenn Minton spoke on behalf of Supervisor Alcorn of Hunter Mill District (the virtual host of the meeting), welcoming the COA and recognizing Older Americans Month. She thanked Phyllis Palombi for her three years representing Hunter Mill on the COA and noted existing services for older adults in Reston, Herndon, and Vienna, as well as the Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia. Other guests introduced were Alex Kramer of Supervisor Storck's Mount Vernon office and Dana Lewis of the City of Falls Church.

AAA Director's Report: Tara Turner, Director, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

- May is Older Americans and Elder Abuse month. The theme for 2022 is "Age My Way."
- Polco, the vendor for the CASOA survey, is now compiling results, which will go first to Jacquie and the Data Analytics team.
- Jacquie conveyed COA interest in an age-related Vulnerability Index map to Katie Miga. Katie suggests we wait until we have the CASOA data to aid development of the map.
- The AAA is hiring a consultant to help organize and develop the SHAPE plan.
- The AAA thanks Phyllis Palombi for her passion and positive impact in helping older adults during her three years on the COA.
- Tara introduced Lauren Elcesser the new Assistant Program manager of AAA programs. Lauren spoke about her previous work, most recently in geriatrics programs at INOVA.

OLD BUSINESS

COA Interim Workplan: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis to Support SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan Development

• **Panel Discussion: State of Personal Well-Being**

Four representatives of Fairfax County programs responded to questions submitted by commissioners about how their teams support the health and well-being of older residents.

o **Karen Hannigan**, Supervisor, Aging, Disabilities & Caregiver Resources, spoke about the ACDR hotline and its importance as the first contact with Aging Services. Her team of social workers averages 1,700 phone calls per month. They are the first line, trained to listen for what is behind the facts someone is presenting. The team uses interpreters frequently. Callers are asked to be very specific. If there isn't a long queue of calls waiting, team members then pivot to "And how are YOU doing?" since it's usually caregivers who call. They are important clients too.

Contacts have gone over 2,000 a month for the first time. Frequent topics are housing, taxes, heating/cooling, insurance, meals. ADCR refers callers to many programs, such as ElderLink or Medicaid or Dementia Friendly Fairfax, with details of what they offer, explaining that you might have to leave a message but someone will call back. We look for opportunities to reduce risk and meet basic needs like food and transportation. Sometimes a neighbor calls with a problem, and the homeowner doesn't agree. A referral to Adult Protective Services may be appropriate in some cases, such as unsafe driving, but APS is a forced response. Mostly we deal with immediate problems and suggest services that will be accepted. But we do council couples to protect their assets; don't wait till the money is all gone.

o **Laura Nichols**, Director, Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, described how her staff of seven, plus volunteers, helps residents in nursing and assisted living facilities by negotiating to resolve problems and promoting individual dignity and respect. (COVID-19 cut off volunteer participation; they're now back up to about 34.) The team covers 91 facilities, with 7,112 licensed beds, as advocates for the highest quality of life for residents. All staff members are trained in mental health. Recently her group has encountered problems with staffing and communications that lead to mistakes, isolation, and wasted time. There aren't enough staff members, and those who are working are rushed, don't bother with conversation or explanation, and need more training on how to deal with dementia or pain. Residents are sometimes medicated or discharged because of behavior issues.

COVID was a sad time in facilities. Some removed all personal items from residents' rooms to prevent infection; others allowed little physical activity, touch, or interaction with others. A few found ways to provide diversions like hallway bingo or an ice-cream cart. Families and Ombudsman volunteers and staff were excluded. Some studies show that isolation increased the death rate. Now that visitation has resumed, families are still stressed managing their own crises at home. Understaffing means that CNAs can't spend time socializing and social workers have to focus on discharge plans.

Ongoing challenges include the increasing purchase of facilities by private equity firms, which then look to contain costs, and the lack of meaningful activities for residents, who deserve to have a voice in what happens. Nichols mentioned the Scandinavian Living Center in West Newton, Mass., which holds community events in a connected assisted living home. Public space is used for both residents and neighbors.

o **Marla Zometsky**, Wellness, Health Promotion, and Prevention Manager, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. Zometsky is one of 11 team members at the newly renamed Sharon Bulova Community Mental Health Center who teach prevention through events and capacity building. They offer the recently updated virtual self-directed Mental Health First Aid curriculum for adults and youth, the virtual Revive training on drug overdose response, and the 90-minute QPR suicide training, which has a component directed at older adults. Except for the program aimed at youth workers, all are appropriate for older adults.

Fairfax County also participates in local coalition programs that could use COA support:

- SPAN is the Suicide Prevention Line for Northern Virginia. The COA could help there by volunteering or publicizing the service.
- Lock and Talk encourages securing medications and firearms and talking about challenges to mental health. Could someone take pills from your bathroom during an open house? Most suicides are done with firearms; locking them up can interrupt the process. The CSB gives out free lockboxes.
- The Fairfax Prevention Coalition helps create a safe and secure county by reducing substance abuse and misuse. The COA could support that effort by participating at the community level and by sharing CSB information in local chats or newsletters.

o **Karen Albers-Froehlich**, Director, Lincolnia Senior Center in Mason District. Lincolnia is one of four Fairfax County senior centers that are connected to housing. It also has an Adult Day Health Care program. The center is returning to pre-pandemic activities, such as exercise classes, in person, but Virtual Center for Active Adults programs are still streamed on-site. They used to serve 100 people a day; now it's 50 or 60. Meals are offered five days a week. Technology connectivity was a problem early on in the pandemic; people were invited to bring their devices to Lincolnia for help in logging in and learning to use common apps. Staff also taught members how to recognize and deal with scams. Lincolnia strives for inclusion, reconnecting, welcoming everyone. Staff connects with Adult Day Health Care, Service Source, Land and Development, and Transportation resources and participates in Mental Health First Aid. (They have not yet held a Dementia Friendly training.) Lincolnia's goal is the least restrictive environment that provides the most support. The center regularly connects with housing residents and also helps anyone in crisis by offering a calm space and access to a staff member with social work training. Caregivers are encouraged to ask for help and to attend classes.

● **Future Presentation Update: SHAPE Economic Stability and Planning** The June meeting of the COA will focus on the fifth category of the proposed SHAPE plan. Commissioners are encouraged to submit ideas for presentations.

● **Animatronic Pets.** Linda Hernandez-Giblin, Planning Coordinator, Volunteer Solutions, and Jacquie Woodruff showed examples of the animatronic cats and dogs being provided to Adult & Aging clients and talked about the positive response to the program. More pets will be ordered.

NEW BUSINESS

● **Commissioner Updates**

Due to time constraints, the following updates were submitted to the Secretary after the meeting at the request of the Chair:

Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax, Behavioral Health Committee (Carolyn): Dr. Robyn Mehlenbeck, director of the George Mason Center for Psychological Services, spoke virtually in March about the Center's free **Emotional Support Line**, at (703) 215-1898. Trained providers (doctoral students supervised by GMU professors) are available seven days a week from 8:30 am to 8:30 pm to listen, offer help, and teach evidence-based skills to people living with stress, anxiety, or grief. Low-cost therapy sessions are available on request. Older adults have not been using the hotline, but would be welcome to call. GMU Associate Professor Dr. Jerome Short, who specializes in working with older adults, might be interested in speaking with the COA.

Fairfax County Housing Symposium (Carolyn): This year's symposium was held virtually on March 17. A plenary discussion led by Victor Hoskins, CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, included BOS Chairman Jeff McKay; Catherine Buell, director of the Amazon Housing Equity Fund; Susan Dewey, CEO of Virginia Housing; and Jonathan Knopf, executive director of programs for HousingForward Virginia.

Subsequent panels each included a member of the Board of Supervisors:

- Dalia Palchik (Providence), "Enabling Economic Mobility through Affordable Housing";

- Rodney Lusk (Lee), “Narrowing the Wealth Gap through Homeownership”; and
- James Walkinshaw (Braddock), “Beyond Housing: Expanding Opportunities through Innovation.”

Videos are posted at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/Housing/2022HousingSymposium.

Dementia Friendly Fairfax (Diane): Thirteen new DF Friends were trained at an April 12 Informational Session given at the request of the Parkinson’s Support Group. Another session was scheduled for the City of Fairfax Regional Library on May 21.

Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) Outreach Group (Diane): At the May 12 meeting, Fairfax Village in the City was approved to become an official member; village coordinator Jason Scadron was present. Attendees heard about the Wise Cities app aimed at making technology easier for older people: www.wisecities.us. NCS presented on the TOPS transportation program.

LTCCC–Social Connection Committee (Diane): The Friend Mobile, winner of the county’s COVID-19 Think Tank Challenge, is one step closer to reality. The committee learned May 13 that the Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP) has selected and funded a proposal submitted by Service Source for a public/private partnership “to provide roving on-site outdoor health and wellness programming, community activities, and entertainment for older adults and adults with disabilities brought to them in their neighborhoods.”

Human Services Council (Carolyn): At the May 16 HSC meeting, Deputy County Executive Chris Leonard announced that in approving the FY 2023 budget, the BOS added another \$10 million for affordable housing and \$825,000 for increased contract payments to the county’s nonprofit human services providers. He also announced that the point-in-time annual count of the homeless was down about 3% from last year. Speaker Daryl Washington, Executive Director of the Fairfax-Falls Church Community, gave an update on CSB Services and the Psychiatric Hospital Bed Crisis between March 2021 and March 2022. During the last fiscal year, the CSB served more than 20,000 individuals.

Northern Virginia Aging Network (Diane): NVAN met on May 17 to determine the three Legislative and three Budget platform items to present to the 2023 General Assembly.

• **Announcements:** none

• **Adjournment:** Kay motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Diane seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Minutes prepared by Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary.

Approved: June 15, 2022

DocuSigned by:
Carolyn Sutterfield

1015341858A0415...

06/27/2022 | 17:39:25 EDT

Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary

Date

DocuSigned by:
Cathy Cole
481E9D15B8E64D2...

06/29/2022 | 10:45:13 EDT

Cathy Cole, COA Chair

Date