

FAIRFAX AREA COMMISSION ON AGING (COA)

FINAL MINUTES OF VIRTUAL – VIDEO/AUDIO MEETING

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87035342822>

Password: COA-m1234!

Or

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

Conference code: 231525

Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

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)

County Staff Present: Tara Turner, Jacquie Woodruff, Beth Ann Margetta, Kristen Helfer Koester, and Hilda Naranjo, Area Agency on Aging; Tavana Limage, LCSW, Assistant Program Manager, Adult Protective Services (APS), and Lori Jones, Paralegal, APS/Guardianships, Adult & Aging Division, Department of Family Services

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: Chair Cathy Cole called the roll and passed the virtual gavel to Vice Chair Muha for motions to establish VFOIA compliance:

- Cathy Muha 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. Motion seconded by Kay and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Muha 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. Motion seconded by Diane and unanimously approved.
- Cathy Muha 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. Motion seconded by Martha and unanimously approved.

Approval of the agenda

Cathy Cole motioned that the agenda be approved. Motion seconded by Carolyn and unanimously approved.

Approval of the minutes

Cathy Cole motioned that the minutes from December 15, 2021, be approved. The motion was seconded by Phyllis and unanimously approved.

Public Comment: Barbara D'Agostino, co-chair of COA of Alexandria, introduced herself. Martha introduced Dana Lewis, representative of Falls Church housing. Rachel Throm, APS, and Season Zellman of the Fairfax Health Department also introduced themselves.

AAA Director's Report: Jacquie Woodruff for Tara Turner

- The Area Agency on Aging is still awaiting a fully executed contract from VDARS for American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.
- The AAA is in the process of ordering the next round of shelf stable meals for Meals on Wheels clients to have on hand for emergencies.
- Kathleen Thomas, DFS Communications, and a multi-department communications team have been working on pre-survey communications materials for the CASOA. Short informational videos will be posted on the website in English, Arabic, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Four of five videos have been recorded. COA Vice Chair Cathy Muha is featured in the English version. The team has also developed multiple flyers.
- The updated COA Resource Manual will be available soon on the new COA Portal.

Q & A: Will libraries provide access to the survey for those who lack computer access to versions in alternate languages? Kathleen Thomas said she would make libraries aware of the survey and need for access. The postcard and letter will have a phone number for assistance.

OLD BUSINESS

• Report on Adult Protective Services (APS) and the Pre-Guardianship Panel

This presentation was in response to a COA request for more information regarding the APS calls listed in the monthly Aging Disability Caregiver Response (ADCR) Intake Line Statistics.

1. APS Overview. APS receives and investigates reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of adults 60 years of age or older and incapacitated adults aged 18 or older. Assistant Program Manager Tavana Limage gave the following report:

APS statistics:

- 62% of APS calls come from legally mandated reporters like health-care professionals. Others come from financial institutions, social workers, law enforcement, friends/family, neighbors, and anonymous sources.
- 86% of calls relate to persons aged 60+; 13% are for persons younger than 60. Less than 1% are for persons of unknown age.
- The majority of calls report self-neglect. For fiscal year 2021, concerns cited were 48% self-neglect, 19% neglect by others, 17% financial exploitation, 9% mental abuse, 5% physical abuse, 0.1% sexual exploitation, 2% other exploitation.

Strengths of APS:

- APS has 45 days to complete an investigation after receiving a call. The department can conduct interviews, access medical records, and request records from financial institutions, which may comply but are not mandated to do so. Partners include the county's Crisis Response Team and Financial Exploitation Prevention Task Force.
- The Prevention Task Force includes APS's Financial Exploitation (FE) coordinator and representatives from law enforcement, the FBI, AARP, Domestic Violence services, financial institutions, and land/zoning development. Monthly meetings are held to discuss FE cases. The coordinator also works with Silver Shield to educate the public on scams.
- During COVID, CARES Act money enabled APS to secure a couple of hotels to provide temporary housing. Consultants are available to assist when a client's capacity is in question. APS staff is receiving professional training online during the pandemic.

Challenges for APS:

- Limited visits to clients and facilities during COVID
- Decentralization of law enforcement
- Need to respect client's values and choices, even when client refuses assistance
- Danger of weapons in the home
- Finding proper placement for younger clients

2. The APS Pre-Guardianship Panel. Established in 1986 by the Department of Family Services, the APS Pre-Guardianship Panel exists to approach potential adult guardianship issues in an objective manner for clients at possible risk. APS paralegal and Panel facilitator Lori Jones described the work of the Panel, which meets on the second Thursday of each month.

- *Composition:* The Pre-Guardianship Panel currently has four members: a citizen representative (COA commissioner Joe Heastie has filled this role since 2010), an attorney, an older adults' mental health representative (provided as of February 2022 by the City of Alexandria), and an intellectual disabilities representative (from the Fairfax County Community Services Board). A quorum of 3 is required to hear cases.
- *Case evaluation process:* The APS social worker forwards to the facilitator a written summary of case issues, the support system, less restrictive alternatives considered, areas of risk, and recommendations, along with a "capacity evaluation" report concerning the physical/mental health of the client at risk. Client names are redacted. The facilitator distributes the documents to members for review prior to the Pre-guardianship Panel meeting. During the presentation, staff has an opportunity to discuss the case, and Panel members can receive clarifications and/or ask additional questions for staff to address.
- *Approval process:* Panel members may condition an approval upon an amended capacity evaluation and/or may request that the case be brought back at a future date. At times, an emergency decision is required when APS staff cannot wait until the Panel's scheduled monthly meeting. In that case the materials are distributed to Panel members, and the facilitator cc's the worker and supervisor to enable get an expedited decision. The approval process has been conducted virtually since COVID restrictions began.

- *Final steps:* Once approved, case materials go to the county attorney's office for the petition process. The court has final review. Some cases involve guardianship (authority over personal decisions like living arrangement, administration of medications, etc.), and some involve conservatorship (authority over a client's finances). Many involve both.

Q&A:

Questions asked in advance by commissioner Tom Bash were the basis for Tavna's presentation. His final query was how the COA might assist APS. Tavna encouraged the commission to lend its support to existing Adult Services programs designed to prevent the need for interventions like those described here. Lori cited the lack of legal guardians in the Fairfax area. Family members often live far away, and attorneys are too busy. She would welcome COA assistance in locating qualified guardians.

Martha asked about community education regarding advance planning and family guardianship. APS has made use of Fairfax County Bar Association's volunteer "Wills on Wheels" program, which assists low-income seniors and disabled persons with life-planning documents like wills, powers of attorney and advance directives. Mike mentioned that there are films available online that deal with guardianship, such as "Edith and Eddie." Lori said she would be willing to participate in a future Reel to Real film club event on that topic.

Cathy Muha asked what level of involvement would be asked of a guardian. Lori said the law simply requires "reasonable visitation," but people interpret that differently.

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

Referring to the SHAPE-related topics identified in the COA's December 15 meeting, Cathy Cole asked commissioners to discuss those they would recommend as a focus for upcoming meetings in February, March, and April.

- Martha requested a "snapshot" of housing needs, noting that housing comes up as part of several topics. What are the issues? How many older adults need housing? How many are leaving because they can no longer afford to live here? What data is available?
- Carolyn also championed housing, mentioning "multi-ability, multi-generational, inclusive communities" described in a January 13 *Wall Street Journal* article. Mike said he knows someone at Generations United who could be invited to speak.
- Cathy Muha suggested mental health and end-of-life planning as related topics. She further narrowed the mental health topic to include peer support and violence both at home and in other settings.
- Kay suggested having someone from the Health Department give us a COVID update.
- Carolyn suggested the vulnerability map as something we need to know more about.

Cathy Cole motioned (1) that we choose housing as the February topic (not seconded) and (2), that we choose mental health and end-of-life planning as the topic (seconded by Diane). Neither motion passed. After discussion commissioners agreed that both topics were complex and would require further research and possible separation into multiple presentations.

Cathy Muha suggested that we choose the vulnerability map as the main topic for the February SWOT discussion, followed by discussion of plans for housing and mental health reports. Cathy Cole made the motion (no second) and called for a vote. The motion passed. The Chair then appointed two subcommittees to suggest approaches to the larger topics: Sharron and Carolyn for housing, and Cathy Muha and Phyllis for mental health.

Adjournment time for electronic meetings. Cathy Cole moved that this topic be tabled again. Cathy Muha seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

● **Commissioner Updates**

- Phyllis attended a meeting with Supervisor Elkhorn and Gwen Minton at which Sharon Cantor of Reston for a Lifetime spoke about village concepts and aging in place. Cantor might be a good person to give a presentation to the COA.
- LTCCC: Cathy Cole reported that Jacquie Woodruff presented on SHAPE to the Long Term Care Coordinating Council. The LTCCC's new Technology Committee heard from Jackie Rich, of Neighborhood and Community Services, about a senior center program to provide assistance in tasks from online shopping to scheduling doctor's appointments. An AARP speaker talked about a tech assistance program for men.
- Northern Virginia Aging Network: Mike reported that the January NVAN meeting featured a presentation on Advances in Dealing with Older Adults Who Have HIV. Attendees also learned that, because of COVID, the public can attend virtual meetings of state legislative committees, and that an AARP coalition is working on developing data support for proposed nursing home staffing requirements. There are efforts to amend VFOIA rules, but no one expects them to pass.
- LTCCC Equity in Aging and Disability committee: Cathy Muha reported that the committee met virtually on January 19 to work on survey questions that will be sent out to member organizations. She may have a draft to show us when that is approved.
- LTCCC COVID Impact committee: Diane reported that this group gave its final report on the 20 meetings it held since last August. Topics included social isolation and inequitable communication in less tech-capable communities.

NEW BUSINESS

● **Commissioner Liaison Choices.** Cathy Cole asked commissioners to send information about their connections with other groups.

● **Announcements:** Jan 19, 2022, 7:00 PM, Reel to Real Film Club. Discussion of movie "Still Alice," depicting the effects of early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Pre-registration was required.

● **Adjournment:** Martha motioned that the meeting be adjourned. Diane seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 pm.

Minutes prepared by Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary.
Approved: February 16, 2022

DocuSigned by: <i>Carolyn Sutterfield</i>	03/10/2022 12:09 PM EST
Carolyn Sutterfield, COA Secretary	Date
DocuSigned by: <i>Catherine Cole</i>	03/10/2022 12:28 PM EST
Cathy Cole, COA Chair	Date