

**Fairfax Area Disability Services Board
Full Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 8, 2023**

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

- Deborah Hammer, Chair, Mount Vernon District
- Brandis Ruise, Vice Chair/Secretary, Hunter Mill District
- Deborah Cohen, Braddock District
- Lindsay Harris, City of Falls Church
- Sarah Graham Taylor, Franconia District
- Robin Rinearson O.D., Mason District
- Diane Monnig, Providence District
- Courtney Cezair Mayers, Dranesville District – via Zoom phone line
- Michael Ritter, Springfield District
- Benjamin Gibbs, At-Large
- Andrew Magill, At-Large
- David E. Simon, At-Large

FA-DSB Members Absent from the Meeting:

- Christie Garton, At-Large - Excused

Others Present: Claudia Vila (DFS staff), Karen Kelly (DFS staff), Alma Hernandez (DFS staff), Courtney Arroyo (DEMS staff- via Zoom), Carly Mullinax (DEMS staff- via Zoom), and Doris Ray (member of the public- via Zoom phone line).

The board met in-person and provided members of the public the opportunity to access the meeting via Zoom and in-person. A quorum was present with most members attending in-person.

Minutes and Agenda:

1. Call to Order: Deborah called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm. A quorum was present. Courtney stated that she was calling from home due to electrical power issues in her building. The other members of the FA-DSB introduced themselves.
2. Approval of Previous (March 2023) Minutes: March minutes were approved. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ben and seconded by Robin.
3. Approval of Agenda. A motion to approve the agenda was made and seconded.

Meeting Items:

1. Nominations Committee Update

Robin stated that she had received nominations for David Simon as next year's Chair, Ben Gibbs as Vice Chair, and Brandis Ruise as Secretary. She asked if there were any nominations from the floor. None were made. Robin asked for a motion to accept these nominees and introduce an official vote at the June meeting. The motion was made and seconded.

2. Enact Legislative Committee

Sarah Taylor provided some background information regarding the duties and responsibilities of this committee. She volunteered to be part of the committee again this year. Mike Ritter volunteered to join her.

3. New Position Statement – Sarah Taylor

Sarah stated she has been working to expand electronic participation regarding advisory bodies. She has done so in her personal capacity but would be willing to introduce this as a new position statement in the summer, per the County Attorney’s recommendation. She stated that this past year, members of the General Assembly did not support electronic participation. However, they have been more receptive to making exceptions for individuals with disabilities, as the bill replacing ‘handicap’ for ‘disability’ was passed. She drafted a statement to ask the FOIA Council to amend the regulation surrounding electronic participation as an accommodation for individuals with disabilities serving on a public body. She intends to submit her statement this week so that the FOIA Council can consider it in June. She also mentioned that an alternative option would be to amend the FA-DSB Bylaws to reduce the number of board members that would make up a quorum.

Claudia stated that this was something the County Attorney’s Office had recommended as an option the FA-DSB could pursue. She had been advised that the Board of Supervisors would have to approve, and because this would technically be a carved exception for the FA-DSB, there could be some hesitancy. Nevertheless, that was an option the board could explore. Sarah stated she would share her research and some links to previous committee meetings on this topic so that Claudia could share them with the entire board.

Both Ben and Courtney shared support for advocacy around allowing individuals who have a disability or are caregivers of someone with a disability to be allowed to participate remotely.

Robin made a motion for a bylaws committee to be established to revisit the rules related to fulfilling the in-person quorum requirement for meetings. Additionally, Claudia noted that executive committee term limits were not included within the recent update of the FA-DSB bylaws, so she offered to include this element as part of the proposed revision. Robin also asked if Claudia could research information regarding the smallest percentage that has been recognized as a quorum requirement in the county and state.

The motion was seconded for discussion and Deborah encouraged everyone to review the FA-DSB bylaws prior to the June meeting.

4. COVID – Lessons Learned – Ben Gibbs

Ben provided a presentation around how COVID procedures helped remove barriers for people with physical disabilities. He then posed that question of the group. Discussion centered around the need for government funds and increased home health workers, the benefits around telehealth, and options for virtual schooling.

The board agreed that while outdoor seating in parking areas had increased, it had often come at the cost of curb cuts being improperly utilized, preventing wheelchair users from using the sidewalks. The board agreed that additional investment in making county parks more accessible would be of benefit to everyone. Ben expressed the concern that accessibility zones will decrease over time because accessibility is not readily considered by some.

Sarah suggested that the board highlight some areas of success that preceded the Pandemic and share that with local businesses and residents, and to also communicate how

rolling back some of the policies enacted during the Pandemic could limit accessibility that was created these past years. A discussion ensued around the best way to go about this proposal.

The board agreed that Deborah and Ben would draft a short 'Thank You' letter which could be disseminated in the District Supervisors' newsletters throughout the county. This letter will be presented at the June meeting. Additionally, an agenda item will be included in the June agenda to discuss future community forums.

5. Board Initiatives- FY 2023

- a. Improved Regional Transportation & Parking Options (public and private/ rideshare) for People with Disabilities: Robin shared that Z Mod was recently deemed invalid due to a legal decision, so there will be future work done around it. As a result, Parking Reimagined has been put on hold. She'll provide more of an update once she has more information. Andrew noted that work is happening behind the scenes.
- b. Ensure that the Needs of Residents with Disabilities are Being Met During the Pandemic: Brandis suggested a name change to this initiative to align with Ben's presentation and work more closely. Ben will propose a new name at the June meeting.
- c. Disability Training of Other Boards: The Department of Family Services (DFS) will fund this training, via Disability Rights and Resources. It will be conducted by the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center. DFS boards, authorities, and commissions will be invited to attend this training, which is taking place in July, in celebration of the ADA's anniversary. The ADA Center will then train Disability Rights and Resources staff on how to conduct the training moving forward, and they are planning to use it to train county staff.

Deborah asked if July might be a challenging time to host the training, given that it's summer and people might be on vacation. Claudia is hopeful that staff liaisons to the various DFS boards can encourage their members to attend, but she can have that discussion internally to see what management thinks. Diane asked if the training could be recorded. Claudia believes that it could and will note the request.

- d. Accessible Voting Spaces: Lindsay and Ben have completed the flyer and it will be posted on the FA-DSB webpage. Lindsey and Ben are awaiting approval from the Office of Elections to post a link to flyer on their site.

6. General Updates—

Mike stated that he was interested in volunteering to fill the LTCCC's FA-DSB seat. Claudia will send out the FA-DSB roster with the LTCCC's information so he can review and decide. Andrew will continue to serve on the LTCCC's Equity subcommittee.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.