

**Fairfax Area Disability Services (FA-DSB)
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 19, 2020**

FA-DSB Members in Attendance:

- Deborah Hammer, Chair, Mount Vernon District
- Judith Turcott, Secretary, Fairfax City
- Tom Bash, At-Large
- Michele "Cookie" Hymen Blitz, Hunter Mill District
- Deborah Cohen, Braddock District
- Mary Pauline Jones, Springfield District
- Andrew Magill, At-Large
- Sailesh Panchang, Sully District
- Doris Ray, At-Large

FA-DSB Members Absent from the Meeting:

- Chester Freedenthal, Vice-Chair, Lee District (excused)
- Ayman Eldarwish, Mason District (excused)
- Kelly Simoneaux, Providence District

Support Staff: Claudia Vila, Nicole Fagan

Members of Public in Attendance: Courtney Arroyo, Gary Scott

The board conducted a wholly electronic meeting because the COVID -19 pandemic made it unsafe to physically assemble a quorum in one location or to have the public present.

Board members and staff support accessed the meeting via the Zoom web platform. All board members stated calling from their home district.

Members of the public accessed the meeting via an AT&T conference call line.

Minutes and Agenda:

Call to order: 7:05 p.m. Roll call was done to establish that a quorum was present and that all could hear. A script was shared about the state of emergency necessitating a virtual meeting.

Approval of Agenda: Proposed by Deborah, it was seconded.

Approval of September minutes: Minutes were approved, proposed by Deborah, it was seconded by Judith. Doris Ray requested to be put in the minutes that she was abstaining from approval of the September minutes as she was unable to attend the meeting in September due to technical difficulties.

Public Comment: Courtney Arroyo, Fairfax Office of Emergency Management reported that all 258 voting locations received boxes of clear face masks requested by the FA-DSB.

Guest Speaker: Gary Scott, Director of Elections Fairfax County. The following questions were asked and answered:

- 1) Are people with disabilities able to skip long lines when waiting to vote? All polling places are equipped with audible ballots, voting machines. He stated there are no specific guidelines to move people with mobility issues to move to the front of the line, but the option to have a ballot to be brought curbside is available.
- 2) How would someone with a disability indicate the ability to vote curbside? Every polling area has at least 3 parking places to have a curbside vote. There is a number to call to access an election officer who will be called to be able to come to the car and help with the process.
- 3) How does a person with a significant hearing impairment with a sign language interpreter be able to vote? Most people can use typical voting machines. There are election officers available to be able to help.
- 4) Are there alternative formats of Absentee ballots for voters with visual impairments? Concerns were raised about varying signatures to make sure the vote would be disqualified. Virginia does not complete signature matching.
- 5) Do all early voting stations have an audible ballot? Yes, they are available.

Sailesh Panchang, Sully District- the document included in the DA-FSB was developed by his company to make mail in ballots accessible and this was an initiative to be completed across 50 states and DQ offered to make ballots free of charge. Sailesh discussed the technical aspects of this type of document.

Doris commented on the article. Doris brought up that if you had to print an absentee ballot and if you do not have access to a printer that could be difficult. This is an important accessibility point - not having access to a printer. Deborah stated that no witnesses for voting were required this year.

FA-DSB Guidelines for Meetings: Deborah asked that these Guidelines be shared on the screen. With only two hours for each meeting, the committee ran out of time for a previous meeting and therefore these guidelines were developed to allow completing board business and maintaining a quorum.

Discussion: Doris is unable to raise hand due to the fact she is unable to do this due to technology, if the technology is not available- the chair states that it was ok to verbalize a request to speak. It is felt it to be unfair that items be put in chat as it is not equitable technology. Claudia offered to monitor the chat box and forward chat box information through her email.

Martha Glennon Awards: As reported by Mary Pauline, Selections this year were difficult.

Organization: Service Source

Individual: Diane Monning, ARC of Northern Virginia

Mary Pauline motioned to accept the awardees and Debra Cohen seconded.

Discussion around how the awards were decided this year vs in the past years. Doris would like to register as abstaining to the vote for the Martha Glennon Awards.

COVID Response: Deborah read the Impacts of COVID 19 on Residents of Fairfax County with Disabilities. See full document for details. Deborah requested for potential solutions. Discussion from multiple members of the committee about insights and potential solutions was completed.

Liaison/Committee Reports and Vacancies:

Housing: Cookie stated that the main thing she has done is liaise through people with other committees to make the needs for people with disabilities known.

Mobility and Transportation: Doris Ray - This committee has not been meeting. May want to coordinate with the long-term care council. Concerns about cuts in metro bus service. Consider the idea to send information to the Fairfax County Board member who liaises with the WMATA board to state concerns about service cuts.

Employment: Judy Turcott - Reconsider role and how to use the employment resources and advocacy going forward.

Retreat committee: Visioning committee has been valuable before, table for a future meeting.

Education Committee: Liaison is currently vacant.

9 p.m. Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned by Deborah.