

Fairfax County Human Services Council Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Location: (primary) Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Room 9/10, Fairfax, VA. Two members participated remotely via Zoom.

A quorum of the Human Services Council (HSC) was physically assembled at the primary location with nine members present. Thomas Goodwin and Adwoa Rey were unable to physically attend the meeting and requested remote participation.

HSC Members Present: Alis Wang (Vice Chair/Mason), Kevin Bell (At-Large), Martin Machowsky (At-Large), Christopher Falcon (Mason), Rev. Dr. Jerrold L. Foltz (Sully), Thomas Goodwin (Providence) via remote participation, Steven Lam (Springfield), Dr. Gerald V. Poje (Hunter Mill), Maria Posey (Braddock), Adwoa Rey (Mt. Vernon) via remote participation, and Paul Thomas (Hunter Mill).

HSC Members Excused: Steven Bloom (Dranesville), Michele Menapace (Chair/Franconia), Robert Faherty (Franconia), William Kogler (Springfield), and Dr. Patrice Winter (Braddock).

Staff Present: Chris Leonard (Deputy County Executive for HHS), Jill Clark (Department of Neighborhood and Community Services [NCS]), and Viola Coleman (NCS).

Call to Order: Human Services Council Vice-Chair Wang called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Health and Human Services Monthly Update: Chris Leonard, Deputy County Executive for Health and Human Services (HHS), reminded the Council of the recent memos (i.e., NIPs) sent to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) that were shared with them on the Extreme Heat Workgroup's recommendations and the pending stepdown of pandemic-era federal benefits. Leonard reported that the workgroup's recommendations include numerous enhancements for the County's extreme heat response that will be implemented for Summer 2023. Leonard explained that the second NIP provided the Board an update on the HHS system's coordinated response to emergency basic needs assistance for vulnerable residents as federal pandemic-era benefits end.

Review and Adoption of the HSC's FY 2024 Advertised Budget Recommendations: HSC Budget Committee chair, Paul Thomas, presented the draft FY 2024 advertised budget recommendations. He reported that the Budget Committee used last year's process to incorporate feedback from other HHS boards, authorities, and commissions. Thomas noted that the bulleted items are budget items included in the advertised budget that the HSC supports and that the other recommendations for funding consideration are categorized by topic.

HSC discussed the implications of the Board lowering the the real estate tax rate and whether to address that specifically in the letter, and whether they should include the recommendation of dedicating an additional half penny of the tax rate to affordable housing. It was suggested to also include language urging the Board not to offset the revenue loss of a lower tax rate with spending reductions in HHS. Additional suggestions were shared.

A motion was made to make the changes discussed to the letter and authorize Thomas to add any relevant information related to the release of the third quarter review package. That motion unanimously passed.

2023 General Assembly Recap: Jill Clark, Senior HHS Policy & Program Analyst, presented a recap of the 2023 General Assembly meeting. Clark reported that 2,200 bills were introduced and 867 bills passed. The General Assembly was unable to pass the budget bill prior to adjournment, but passed a "mini budget" to address the school aid calculation error. Clark highlighted HHS-related legislation. She also reported that all 140 seats will be on the November ballot, and the Fairfax County delegation will look different next January.

Member Sharing: Machowsky suggested that the Council get an update on the Innovation Fund at the next meeting. He recently learned that other local jurisdictions have launched a similar income support program through the Greater Washington Community Foundation.

Adjournment: Vice-Chair Wang adjourned the meeting at 8:33 p.m.

Minutes captured by Coleman.