



**Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)
Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 5, 2023, 7:30pm
Fairfax County Government Center Rooms 9 & 10**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Vice Chair Heather Thomas, who proceeded with doing the member roll call.

Members in Attendance: Nermin AbdelWahab; Sandra Barksdale; Hawa Hassan; Caroline Hockenberry; Michelle “Cookie” Hymer Blitz; Morgan Jameson; Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso; Michael Mahrer; Marcia McDevitt; Michele Menapace; Alex Rodriguez; Phil Rosenthal; Heather Thomas; Benjamin Zuhl

Members Participating Remotely:

Michelle Jefferson, Fairfax, participating remotely due to medical reasons; Ken McMillon, Falls Church, participating remotely due to medical reasons.

Absent: Matthew Bell, Alicia Doe, Mary Ann Floto, April Hall, Kevin Hickerson, Hari Kurup, Ann Mcpherson, Whitney Richardson, Alice Yam, Shari Zamarra

Guest(s)/Staff: Valerie L’Herrou, Virginia Poverty Law Center; Alpha Woolen, Democratic Committee

Remote Participation:

The motion that the voices of CAAB members participating remotely were adequately heard and that their remote participation comports with the Remote Participation Policy was made by Heather, seconded Alex Rodriguez and was carried without objection.

August 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes:

Michael Mahrer moved to approve the meeting minutes with amendments. The motion was seconded by Ben Zuhl and was carried with one abstention (Alex Rodriguez).

Presentation: Valerie L’Herrou of the Virginia Poverty Law Center

Valerie L’Herrou of the Virginia Poverty Law Center and Alpha Woolen from the Democratic Committee provided information to the CAAB about their work to raise compensation for court appointed attorneys working in the foster care system. Pay for attorneys in Virginia has not been changed in 20 years and the Virginia rate is lower than surrounding areas. The Virginia Poverty Law Center has been working on raising compensation for appointed attorneys since 2015. Ms. L’Herrou and Ms. Woolen indicated that they would share their draft resolution with CAAB members; they would like the CAAB to formally sign on to the resolution and make a request to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to also endorse the resolution.

CSBG 4th Quarter Report

Staff presented the FY23 4th Quarter CSBG Program Progress Reports, including financial reports for federal CSBG and TANF, Narrative Reports, and Outcome Reports. The motion to approve

the reports as presented was made by Michele Menapace, seconded by Nermin Abdel Wahab and was carried without objection. Ben Zuhl requested when reviewing funding requests in the future, CAAB members be informed of who underperformed in previous funding years, and why.

Upcoming Meetings

By consensus, the CAAB has agreed to hold the October 3 meeting at Food for Others. CAAB members who served as designees of the Board of Supervisors indicated their interest in engaging with their Supervisor's office to do a food drive in the Supervisory offices. Michelle Jefferson will connect with those members to discuss the food collection efforts.

The CAAB Bylaws indicate that the CAAB does not meet in November; a meeting in November was proposed by the CAAB Chair. CAAB members voted to not have a meeting in November. Nermin AbdelWahab motioned to have the December meeting held via virtually. The motion was seconded by Caroline Hockenberry. Carried with one in opposition.

Membership and Election Committee Report

The HeadStart slot will be filled by two parent representatives, with the seat still only retaining one vote. One person has indicated an interest in joining the CAAB through a representative slot; however, that application is still pending. A designee for the Mason District slot is still needed. The Membership and Elections chair will continue to communicate with the Supervisor's office about the need to fill the slot. Ms. Nermin AbdalWahab was confirmed as the representative for the Fairfax Bar Association and Mr. Kurup was reconfirmed as the representative for the Fairfax County Council of PTAs.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Updates

Susan Al-Suqi provided FOIA updates based on the recent Gloss v. Wheeler case. When 3 or more CAAB members are present at an event, or engaging through email or other forms of communication, all care must be taken to not discuss business of the CAAB to comply with FOIA regulations.

CAAB Member Sharing

Michelle "Cookie" Hymer Blitz- The county has organized a process to keep the community informed about heat advisories. Individuals can sign up to receive alerts via text. The heat index needs to hit 105 degrees Fahrenheit in order to implement extreme heat relief measures.

Marcia McDevitt provided ballot information. Sample ballots will be available around September 12.

Phil Rosenthal attended three distributions of backpacks to low-income families. About 2,000 backpacks were distributed, and in the winter, there will be a coat drive.

Michael Mahrer shared that he and Michelle Jefferson attended a ribbon cutting ceremony on behalf of the CAAB at an innovation center in the Braddock district.

Michelle Jefferson stated there is a broadband program that offers services for \$9.99 or for free and is looking for ways to get the word out to communities.

Alex Rodriguez stated Hispanic Heritage month starts in September. He will share information with CAAB members on celebration events and how to participate.

Ben Zhul shared that Cox Communications can contact him to get the word out about the broadband connectivity program.

Alex Rodriguez motioned to adjourn at 9:06. The motion was seconded by Michelle "Cookie" Hymer Blitz and was carried without objection.