

**Commonwealth Council on Aging
First Quarter Meeting
September 30, 2015**

DARS/Virginia Division for the Aging (VDA)
1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100, Henrico, VA 23229

Meeting Minutes

Present

Beth Barber, Chair
Kyle Allen
Robert Blancato (phone)
Mitchell Davis
David Farnum
Joni Goldwasser
Carter Harrison
Valerie L'Herrou
Shewling Moy
Brenda Nelum
Valerie Price
Roberto Quinones (phone)
Vernon Wildy
Veronica Williams
Terry Smith, Ex-Officio
Lynne Williams, Ex-Officio

Absent

Pete Giesen
Richard Lindsay
Kathryn Reid
Sandra Williamson-Ashe
William Massey, Ex-Officio

Guests

Leslie Van Horn, Virginia Federation of Food Banks
David Hominik, DARS/VDA Staff

Staff

James Rothrock, Commissioner
Amy Marschean, JD, Senior Policy Analyst
Cecily Slasor, Administrative Support

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Barber called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and asked that members and guests introduce themselves. She passed around sign in sheets and a member listing for members to review and edit their contact information.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Farnum asked if members had reviewed the July 8 meeting minutes and if there

were any corrections. Shewling Moy moved to approve the minutes. David Farnum seconded the motion. The minutes were approved and accepted.

Commissioner's Report

James Rothrock

Commissioner Rothrock thanked the members for their service and noted some staff changes at DARS. Bob Brink, former Deputy Commissioner at VDA, has been tapped by the Governor to be his Senior Legislative Advisor. He was here for 14 months and visited all 25 area agencies on aging (AAAs). Until the federal government budget situation is resolved, it is unlikely a new deputy will be hired, but Commissioner Rothrock is in discussion with the Secretary's office concerning a replacement.

Charlotte Arbogast, former Dementia Services Coordinator and Ali Faruk, former Special Assistant to the Commissioner, have left DARS and gone to work in the Long-term Care Policy division at the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS).

Devin Bowers has accepted the Dementia Services Coordinator position. Devin had been with VDA previously and is an asset with her understanding of grant administration. Donna Weaver has been appointed as a Special Assistant to the Commissioner and will work with legislative staff and communications staff.

DARS was just awarded two federal grants - (1) a three-year grant to expand No Wrong Door and (2) to migrate data related to Adult Services and Adult Protective Services onto PeerPlace, which is used for No Wrong Door. He noted Mr. Harrison asked last time about budget discussions and he still continues to have high hopes for the DARS budget, particularly with reference to public guardianship programs. DARS was also awarded the Alzheimer's Disease Initiative - Specialized Supportive Services (ADI-SSS) grant for Alzheimer's services. This grant includes care management for families of persons newly-diagnosed with dementia.

Care Transitions efforts in Virginia are gaining momentum and the hope is to implement the program statewide. It is exciting to see the program gaining traction and recognition. The Commissioner described a Care Transitions patient that had recurring monthly visits to the Emergency Room for chronic breathing problems. Care Transitions coaches went into his home and discovered a gas leak. The gas leak was repaired and he did not have respiratory issues anymore. This could not have been discovered by the doctors or nursing staff, but this proves the value of the Care Transitions coaches.

The State Plan for Aging Services 2015-2019 was approved and will be implemented. The planned Governor's Conference on Aging will be held on May 2-3, 2016 at the Hilton Short Pump. Martina James will be the new point person for the conference in a part-time capacity. The new plan is to have more interactive time by adding a half-day to the conference. In addition to speakers, the new idea is to have an open forum to permit time to talk *with* people. In that vein, Ms. Barber wanted to submit the idea to have a venue at the conference for the Best Practices Award winners and letting them have a table so they can talk with people about their programs.

Ms. Marschean reminded members that the hope is to have a joint meeting of the 3 VDA advisory boards the day before the conference or on the half day if that is added.

Executive Committee Confirmation

Beth Barber

Ms. Barber nominated Roberto Quinones to replace Robert Blancato on the Executive Committee. Mr. Blancato will continue to serve as the Chair of the Planning & Development Committee. Brenda Nelum currently serves and has agreed to continue on the Executive Committee. Shewling Moy made the motion to accept the nominations and Vernon Wildy seconded. The motion passed and the nominations of Mr. Quinones and Mrs. Nelum were accepted.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)

David Hominik, Legal Services Developer, DARS

Mr. Hominik discussed new Virginia state-specific guides from the CFPB that have been published for families and caregivers. They are available on the CFPB website: <http://promotions.usa.gov/cfpbpubs.html>. Managing Someone Else's Money for Powers of Attorney, Court Appointed Guardians, Representative Payees and Fiduciaries, Trustees under a Revocable Living Trust are available for download and can be ordered by calling 1-855-411-CFPB. They can be modified by Virginia attorneys who may wish to use them. The Virginia guide was a collaborative effort of the VA Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, the ABA, the Poverty Law Center and DARS. The national guides were released first in 2014 and over 600,000 guides were ordered in the first six months that they were available. The next step was creating state-specific guides. The guides for Virginia were published first in July and Attorney General Mark Herring attended a northern Virginia meeting where the guides were officially rolled out by the CFPB.

Federation of Virginia Food Banks

Leslie Van Horn, Executive Director

Ms. Marschean mentioned that Brenda Nelum asked about including senior hunger as a legislative initiative. Ms. Van Horn reported that there are seven food banks located around the state – Southwest, Blue Ridge, Feedmore (metro Richmond), Fredericksburg, Capital Area, Virginia Peninsula and Norfolk. She works out of the Norfolk area food bank. Each year, over 136 million pounds of food products are distributed through the food banks. A lot more fresh produce is being distributed now. Over 2 million persons are served in Virginia through the food banks. Senior hunger rates have risen steadily since 2007 and persons 60 or older on limited incomes are having a hard time making ends meet. It often comes down to a choice between purchasing food or paying rent and utilities. A recent report on senior hunger can be found at: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/senior-hunger-research/facing-hunger-after-fifty.html>

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. Through CSFP, USDA distributes both food and administrative funds to participating states and Indian Tribal Organizations and she is working to bring the program to Virginia through the Virginia Department of Health.

Food banks are having to purchase more food every year, but donations of course are still accepted and needed. A July 2015 report stated stores are getting more efficient about knowing what they need to order with and have less overstock to provide to the food bank. Persons living below the federal poverty level are 69-75% of persons they serve. Working closer with the health care industry, food banks are trying to help change people's bad food habits and minimize hospital readmissions. Senior households cope by buying cheaper food and that is less healthy. Suffolk has a high diabetic population and the hospital and food bank partner to provide a healthier pantry and have a chef come in to cook fresh vegetables.

Mrs. Nelum noted AARP sponsors a food drive. Ms. Van Horn said AARP has been a fantastic sponsor offering funding and grants. They partnered with *Feeding America* to produce the report on senior hunger. Ms Van Horn said they are developing a food insecurity map for Virginia.

Legislative Committee (Handout)

Action: Adopt Recommendations

Brenda K. Nelum

Action: Adopt 2015 Annual Report

Members were provided copies of the draft Commonwealth Council on Aging 2015 annual report. Mrs. Nelum reported attending the meeting of the Virginia Elder Rights Coalition (VERC) on September 25 where they developed their legislative platform. VERC is in favor of increasing auxiliary grants and Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) funding. There has not been an increase in many years. VERC asked Mrs. Nelum if she would bring these issues back to the Commonwealth Council and ask if council would include them in the annual report. Ms. Marschean provided an amended sheet of recommendations to include these initiatives. After Council discussion, the report was amended to include the following amended language:

- **Increase funding for Elder Abuse Prevention and the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program** to move the state toward a "proactive model" for prevention of elder abuse. More education about self neglect is needed since self neglect constitutes approximately 55% of adult protective services reports.
- **Increase funding for the Auxiliary Grant Program.**

Mrs. Nelum made a motion to approve the annual report with the above amendments. Joni Goldwasser seconded the motion. Members voted unanimously to accept and approve the annual report. Mrs. Nelum also noted she attended an event for Senator

Charles Colgan for his retirement held at George Mason recently with over 700 attendees, including former Governors.

Public Guardian & Conservator Advisory Board Update

Veronica Williams

At the September 10 meeting of the Public Guardian & Conservator Advisory Board (PGCAB) meeting, Public Guardian Program Coordinator Janet James provided the program update. Mrs. James talked about the new funding that DARS received for the program.

There are 986 persons on the wait list. While expressing gratitude for the increase in funding, Mrs. James also asked for continued support of the programs.

Mrs. James reported on the Chesapeake Public Guardian Program that gave up their contract. All of the 18 persons being served by that program were moved through court orders to Jewish Family Services in Tidewater. It was a long, cumbersome process and Mrs. James worked with the Chesapeake City Attorney and staff to get the records together and the court orders transferred.

Mr. Paul DeLosh from the VA Supreme Court was a guest speaker at the meeting. Mr. DeLosh chaired a group on a national guide for guardianships for the National Association for Court Management. Mr. DeLosh described the WINGS initiative which is the Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders. This is a court-community partnership to improve practices in adult guardianship. The ABA and the National Guardianship Association is urging states to develop WINGS groups for ongoing assessment of adult guardianship. The initiative aims to improve guardianship programs and the lives of vulnerable people, as well as prevent abuse and financial exploitation.

Dr. Pamela Teaster provided a report on the guardianship programs in Virginia and discussed her ideas for a statutorily mandated study that will focus on the public guardian unmet needs in the Commonwealth. This study is a request to the General Assembly as part of the PGCAB biennial report. There was discussion about whether the funding for the study would come out of the funding for the Public Guardian Program and Ms. Marschean said that the request from the PGCAB specifically seeks separate study funding.

Working Lunch: Washington DC Update

Sequestration Letter

Robert Blancato (by phone)

Bob Blancato provided great news that the Congress would pass a Continuing Resolution today to keep the federal government going until December 11 with current levels of funding continued. While there are no certainties, the hoped for next step is a high level bipartisan effort to craft a 2-year budget agreement to keep the government running through the 2016 presidential election. The aging advocates are working to get a commitment that there will be no sequestration. After the White House Conference on Aging in July, Bob also reported that Victims of Crime Act funding (from fines

assessed) would be used to fund elder abuse victims. Ms. Marschean said that the Sequestration Letter sent from the Council to the Governor's Washington, DC liaison office was appreciated and well received.

Future Meeting Dates

Beth Barber

The next meeting will be held on January 27, 2016 in coordination with the Virginia Center on Aging breakfast.

The 2016 Council meeting dates are: January 27, May 1, July 13 and September 21.

New Business

Ms. Barber noted that the Secretary position is appointed by the chair subject to confirmation by the Council. David Farnum has offered to continue serving. Ms. Barber asked for a motion to approve David Farnum for Secretary. Ms. Moy made a motion that was seconded by Vernon Wildy. The motion passed unanimously. Carter Harrison noted that DSS is receiving Public Comment on the Assisted Living Regulations until November 7. The proposed regulation, *Standards for Licensed Assisted Living Facilities*, may be found in the *Virginia Register of Regulations* at <http://register.dls.virginia.gov>.

Dr. Allen noted that CMS has new regulations to revise the requirements that Long-Term Care facilities must meet to participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. These proposals are also an integral part of CMS efforts to achieve broad-based improvements both in the quality of health care furnished through federal programs and in patient safety. For more info:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/07/16/2015-17207/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-reform-of-requirements-for-long-term-care-facilities>

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

Meeting Adjournment

Chair Barber adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.