

Commonwealth Council on Aging Planning and Development Committee Agenda

February 13, 2015, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Switzer Building Large Classroom at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center
243 Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Fishersville VA 22939

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) videoconference locations:

- DARS Roanoke
Roanoke Valley WFC
1351 Hershberger Road, Suite 205 Roanoke, VA 24012
- DARS Abingdon
468 East Main Street, Suite 200 Abingdon, VA 24210
- DARS Fairfax
11150 Fairfax Blvd., 3rd Flr. Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22030
- DARS South Hampton Roads (Norfolk)
Interstate Corporate Center, Bldg. #7
6340 Center Drive, Suite 101 Norfolk VA 23502

Members Present:

Robert Blancato, Chair
Beth Barber
David Farnum
Brenda Kelley Nelum
Veronica Williams

Chair Bob Blancato called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Commonwealth Council on Aging (Council) Planning and Development Committee members and staff introduced themselves. Mr. Blancato also recognized Council members at the videoconferencing sites: Joni Goldwasser in Roanoke, Roberto Quinones in Fairfax, and Valerie Scott Price in Norfolk. He encouraged all attendees to sign in on the sheets provided even if they did not plan to speak. The sheets record an email address for attendees to be kept apprised of the planning process.

Mr. Blancato stated that Virginia, like the nation as a whole, is becoming older and more diverse. He noted that the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) is required to develop and maintain a state and federal Four-Year Plan for Aging Services for the period 2015-2019. The Council helps Virginia plan to meet the needs of the growing number of older Virginians and their caregivers and the purpose of the meeting was to receive comment on what the Commonwealth is doing right and what could be done better.

Abingdon: Mike Guy, Executive Director of District Three Senior Services, an Area Agency on Aging (AAA), urged continued use of the current funding allocation formula and to be allowed to promote maximum flexibility in directing local resources in order to serve those with the greatest needs. A “one size fits all” approach often is not in the best interests of a diverse older population. DARS should use caution in requiring any quality improvements that increase costs with the result of reducing the quantity of services. He supports additional funds for chronic disease management, Public Guardianship, wages for persons who work with the elderly, dental care, hearing aids, and Adult Protective Services (APS) (especially prevention of financial exploitation). He further urged livability of communities and promoting the interests of family caregivers.

Norfolk: John Skirven, Executive Director of Southeastern Senior Services, urged DARS, the state unit on aging, to focus on “gerontologizing” state government. All state agencies need to focus on aging services across the board. State preparation should focus on long-term services and supports and a special focus should be placed on nutrition. More nutrition funds are needed to support evidenced-based practices.

Fishersville: The Arlington site asked for clarification about the listening session and Ms. Marschean explained that the federal Four-Year Plan for Aging Services was being developed in coordination with the Administration on Community Living and the guidelines listed focus topics of aging programs, person-centered planning and Elder Justice as outlined in the notice for the meeting. Council Chair Beth Barber urged that the tone of the Plan should be on older Virginians as resources. A major focus should be on livable communities and visitability recognizing that socialization is necessary to aging well; it is as necessary as medical intervention. Mr. Blancato also called for advanced care planning. He noted that Facebook was addressing what to do when you die, but a better goal would be to make preparations for how you die through advanced care planning.

Fairfax: Marie Barnes from Prince William DSS spoke to APS issues. Homelessness is on the rise and more homeless are vulnerable older Virginians and not just those with mental illness. She urged appropriate affordable housing to meet the needs of older Virginians. Arlington AAA Executive Director, Maimoona Bah-Duckenfield, agreed that visitability was key and urged housing universal design and accessibility. Older Virginians need wrap around services in affordable, safe and accessible housing and, if such aging resources are absent, it will compromise aging in place. She agreed chronic disease management, personal care services were needed.

Abingdon: Suzy Quillen, APS Investigator, Giles County DSS, represented a rural community where begging and borrowing from others is the norm and this impedes system progress. APS needs a real funding source for oil and crisis needs. Companion services are severely underfunded. She has clients that qualify for quadruple the number of hours than the Commonwealth has money to serve. In addition, courts and attorneys do not seem to be aware of the new financial exploitation statutes passed last year. She requests sentencing guidelines be written to help the Commonwealth’s Attorneys better to understand the new statutes. She noted a big need for Public Guardians when family

members are not able to serve. Finally, she requested more support for aging in place and New River Valley is promoting a new Livability Program. On May 14, they are continuing their Community Dialogues on Financial Exploitation.

Fairfax: Council member Roberto Quinones discussed the changing demographics of the state and promoted cultural competency in providing services for older Virginians. He noted that older Virginians span from Appalachia to international diplomats. Cultural competency goes beyond language to nuances on how to serve different populations effectively. Second, he stressed the pipeline of workers for the aging population. Organizations promote careers in aging and Virginia needs to take a greater role. Finally, he urges a big goal around which all stakeholders can rally such as making the state the best place to retire.

Norfolk: Mr. Skirven agreed with Mr. Blancato that advanced care planning is important. Older adults are regular people with multiple needs and ambitions, but the Four-Year Plan should set clear priorities. The Older Americans Act addressing all the specific needs may be too much. This Plan should set out a pathway of major avenues to improve lives of all with specific outcomes and measurable goals with a focus on innovation with flexible use of funding streams.

Fishersville: Ali Faruk, special assistant to the Commissioner, spoke of the aging state workforce and sought input from the Council regarding aging workforce issues generally. Ms. Barber stated that the “sage” factor of older workers is invaluable. Capturing institutional knowledge in the work setting is key and creating a flexible workforce to find work balance as one ages. Ideas such as part-time work and mentorships pairing someone entering a career as someone ages out. Mr. Blancato urged persons to fight age-based discrimination “irregardless of age.” Aging workers should be valued. He noted that state workers are not valued and they should be so that they can feel greater security about their future.

Mr. Blancato thanked all attendees for their comments and adjourned the meeting at 11:10a.m. Ms. Kelley Nelum arrived at 11:15 a.m. and Mr. Blancato reconvened the meeting at 11:20 in order to adopt the three sets of prior Planning and Development Committee meeting minutes dated September 19, 2012, April 10, 2013, and December 12, 2014. Ms. Nelum moved the three sets of minutes as a block and David Farnum seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted unanimously and the committee adjourned at 11:25 a.m.