

**Commonwealth Council on Aging
FINAL MINUTES**

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
8004 Franklin Farm Drive
Henrico, VA 23229**

**July 15, 2025
10:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Quarterly Meeting

Members Present: In-Person: Dr. Tracey Gendron, Senator Christopher Head, Carla Hesseltine, Ellen Nau, Paige Wilson, Roland Winston, Joshua Myers, Donna Smith, Dr. Yolanda Stevens, Delegate Patrick Hope (Zoom), and Jo-Ann Chase (Zoom) and Ex-Officio Members: Ron Boyd, Kathy Hayfield, Tara Ragland, and Courtney Richter

Members Absent: Dr. Andrea Buck and Vickie Runk

Guests & Presenters: In-Person: Mary-Jane Atwater, Adrienne Johnson; Via Zoom: Carol Paquette, Dana Parsons, Harvey Chamber, Steve Zollos, Lucy McShane, Cindra Dowd

Staff Present: In-Person: Charlotte Arbogast, Kiersten Ware, George Worthington, Laura Koch, Catherine Harrison, and Becky Gibbs (Zoom)

Welcome and Member Introductions

Carla Hesseltine, *Chair*

Chair Carla Hesseltine called the meeting to order at 10:07 am and welcomed members, guests, staff, and presenters.

Carla Hesseltine welcomed new members, Donna Smith and Vickie Runk.

Carla Hesseltine reminded members that Council meetings is being livestreamed for the public. Members of the public can register to listen to the meeting. Council members participating electronically have joined the meeting as “Panelists” as have our presenters for the meeting. Several council members are joining the meeting via Zoom as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Carla Hesseltine also reminded members about the Council’s purpose in the Code of Virginia and about opportunities to get involved in promoting the Council’s work and supporting the Council’s efforts.

Carla Hesseltine called for a Roll Call for attendance and for members to introduce themselves. Sara Stowe confirmed that a quorum was present.

DARS staff, guests, and the presenters for the meeting also introduced themselves.

Commonwealth Council on Aging FINAL MINUTES

Review Proposed Agenda

Carla Hesseltnine, *Chair*

Carla Hesseltnine presented the proposed agenda. No changes were made to the proposed agenda and were approved by unanimous consensus.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Sara Stowe, *Secretary*

Sara Stowe presented the March 12, 2025 meeting minutes for consideration and approval. There were no edits or changes. Roland Winston made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented and Josh Myers seconded. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment Period

Carla Hesseltnine, *Chair*

Carla Hesseltnine opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were made during this time.

DARS Agency Updates

Kathy Hayfield, *Commissioner*

Commissioner Kathy Hayfield welcomed members and guests and provided a brief update on DARS. On July 14th, DARS celebrated the Older Americans Act (OAA)'s 60th Anniversary at an event. Commissioner Hayfield shared statistics related to the impact of the Older Americans Act including demographic data from the Vintage 2024 Census Report. There was discussion around the importance of aging services.

DARS Division for Aging Services Update

Kiersten Ware, *Deputy Commissioner*

Deputy Commissioner Kiersten Ware provided an update on the Division for Aging Services (DAS). Her updates focused on the following activities:

- Older American Month was celebrated in May with the theme of “Flip the Script”
- Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month was celebrated in June
- Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III and Title VI Summer Convening was held in June and works to strengthen collaboration with Virginia’s Title VI grantees and AAAs
- DARS participation the following conferences: Virginia Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (VCPEA) in May and the Virginia Governor’s Conference on Aging in May with over 400 attendees present
- AAA Executive Director Training provided by DAS
- OAA new federal regulations efforts
- Updated Area Plan Program and Budget Rollout
- Amended State Plan for Aging services
- Needs Assessment for the next State Plan for Aging Services
- Dementia Screening Enhancements to the AAA data and case management software
- Upcoming in-person visits from the NWD Virginia Team to all 25 AAAs
- NWD-ACL Two-Year Grant received for *Enhancing State No Wrong Door Systems for Efficient Access to Long-Term Services and Supports*

Commonwealth Council on Aging FINAL MINUTES

- NWD Wins national Communicator Award
- Free Online Elder Justice and Ageism Training through the Virginia Helping Elders Access Resources (HEAR) program

2026 Legislative Priorities: Updates

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSSEVA)

Steve Zollos, *CEO*

SSSEVA CEO Steve Zollos presented his organization's 2026 legislative priorities, which are categorized as: housing and homelessness, food insecurity, social isolation, and transportation. Steve Zollos shared that funding is needed to catch up from the last 10 years; while there have been some increases, it has not kept up over the last 10 years. Meetings are being scheduled with local delegates and senators to begin advocacy work.

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders (ADRD) Commission

George Worthington, *ADRD Commission Staff*

ADRD Commission staff George Worthington presented the ADRD Commission's approved 2026 Legislative Recommendations, one of which was also recommended by the Council's Legislative Committee. The ADRD Commission is planning a Mini Summit in September prior to their regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. George shared the difference between Dementia Care Management, Dementia Specialists request and GUIDE programs. There was discussion around the Dementia Specialists and similar programs that may exist.

Virginia Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board (VPGCAB)

Laura Koch, *VPGCAB Staff*

Laura Koch, VPGCAB staff, presented the VPGCAB's potential Legislative Recommendations which were proposed by their Legislative Committee on June 17, 2025. The Board will finalize its recommendations at its upcoming September meeting.

Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)

Ron Boyd, *V4A Representative*

V4A Representative Ron Boyd provided an update from V4A, which will be advocating for an increase of \$10 million for AAAs in the upcoming General Assembly Session.

Presentation: Policy Interventions to Address Barriers to Aging in Place

Riley Dowd, *Master of Public Policy Student working with DARS*

Riley Dowd, a recent Master of Public Policy graduate from University of Virginia presented her capstone project on Policy Interventions to Address Barriers to Aging in Place. Riley shared four policy alternatives ranking them based on 4 criteria: cost effectiveness, political feasibility, administrative feasibility, and equity. There was discussion around the importance of social connection and the challenges rural areas may encounter with some of the policy alternatives. Members shared their gratitude for the presentation and thorough consideration of the policy alternatives.

Legislative & Budget Updates

Proposed Action: Adopt 2026 Recommendations

Commonwealth Council on Aging FINAL MINUTES

Josh Myers, *Legislative Committee Chair*

Carla Hesseltine thanked Dr. Andrea Buck for her leadership of the Legislative Committee over the last year and shared that the legislative committee elected Josh Myers as the new Legislative Committee Chair. Josh thanked everyone and shared a brief report out on the Legislative Committee's June 26th meeting.

Sara Stowe presented the background and summary of the Legislative Committee's proposed 2026 Legislative Recommendations, which included:

1. Increase funding for Home & Community-based Services through the AAA's
2. Strengthen Nursing Home Transparency, Data, and Oversight
3. Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Board
4. Support Nursing Home Inspection and Enforcement Process
5. Increase Funding to the Statewide Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
6. Increase Funding for Public Guardianship Slots
7. Provide State General Funds for the ongoing operations of the Virginia Memory Project
8. Extend the Sunset for the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission
9. Increase funding for No Wrong Door's Statewide Resource Database

Members were asked to ask questions or offer additional thoughts on the proposal.

Members spent some additional time discussing potential recommendations #3 and #4.

Roland made a motion to approve the proposed 2026 Legislative Recommendations as presented. Senator Head seconded. The Council held some additional discussion around the fine-tuning of some of the conceptual language of some of the items. Members then voted unanimously to approve the 2026 Legislative Recommendations as presented. Sara Stowe shared that some minor grammatical changes will likely occur and she will coordinate with stakeholders who may want to add their support to the Council's 2026 Legislative Recommendations.

Josh Myers also referred members to the How to Talk to Legislators handout and encouraged members who might be interested in helping advance the legislative priorities or tracking them to reach out.

Nominating Committee Report

Proposed Action: Officers Election

Roland Winston, *Nominating Committee Chair*

Roland Winston shared about the April 8, 2025 Nominating Committee meeting and that the committee identified a slate for Chair and Vice-Chair. Carla Hesseltine was nominated for Chair and Ellen Nau was nominated for Vice-Chair. Notice on the slate was provided on June 13th in accordance with the requirements in the bylaws.

Roland opened the floor for additional nominations. No floor nominations were made. Per the bylaws, the slate of officers was approved by acclamation as presented.

Commonwealth Council on Aging FINAL MINUTES

CCOA Transition: Updates and Planning

Carla Hesseltine, *Chair*

Sara Stowe, *Council Staff*

Proposed Action 1: Adopt Revised Electronic Meeting Policy

Sara Stowe summarized the Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy noting that no content changes have been made it this year under FOIA, but it does need to be approved annually. Roland Winston made a motion to adopt the updated electronic meeting policy. Ellen Nau seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Proposed Action 2: Adopt SFY 2025 Committee Assignments

Carla Hesseltine shared about the importance of committee membership as the Council's membership is now smaller.

Carla Hesseltine explained the role of the Executive Committee. Sara Stowe asked members to express if they would like to continue as all are eligible for a second term. All current members expressed interest in remaining on the Executive Committee. Tracey Gendron made a motion to approve the Executive Committee membership with Roland Winston, Dr. Andrea Buck, Ellen Nau, Carla Hesseltine, and Jo-Ann Chase. This was seconded by Roland, and upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

The Council discussed the Legislative Committee membership, which is currently full with five members per the bylaws. No changes were requested or needed to that membership. Roland Winston made a motion to approve the Legislative Committee membership with Roland Winston, Dr. Andrea Buck, Ellen Nau, Josh Myers, and Jo-Ann Chase. This was seconded by Josh Myers, and upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Carla Hesseltine shared the Best Practices events attended by herself and Sara Stowe in May: LOWLINC's 10th Anniversary celebration where there were presented an Honorable Mention and the Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging where the first, second, and third place winners were honored in a reception. She also shared the importance of the Best Practices Awards. Carla strongly urged members to consider joining this committee. The Best Practices Awards Committee has three current members remaining: Dr. Tracey Gendron, who is representing the Virginia Center on Aging (VCOA) slot, Shannon Arnette, who is occupying the second VCOA slot, and Paige Wilson. Yolanda Stevens and Donna Smith both indicated they would be interested in serving on the Best Practices Awards Committee. Dr. Tracey Gendron made a motion to approve the identified members for the Best Practices Awards Committee. This motion was seconded by Jo-Ann Chase. Upon a vote, the motion was approved unanimously.

Announcements, Regulatory Update and Future Meetings

Carla Hesseltine

Charlotte Arbogast, Senior Policy Analyst with DARS provided an update on recent state regulatory activities. Her handout identified regulatory actions that had experienced a change in status since the last Council meeting. One regulatory activity was left off of the handout; this was a State Board of Social Services action around background checks for assisted living facilities and adult day centers. .

Commonwealth Council on Aging FINAL MINUTES

Carla Hesseltine noted that the next Council meeting is planned for September 10. The next meeting will include the following agenda items:

- Review and approve the Council's 2025 Annual Report
- Set the 2026 Meeting Dates
- A presentation from the Tara Ragland and the Division of Licensing Programs with Virginia DSS on Assisted Living Inspection Process

Ellen Nau shared two updates. One about an event she recently attended hosted by Delegate Mark Earley on fraud prevention. Ben Bickel from the Attorney General's Office was in attendance and shared recommendations for detecting fraud. Ellen Nau also shared about a recent Public Guardianship Program training she attended in role as the Council's representative on the Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board and shared about how valuable the information was and will be to public guardians.

Public Comment Period

Carla Hesseltine

Mary-Jane Atwater shared in a public comment that she was thankful that Carla Hesseltine and Sara Stowe were able to attend the LOWLINC 10th Anniversary event and were grateful to receive the Honorable Mention Best Practices Award during that celebration.

Meeting Adjournment

Carla Hesseltine

Having completed the meeting agenda, Carla Hesseltine adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

Members Participating Electronically:

- Jo-Ann Chase, Caregiving provision, from Brambleton, VA
- Delegate Patrick Hope, 60+ Miles away provision, Arlington, VA

Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda for July 15, 2025
2. Draft Meeting Minutes for March 12, 2025
3. Legislative Committee's Proposed 2026 Legislative Recommendations
4. How to Talk to Legislators Handout
5. Riley Dowd CCOA Presentation
6. CAPABLE Handouts- State Primer, CAPABLE FAQs, and Sample Budget
7. ADRD Commission 2025 Legislative Recommendations
8. Nominating Committee—2025 Required Slate Notice
9. Draft Revisions to the Council's Electronic Meeting Policy
10. Council on Aging Committee Listing for SFY 2026
11. Update on Regulatory Actions