

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING AGENDA

Virtual Meeting: Thursday, March 10, 2022; 4pm

This meeting is being held electronically, unless a determination is made that it is safe enough to be held in person at a location to be determined. Electronic access will be provided in either event. The meeting can be accessed by the public through the Zoom link or phone number provided below. Public comment will be received at the meeting. Public comments can also be sent to daas@alexandriava.gov in advance of the meeting. Please indicate that your comments are for a meeting related to the Alexandria Commission on Aging in the subject line. A recording will be made of this meeting.

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5Vq0LkPxQuOmt1DgON4WjQ

Meeting ID: 935 7751 7116

Password: 251935

Phone In number: 301-715-8592

MEMBERS: Please read through the Agenda and have available for reference at the meeting.

MISSION

To identify the needs of the elderly, develop overall planning to meet those needs, evaluate service delivery plans as implemented, and advocate on behalf of the elderly

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of February 2022 minutes
4. Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report – Sgt. Ian Torrance
5. Special Presentation: Cherry Blossom PACE: Tom Reiter, Acting Director; Zhao Zhang; Jasmine Bailey; Dr. Racheli Schoenburg
6. Executive Committee Report– see attached
7. Discussion / Action Items
 - A. Budget Briefing by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) February 25, 2022 (Notes from meeting, Letter and Testimony to City Council given by Michael Schuster included in agenda packet under Advocacy.)
 - B. Michael Schuster appointed as COA partner to City of Alexandria's Housing and Community Development for the future use of federal funds to support housing and community development in Alexandria.
 - C. Transportation Committee requests that the COA approve the draft Letter of Support for Increased Prioritization of Funding for Vision Zero and Complete Streets in FY 2023.
 - D. Thank you Ray Biegun for accurately and faithfully taking notes for ExCo for two years.
 - E. COVID-19 Vaccinations Updates: Gerri Wallace
8. **Liaison Reports - Please provide a written summary to Pamela.Austin@alexandriava.gov**
 1. Division of Aging and Adult Services – Christopher Moore
 2. INOVA Alexandria Hospital

3. Human Rights Commission – Lynette Foster
4. AHA – Bob Eiffert
5. AARP – Jane King
6. NVAN – Babs Waters
7. St. Martins Senior Center – Anne Coyne– see attached
8. Virginia Hospital Center – Kate Chutuape/Blanca Cali
9. Commission for Women – Jenn Stowe
10. Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria - Marjorie Conner
11. Public Health Advisory Commission
12. Commission on Persons with Disabilities – Michael Kamin
13. Senior Center @ Charles Houston – Pamela Guerra– see attached
14. Senior Services of Alexandria – Mary Lee Anderson– see attached
15. Alexandria Commission on Employment, ACE – Mary Lee Anderson
16. Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance, NVFPA – Mary Lee Anderson
17. Arlington Legislative Committee – Michael Schuster
18. Arlington Commission on Aging – Linc Cummings
19. Successful Aging – Margaret Orlando
20. Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities – Margaret Orlando
21. Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, ADSC – Darrell Wesley
22. Housing Affordability Advisory Committee, AHAAC – Jan Macidull– see attached
23. Alexandria Housing Action Plan - Michael Schuster

9. Committee Updates

1. Housing – Chair, Michael Schuster
2. Outreach Committee – Co-Chairs, Ray Biegun & Barbara D’Agostino– see attached
3. Transportation – Co-Chairs, David Kaplan & Bill Campbell
4. Economic Development – Chair, Mary Lee Anderson
5. Strategic Planning – Chair, Babs Waters
6. Health /Dementia Friendly Committee – Chair, Barbara Huelat
7. By-Laws – Chair, Michael Kreps
8. Advocacy – Babs Waters, Chair – see attached

10. Other Business

11. New Business

12. Public comments – please limit your comments to 3 minutes

Next Commission Meeting: Virtual Meeting; Thursday, April 14th, 2022, 4pm

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Virtual Meeting; Monday, April 4th, 2022, 1:30pm

COMMISSION OFFICERS: Babs Waters, Chair
Barbara D’Agostino, Vice Chair
Secretary, Michael Schuster

The business of the Commission on Aging is largely conducted by its committees. ALL COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Please call the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703.746.5999 for more information. In addition, the Commission has official liaisons with several other commissions, organizations or activities.

The City of Alexandria complies with the terms of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). An individual with a disability who wishes to request an accommodation may contact the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703.746.5999, email DAAS@alexandriava.gov

Visit the Division of Aging and Adult Services website for Commission on Aging agendas and minutes and other aging information: www.Alexandriava.gov/aging

The Alexandria Commission on Aging Racial Social Equity Committee
(as of June 01, 2021)

No one should be denied the opportunity to engage fully in our community.

We encourage people of different cultures, races, nationalities, immigration status, ages, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identities, and religious affiliation in Alexandria to be informed about and have access to the range of services available in the City, and to be engaged in civic life.

We are committed to representing a diverse community that represents the rich heritage of our city. We are committed to ensuring older persons have access: to affordable housing, transportation, health care, broadband, nutrition services and to opportunities for meaningful employment and related training.

Older adults and persons with serious medical conditions often experience various degrees of inequity, particularly in obtaining access to health care. It is essential to support older persons, family caregivers, and direct care workers since these residents face additional biases and hurdles.

This meeting is being held electronically. A determination was made that it was not safe enough to be held in person. A recording was made of this meeting.

MISSION

To identify the needs of the elderly, develop overall planning to meet those needs, evaluate service delivery plans as implemented, and advocate on behalf of the elderly

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome. Members present: Barbara “Babs” Waters (COA Chair), Barbara D’Agostino (COA Vice Chair), Mary Lee Anderson, Raymond “Ray” Biegun, Bill Campbell, Bob Eiffert, Jane King, Michael Schuster, Lois Steele, Gerri Wallace. Staff present: Pamela Austin.

2. Call to Order. Babs called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

3. Approval of Agenda with additions. No additions or corrections. Approved.

4. COA Executive Committee (ExCom) Business Meeting

A. Presentation - none

(1).	
(2).	

B. ExCom Information only

(1).	Chair Report
(a)	Updates on COVID-19 and its variants – Gerri Wallace stated that there has been a total of 29,539 reported transmissions in Alexandria. In the last 7 days, the rate per 100,000 residents was 118.0, which puts Alexandria in the HIGH range according to CDC measurements. In Alexandria 75.4% residents are fully vaccinated and 83.6% are either fully or partially vaccinated. 47,249 people have been hospitalized throughout VA and 1.6M residents have been vaccinated. Statewide, there are 18,031M people who have received doses = 66.4%
(b)	Excellence in Aging Awards Committee Chair – Barbara D’Agostino <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday, May 10, 2022 @ 5:30 PM via Zoom • Theme: “Age My Way”
(2).	DAAS Staff Report -
(a)	
(b)	

C. ExCom Discussion Items

(1).	<p>Report on outcome of Fri, Feb 25 OMB briefing to Advocacy Committee. \$306,000 for rent relief in City Manager’s proposed budget. Since Budget Public hearing is March 7th, prior to full COA meeting - unable to have approval to give testimony - Letter will be from ExCom. Too short of time on amount to request for increase to and will have better information on amount to request for increase in rent relief for each person.</p> <p>Dash will continue to be free. Real estate taxes will not be raised; however, property taxes have increased significantly for some people. Budget meeting on March 7 prior to full COA meeting. Recommend rent relief of \$500 should be increased to keep up with rent inflation. COA to provide statement to City Council requesting study on existing program to help more people to afford to be able to remain in Alexandria. Perhaps threshold raised. Bob Eiffert suggests asking City Council to request a study on property tax relief and what affect it has on older homeowners and those with disabilities on fixed incomes. Ask for parity with Arlington as similar property values. Motion: We make a statement in testimony on March 7 that Alexandria should increase income and asset limits to match Arlington County. All members in favor.</p>
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	Rent relief. Ask for increase in monthly rent relief. Agreed that more data is needed. To short of time to have all information by next week.
(a)	Proposed Items to thank Council for in Draft Budget. Thank for \$306,000, eliminating wait list for people waiting for rent relief and for next year, will have better information on amount to request for rent relief.
(b)	Proposed additional items to add or delete if any
(2).	Age Friendly Updates. Jane King stated all committees are working on their evaluations. Deadline extended to the end of March. Committees also need to start planning for the next 3 years. The Housing Committee already set up a formula to document their evaluation. Mary Lee and Jane also stated that SSA has a March 17 event at 10 AM on community resources. Jane will discuss the Age Friendly plan and ask for input. It's a virtual community forum.
(3)	Report on Programs to be included in the FY2023 Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development - Michael Schuster stated that funds are allocated to Alexandria, so he has a drafted plan on what to spend money on. Submitted housing report to City Council. Agree on proposal on spending money on rent relief and money for homeless and affordable housing. Michael is indicating areas that they are supportive. Michael has full support of the Executive Committee of the COA to represent us to the full Commission.
(a)	Role of Housing and Community Development Planning Group
(b)	Role of COA appointee

D. ExCom Decision Items

(1).	Determine which budget items to advocate or thank the City for during the Monday, March 7 th Budget Public Hearing @ 5:30 PM
(2).	Recommend COA approve and authorize the COA's selected appointee to consult with the Office of Housing on the use of federal funds to support housing and community development activities in Alexandria

5. Planning for Thursday, March 12, 2022, COA Monthly Meeting

A. Presentation

(1).	Cherry Blossom PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly). Nicholas Joseph, the Executive Director has resigned. Tom Reiter is temporarily taking over. He is with Eden Bridge. He will be presenting and perhaps others.
(2).	Q & A

B. COA Information Items

(1).	Chair Report
(a)	Updates on COVID-19 and its variants – Gerri Wallace
(b)	Excellence in Aging Awards Committee Chair – Barbara D'Agostino
	• Tuesday, May 10, 2022 @ 5:30 PM via Zoom
	• Theme: "Age My Way"
(2).	DAAS Staff Report
(a)	
(b)	

C. COA Discussion Items

(1).	Report on Programs to be included in the FY2023 Annual Action Plan for Housing and Community Development Plans - Michael Schuster
(a)	Role of Housing and Community Development Planning Group
(b)	Role of COA appointee
(2).	Age Friendly Updates

D. COA Decision only Items

(1).	Proposed motion passed: Move that effective immediately, the COA approve and authorize the COA's appointee (Michael Schuster) to consult with and represent the views of the COA on all matters requested or deemed appropriate at the Housing and Community Development Planning Group meetings.
(2).	

6. Planning for future COA meetings

A. Future Speakers

(1).	April 2022: Ray Whatley, Acting Emergency Manager, Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security.
(2)	May 2022: Asst City Manager and Legislative Director - Sarah Taylor

B. Additional items - Please submit other proposed speakers to babswaters@comcast.net

7. Other Business

8. Announcements

A. Next two (2) COA Executive Committee (ExCom) Meetings

(1).	Date: Monday, April 04, 2022 Time: 1:30 – 3:30 PM How: Via Zoom
(2).	Date: Monday, May 02, 2022 Time: 1:30 – 3:30 PM How: Via Zoom

B. Next two (2) COA Monthly Meetings

(1).	Date: Thursday, April 14, 2022 Time: 4:00 – 6:00 PM via Zoom
(2).	Date: Thursday, May 12, 2022 Time: 4:00 – 6:00 PM via Zoom

C. Other non-Alexandria COA events

(1).	Event: NVAN Date: March 15, 2022 Time: 9:30 AM via Zoom Hosts: Alexandria
(2)	Event: Date: Time: Host:

9. Public Comment

10. Adjourn

Notes prepared by Barbara D'Agostino

The City of Alexandria complies with the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Anyone with a disability who wishes to request an accommodation may contact the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703.746.5999 or Virginia Relay 711. Please provide at least 7 calendar days advance notice

St. Martin de Porres Senior Center COVID-19 Report March 2022

We were delighted to learn during the month of February the high rate of Omicron transmission convincingly began to descend, and hospital admissions dropped as well. This was great news at SMDP as we began to plan reopening plans for Monday 7 March. Collaborating with the Alexandria Health Department (AHD), we were advised the center received the green light to safely reopen while still maintaining COVID-19 precautions as we start back. So, we notified all our seniors, volunteers, and families about our reopening plans. Naturally we remind everyone to continue safe practices wearing an approved facial covering, physical distancing, hand hygiene and remaining home when ill. Since we are not strangers to safe COVID practice we reverted from us in person and hybrid programs to virtual programs such as ESOL, cognitive and physical exercises, trivia, nutrition, and cooking classes. Meanwhile for the month of February weather permitting we continued to offer shopping trips, Walking at the Springfield Mall, and SAIL exercise classes at the Patrick Henry Recreation center twice a week. These activities helped the overall wellbeing for the seniors as they were able to participate in activities with their friends.

- The following activities and wellness checks continued throughout February:
 - We continue to do outreach/wellness calls for the seniors meeting basic needs delivering supplies as needed to seniors home bound. The seniors report doing well and appreciated shopping and exercise opportunities.
 - Food and Fun with SSA's webinar with Chef Kole and two Virginia Tech Coop food presentations
 - 4 Activity Kits with trivia, puzzles, crossword puzzles, crafts, sudoku and fav recipes
 - Continued partnership with Charles Houston Senior Center and Alexandria Day Care Center virtual trivia, brain teasers, AFE exercise classes and arts and crafts classes.
 - Two seniors received their COVID-19 booster vaccine. We continue to be available to assist seniors get their booster and answer questions.
 - Virtual programs such as Arthritis Foundation and Zoom SAIL exercise classes.
 - Senior Shopping Trips: due to scheduling conflicts, shopping changed to Mondays with success
 - Walking Club Trips: arranged trips to Springfield Mall to Tuesdays
 - SMDP senior center and AHD consult at a minimum of weekly discussing trends and status of Omicron in the local area, SMdP is closely aligned with ALX Promise Gold protecting our community and seniors during COVID-19.
 - We keep DAAS informed as well.
 - We coordinate with seniors who need food and rental assistance through Alive, Christ House and DCHS.
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- Submitted by Anne T. Coyne, Senior Center Director, St. Martin de Porres Senior Center. Tele: 703-751-2766. Email: anne.coyne@ccda.net

The Senior Center at Charles Houston February 2022 Report for March 2022 Meeting

Staff continues to provide weekly wellness telephone checks, weekly teleconference & zoom virtual activities. Virtual activities include Bingo and cognitive/brain teaser exercises (i.e., scavenger hunt, geography, general and television trivia, word search, word scramble, and rebus puzzles). For February, we included Black History activities.

Other notable activities and events during February include:

- **Wellness/Informative Wednesday Presentation – Chef Philippe cooking demo Featured Crepes.** Participants enjoyed learning how simple it was to make this delicious French pancake. Arzu Moosvi, a pharmacist from Giant stores gave a presentation on Seasonal Affective Disorder.
- **Weekly Thursday Shopping Trip – Trips were provided to local area markets and grocery stores, including Walmart, Dollar Tree, Roses, and the Dutch Amish Market to enable participants to purchase food, medical supplies, and essential household items.**
- **Weekly Walking Cub – We moved from Belle Haven Park to Pentagon City Mall due to inclement weather. We also now walk Mondays and Fridays. Participants are consistent and happy to have increased access to getting more exercise for improved health.**
- **Arthritis Exercise Class – Participants enjoy a virtual exercise class over Zoom twice during the month. The Center has 13 duplicated participants in the exercise class monthly.**
- **Goody Bag Distribution – We provided goody bags filled with nutritious snacks and word search workbooks and a packet of crossword and other trivia worksheets with famous African -American heroes.**
- **Staff assisted participants with assistance to complete and ordering Free Covid test kits provided by the Federal Government.**
- **Black History Celebration was a soft opening for 18 participants with the approval of the health department based on all Covid protocols they suggested. CH staff followed all guidelines and provided a safe environment for participants. Several participants shared a reflection on an African American that made significant contributions to American history.**

February had a significant slowdown on the omicron variant and staff and participants were able to continue weekly walks and add the Black history celebration. Staff and participants have taken extra caution to social distance, upgrade masks to N95, and been more diligent in proper handwashing to prevent further spread of Covid -19.

In Summary, seniors remain consistent in their journey for better health and mental wellbeing. Participants continue to practice social distancing, proper handwashing, and wearing a mask.

*Submitted By: Pamela Guerra, Senior Center Manager
Senior Center @ Charles Houston*



March 2, 2022

To: Commission on Aging
From: Mary Lee Anderson, Executive Director
Senior Services of Alexandria
Subject: Update on Senior Services of Alexandria

SSA is participating once again in the “March for Meals” campaign celebrating 50 years of the passage of a law that amended the Older Americans Act to include a national nutrition program for seniors 60 and older. During the month, SSA will help to generate public awareness about the program, and to celebrate the invaluable services provided by our volunteers. Throughout the month, city and other public officials will be delivering Meals on Wheels to show their support for senior nutrition programs. March 21-25 is “Champions” week, and we are looking forward to seeing Congressman Don Beyer, MOWA President Ellie Hollander, Mayor Justin Wilson, and DCHS Director Kate Garvey, just to name a few! If you are interested in delivering Meals on Wheels as a COA Champion, please email me at executivedirector@seniorservicesalex.org

This month’s “*Senior Living in Alexandria*” workshop will focus on “*Community Resources for Older Adults*” which help them stay in their homes and live independently. Jane King will be talking about the accomplishments of the COA’s Age Friendly plan and goals for the next plan. We also hope to get ideas and feedback from participants. SSA staff will discuss our programs and services including Meals on Wheels, Groceries-to-Go, and the Friendly Visitor Programs. The event will be held virtually on Thursday, March 17 from 10-11am. Go to www.seniorservicesalex.org to register.

Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee Report
Virtual Meeting – February 3, 2021

Topics Covered

1. Energy Masters Informational Briefing (Aisha Salazar)

This program is co-sponsored by the Cooperative Extension of Northern Virginia and Eco Action Arlington. It trains volunteers and students about home energy savings and how to engage in small projects that helps make housing units more energy small and efficient. Work is done in residential homes based on request. Targets are low income renters, multi family units, and vulnerable populations. In the future they hope to work with small businesses and faith communities. Average tenant savings are \$160/year. Approved.

Implications for COA: Action item – Publicize the benefits and availability of this utility bill-savings program to vulnerable, at risk seniors. It would also be a wonderful volunteer opportunity for seniors.

2. Consideration of an Affordable Housing Plan for 901 North Pitt Street (Tamara Jovovic/Ken Wire)

The developer of this mixed use 250 unit residential project is requesting zoning and density. AHAAC was asked to approve both the affordable housing and arts district affordable housing bonus density requests. The developer offers to provide 16 units of affordable housing (all 60% AMI) and contribute \$666,669 to the Housing Trust Fund.

Implications for COA: No action items. Awareness as potential living space for seniors who can afford it. Located in a very walkable community.

3. Report on Application of Arts Bonus Density (Staff)

The practical application of the two bonus density alternatives – affordable housing only or arts district -- for developers raise questions about how and why developers are choosing to use one versus the other or both together. This will be discussed at the next meeting.

Implications for COA: None at this time.

4. Report Outs (Committee Members)

Power Plant site development: HILCO, the developer, is holding another community engagement zoom with interested member of the public on February 24th (register on their site). At this point, they plan to ask for both affordable housing and arts district bonus density.

Implications for COA: Action – This could be a potential site for a mixed use affordable assisted living facility, assisted living or retirement community. Outreach to the developer and the developer's attorney, Mary Catherine Gibbs, would be a

starting place. North Old Town currently has one of the highest densities of older residents living in Alexandria.

ARHA Updates : 25 Park Place units will be renovated. Samuel Madden project is moving forward. RFP's for Ladrey Senior Facility development site are as well.

Discussion with residents have begun.

Implications for COA: Action – COA and Housing Committee leadership have been alerted to the Ladrey RFP's. Quick action in talking with ARHA about an MIAALF is being led by Bob Eiffert.

AHDC Updates (Jon Frederick) The 475 unit development at the corner of West Glebe and Mt. Vernon Ave. has been approved by Council. They will close on acquiring the 196 unit Park Vue apartments in Arlandria at the end of the month. They are working with the Amazon Fund for this acquisition. All units would be 60% AMI.

Implications for COA: Keep on the radar – how may this impact intergenerational Hispanic families living in this community? Will they be able to stay together? Impact on seniors?

5. Staff Report

FY 2022 Affordable Housing Development Funds currently available = \$10,572,938. The Jan 2014 – Dec 2025 Housing Master Plan has a target of 2000 new affordable units. *Through September 2021, 1257 units have been developed or are committed through new construction, preservation or rehabilitation.*

Implications for COA: Action – COA's Housing Committee is encouraged to explore needs of senior community for affordable housing, assisted living, and continuing care facility programs. For example, where will Ladrey's seniors go if they no longer live in one facility? Will they get the supportive service they currently receive? Do we have data on the number of seniors at this income level in Alexandria?

Notes by Jan Macidull, COA's AHAAC representative.

City of Alexandria, Commission on Aging
Outreach Committee Notes
January 26, 2022 11:30 a.m. Via Zoom

This meeting was held electronically. A determination was made that it was not safe enough to be held in person.

Members Present: Ray Biegun, Gary Hacker, Jane King, Margaret Orlando, Gerri Wallace.

Absent: MaryAnne Beatty, Dawn Higgins, Barbara Waters

Hosting staff: Pamela Austin

The meeting was called to order at 11:32 a.m. by Ray Biegun.

Introductions were made due to recent changes in the committee. Ray Biegun reported this was his first time as co-chair of the Outreach Committee and another co-chair is currently being recruited. A former co-chair, Victoria Almquist, has agreed to stay on the Committee for a while to assist Ray during the transition. Gerri Wallace has joined as a new committee member. Ray pointed out that all committee members at the meeting are also Senior Service of Alexandria (SSA) Senior Ambassadors.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as proposed.

2. Updates on Outreach to:

Faith Community: SSA is updating its contacts to the faith community. One of the churches reported exceptional assistance from the city in providing updated Covid-19/Omicron guidance needed in the decision to reopen for inhouse services.

LGBTQ community: There are still concerns within the LGBTQ community regarding support and information needs within the larger community. For example, there are the needs of those within the LGBTQ community who also serve as caregivers.

Senior Ambassadors: SSA reports there are currently 100 ambassadors. The next new ambassador training will be on February 7. In addition, there will be a Spanish language new ambassador training on February 22. The Senior Ambassador program offers a good way to get plugged into the Alexandria senior community. The emails MaryAnne sends out several times a week to the ambassadors keeps them informed. Also, the weekly Wednesday ambassador zoom meetings continue to cover a wide range of topics and speakers.

Age Friendly Plan: The three year Age Friendly Plan expired December 2021. COA anticipates a new three year plan will be created and will go to the City Council for review and approval sometime in the spring (see Committee Planning for 2022).

3. Review of Past Accomplishments

Letter on Bullying Presentation: A presentation was offered by the Mayor's Campaign to End Bullying Committee that addresses bullying in senior communities. A letter was drafted in 2021 on bullying from the former Outreach Co-chairs to go to senior continuing care facilities throughout Alexandria. The distribution spreadsheet still needs to be completed. Ray will follow up with Victoria Almquist. Margaret reported that the bullying presentation information has been sent to the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities and that the bullying presentation will be considered when the recreation centers return to normal.

Recent City Outreach: Margaret reported that the "Winter at a Glance" brochure recently went out and included a variety of recreation activities, classes, programs, etc. Pam added that calls are coming in from seniors regarding recreation programs. People continue to be unsure what is or is not happening within the city.

SSA and the Department of Aging and Adult Services continue to contribute/support articles in local publications, such as Alexandria Times, Alexandria Gazette Packet, Zebra, etc. Speakers on relevant subjects, such as preventing falls, have been sought out and appeared in Zoom presentations.

4. Committee Planning for 2022

Opportunities for Outreach: Pam reported that a new attorney at Alexandria Law wants to meet with Alexandria seniors and do a presentation.

Committee Goals: The last 3-year plan (2018-2021) included various diversity and communications goals. Accomplishments need to be reviewed and decisions made. Should the old goals be retained or should they be revised? Are there any new goals that need to be added?

Outreach Committee Needs: Current members include MaryAnne Beatty, Ray Biegun, Gary Hacker, Dawn Higgins, Jane King, Margaret Orlando, Gerri Wallace, Barbara Waters (COA Chair) and Pam Austin (staff). Outreach efforts to recruit new members continues. In, addition, efforts are underway to recruit a co-chair.

5. Public comments: None

6. Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 23th February, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.

7. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee Meeting of February 25, 2022
Via Zoom
Draft Meeting Notes (2-27-2022)

Attendance:

Committee Members: Babs Waters, Chair, Bob Eiffert, Mary Lee Anderson, Raymond Biegun, Jane King, Ellen Nelson, Michael Schuster, Lois Steele, Gerri Wallace.

Staff: Pam Austin, Phil Caldwell, Terri Lynch. Christopher Moore.

Guests: Meghan McGrane, Budget and Management Analyst, Morgan Routt, OMB Director – City of Alexandria

Call to Order – Chair Babs Waters called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions. Each of the participants introduced him or herself.

Special Presentation by Meghan McGrane. Ms. McGrane shared a 29-slide presentation, which was distributed before the meeting. The proposed General Fund operating budget equals \$829.9 million, a \$59.2 million (7.7%) increase over the FY 2022 approved budget; there is no change in tax rates; there is a significant increase in employee compensation; the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is \$2.73 million, a 2.4% increase over the previous plan; and both the operating budget and CIP fund 100% of the School Board adopted operating budget and CIP.

Meghan shared a slide with the estimated revenue sources: the majority of the City's revenues will come from real estate taxes – residential real property (36.9%) and commercial property (25.3%); the next largest sources of revenue were personal property taxes (7.6%), state revenue (5.9%) and sales tax (4.4%). There would be no increase in either the real estate (\$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value) or personal property (\$5.33 of \$100 of assessed value on vehicles) tax rates.

Some of the special items of the operating budget included the following: the \$200,000 contribution to the Birmingham Green Assisted Living Facility in Prince William County would be dropped because of the increase in Medicaid payments to the facility, but no slots would be eliminated; the Alexandria Co-Response Program (mental health crisis team) would add a senior therapist and police officer (\$277,313); funds were proposed for body worn camera consulting services (\$200,000); and various funds were proposed to launch the building at 4850 Mark Center Drive (e.g., shuttle service at \$150,000), which will house DCHS, neighborhood health and finance.

On slide 12, Meghan discussed the housing programs in the proposed budget. The Rent Relief for the Elderly and or Disabled Renters with Low-income Fund would receive \$306,000 in General Funds; this funding would be in addition to its existing funding. Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) would be used for various housing initiatives: Arlandria Chirilagua Housing Cooperative (\$2.5 million); AHDC Arlandria Project Infrastructure (\$10

million in 2024); Eviction Prevention and Support Services (\$500,000); and Eviction Prevention Data Analytics (\$99,782). These proposals do not include the federal community block grant and home investment partnership funds which would be accounted for separately in the Office of Housing budget.

Meghan concluded the presentation with the proposed budget development dates: March 7, 2022, would be the public hearing on the proposed budget, which may be partly virtual. The DCHS budget work session will be on March 16. The housing proposals will be discussed at the budget work session on March 23, 2022. The preliminary add/delete work session will be on April 26. The final budget work session will be on May 2, 2022, at which there will be a final add/Delete discussion. Budget adoption will be on May 4, 2022.

Committee Questions. Ellen Nelson asked whether the proposed Aquatics Center at Minnie Howard (\$12.1 million) would be open to the public. Meghan said that it would be available to those outside the school during off-school hours. Babs Waters asked about the additional children that would be served with the mental health funds. Meghan said it would cover two youths needing the full range of services. Babs also asked if the Racial and Social Equity (RASE) program manager position (\$97,500 and 1.0 FTE – General Funds) was in addition to the current staff position. Meghan said that it would be. Bob Eiffert asked about the virtual technology in the new Mark Center facility. Phil Caldwell said that money is budgeted for virtual capabilities and ADA compliance. There is an IT group working in the new facility. On behalf of Mary Lee Anderson, who had left the meeting, Bob asked two questions. First, whether the DOT paratransit free rides within the city would continue. Morgan Routt said that when the city eliminated fares for the DASH bus system, ADA parity required the city to make DOT fares free within the city limits as well. The City’s receipt of state transportation funds will allow the city to continue free rides for the foreseeable future. Second, Bob asked whether there are any proposed changes to the real estate tax relief program. Morgan said there were none proposed.

Committee Discussion. After Morgan and Meaghan left the meeting, the committee discussed the issues they would recommend to the Executive Committee that could be taken up at the March 7th public meeting. Bob asserted that the Commission’s or Executive Committee’s testimony should begin with a warm “thank you” to the City Manager and the Director of the Department of Community and Human Services for the inclusion in the proposed budget of the new Rent Relief funds, as well as a multitude of beneficial programs for older Alexandrians. The committee then proceeded to discuss what additional items it could recommend to the Executive Committee. Bob suggested that we could recommend that the rent relief payment of \$500 be increased to keep up with inflation, which currently is at 6%. This increase may have to wait until next year’s budget, but he said nonetheless we should mention it now.

The remainder of the committee discussion focused on recommending changes in the real estate tax relief program. Ray Biegun said that many older residents are frustrated with the lack of services for their property taxes. Older persons have seen, not only their taxes go up, but also the cost of their health care, home maintenance, and other necessary expenses. Many are becoming financially insecure in the face of all these increased costs. He asserted that like other long-time residents he feels that he may be forced to leave Alexandria because of the increased cost of home ownership. Other committee members echoed Ray’s comments about feeling left out of

city programs because of restrictive program criteria and receiving fewer city services while paying higher taxes. Bob said the maximum value of assets (excluding your home) you can have and qualify for tax relief has not changed. He suggested that we ask the City Council to request the city government conduct a study of the impact of high real estate taxes on long-time older residents and come up with recommendations. The committee members assented to this proposal.

This was Terri Lynch's last meeting in her official capacity. The committee members expressed their sadness in her leaving city government and thanked her for her seven years of dedicated service to older Alexandrians and of her constant support of the Commission on Aging.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Next Meetings via Zoom:

Executive Committee meeting: Monday, February 28, 2022, 1:30 p.m.
NVAN meeting hosted by Alexandria COA, March 15, 2022, 9:30 a.m.
COA meeting: March 10, 2022, 4:30 p.m.

Notes prepared by Michael Schuster

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED ON BEHALF THE COMMISSION ON AGING'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
BEFORE THE ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 7, 2022,
IN SUPPORT OF THE CITY MANAGER'S PROPOSED FY 2023 BUDGET**

Presenter: Mr. Michael Schuster, Secretary, Alexandria City Commission on Aging

My name is Michael Schuster. I am the Secretary of the Alexandria City Commission on Aging and Chair of its Housing Committee. I am testifying on behalf of the Commission's Executive Committee.

First, we thank the city government for its generous support of older Alexandrians over the years. In particular, we appreciate the contributions of the City Manager and the Office of Management of the Budget, in putting together this proposed budget. The director and staff of the Budget office met with our commission recently to brief us on the proposed budget. We also thank the Director of the Department of Community and Human Services for the department's proposal in this budget to increase the funding for rent relief by \$306,000. We enthusiastically support this proposal. This money will eliminate the waiting list – of approximately 50 residents – who are struggling to pay ever increasing rent in the city. More than 74% of low- to moderate-income Alexandrians (approximately 14,539 households) spend 30% or more of their income on rent or mortgage payments (2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates) - only one medical or financial crisis could put some of them perilously close to facing eviction for non-payment of rent.

One item not in the budget, but related to affordable housing, is a provision for updating the asset limits in the real property tax relief program. The most a taxpayer can have in assets, excluding their home, is \$430,000, more than \$100,000 less than the limit in place in 2013 (\$540,000), and far lower than Arlington County's current limit of \$585,880. It is important to note that the city lowered the asset limit in 2013 to closely match Arlington's lower asset limit in 2013. While Arlington County has increased its asset limit, Alexandria has frozen its limit. If anything, Alexandria, like Arlington County, is becoming more expensive place to live. Increasing the asset limit would not require an appropriation of money, and in the cases of tax deferral, the city would eventually receive the tax dollars with interest when the owner sells the home or dies. We request that the Council follow Arlington County and increase the asset limit to ensure that long-term, moderate-income residents are able to continue living in Alexandria.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your attention.