

DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 24th, 2024

Participation:

Trustees Present: Season Roberts (Chair), Abigail Wescott (Vice Chair) – arrived 10:49AM, Tyler Hart (Treasurer), Tarina Keene (Secretary), Virginia Powell, Beverly Crowder

Remote Participating Trustees: Cherie Short (Alexandria), Allison Lawrence (Henrico), Cindy Han (McLean) - joined 10:50 A.M., Maureen Coffey (Arlington)

Trustees Absent: Carl Ayers

Staff/Guests Present: Nicole Poulin (Executive Director), Michelle L'Hommedieu (Office of Attorney General - FACT Counsel), Taylor Hohle (Senior Research Associate), Jeannine Panzera (Henrico CASA), Nancy Oglesby (Justice 3D), Ryan Kelly (VDSS)

Opening: Chairperson Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:40 AM. A quorum was present starting at 10:49 A.M.

Decisions and Actions: The following actions were approved by the Board unanimously unless otherwise noted.

Guest Presentation: Jeaninne Panzera, Executive Director for Henrico CASA, provided a presentation about CASA's work.

- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) was created nationally in the 1970s as a program of trained volunteers who advocate on behalf of children who are subjects of juvenile court proceedings involving allegations of abuse and neglect.
- In Virginia, CASA programs are regulated by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and comply with standards from the National CASA Association in Seattle. Henrico's program was started in 1994 and is now the largest CASA program in the Commonwealth.
- In accordance with Virginia Code (§ 9.1-153), CASA does the following:
 - Investigate the case to provide independent factual information to the Court.
 - Submit a written report at hearings, including recommendations as to the child's welfare.
 - Monitor the case to ensure compliance with the Court's orders.
 - Assist the guardian ad litem in providing effective representation of the child's needs and best interests.
 - Report suspected abuse or neglect of a child.
- CASA volunteers are required to complete:
 - Pass rigorous screening process – including background checks.
 - Complete 40 hours of classroom training – includes information on neutrality and objectivity, confidentiality and privacy, and cultural sensitivity and diversity.
 - Daily supervision by staff members.
 - Annual continuing education requirements.
- There was discussion about state level coordination and expansion of CASA programs in counties not currently being served by a CASA program. Virginia has a statewide leadership team for CASA programs and there was a recent legislative study looking into whether CASA programs should be required for all jurisdictions. Executive Director Poulin participated in the workgroup for the study.

**DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
(VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 24th, 2024**

Remote Participation:

- Trustees Short and Han requested to participate remotely due to residing more than 60 miles from the meeting location. Trustees Lawrence and Coffey have requested to participate remotely today due to family illness.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to allow remote participation for Trustees Short, Han, Coffey, and Lawrence. Trustee Powell seconded.**

Minutes Approval:

- Chairperson Roberts opened the floor for comments and corrections on the previous Board minutes from the June meeting. Trustee Crowder provided correction of a comma placement.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Powell seconded.**

Chair's Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the report.

- There are currently five board vacancies which will be appointed by the Chairperson of the House and the Chairperson of the Rules Committee in the Senate, due to the new legislation that was passed last fiscal year. There have already been applications submitted through the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office. Nicole has been in contact with the staff to determine how the legislative change will impact the application process.
- A survey will be sent out in the next couple of months to get perspective on how Trustees see their role in serving FACT and how the meetings can be better for increasing engagement.
- Board member updates
 - Trustee Short shared that she met with the Governor's Transformation Office in June to discuss the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline wait times and dropped calls. She also met with professional call centers to discuss their models. Other states have consolidated contracts for their call centers which helps to cover smaller numbers of calls, like those received through the CPS hotline, in order to save on costs. Roughly half of the current staff are contractors. VDSS already has enterprise call center contracts in other programs.
 - Trustee Roberts is working on a marketing contract project for the Virginia Department of Health's opioid educational program targeted at middle and high school students in Virginia Beach. They are currently in the focus group phase.

Child Abuse & Neglect (CAN) Advisory Committee Report: Trustee Powell provided the committee update.

- As one of Virginia's Citizen Review Panels (CRP), the CAN Advisory Committee has the ability to review child abuse and neglect cases reported to VDSS. The Committee is working to establish a sub-committee to develop a process and structure to review these cases, starting with child death cases. FACT staff are working on a brief to provide an overview on child fatality review processes across the Commonwealth compared to other states. Currently there is a wide variety of processes and a lack of coordination between various entities that are reviewing these cases. The report intends to show what data is currently available and where gaps exist.
- The FACT Board previously sent a letter to VDSS requesting that the CAN Committee Co-Chairs participate on the workgroup being established to provide input on the outcome measures and

DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 24th, 2024

processes that will be collected through the new Child Welfare Information Solutions (CWIS) software system being established. Recently, VDSS modified the procurement request for the software system, which resulted in a delay of the project. A new Request for Proposal (RFP) is in development and will go out in the next few months. This will delay establishment of the workgroup for several months.

Editorial & Planning (E&P) Committee Report: Trustee Powell provided the update.

- This committee is on temporary pause due to the work on the CAN Child Fatality Report project.

Treasurer's Report: Trustee Hart provided the update.

- Trustee Hart reviewed the Profit and Loss statement comparison by quarter, month, and year, as well as the balance sheet comparison for fiscal years 2024 and 2023.
- License plate funding from last fiscal year has not been received at this time. Staff have been in contact with the Department of Motor Vehicles and Department of Accounts to try to determine the amount of this funding.
- Executive Director Poulin reviewed challenges with FACT *not* being a part of the state payment system, eVA, while still being required to comply with state procurement.
- There was discussion about the process for hiring more staff. Several years ago, FACT received advice from outside counsel that the FACT Board is not authorized to hire staff and that any additional staff would need to come through VDSS administrative support.
- Previously FACT was not able to guarantee funding would be available year-to-year; however, with the Gaming Proceeds Fund, there is an increase in funding that will likely maintain or increase in coming years. This provides an opportunity for larger grants over multiple years that would be funded by the anticipated income. These grants would need to go through the state procurement process, unless an exemption from the process is passed through the legislature and signed by the Governor.
 - Nicole will send out the previous Request for Applications for the Trauma Informed Community Networks to provide an idea of the process.
 - **A motion was made by Trustee Wescott to approve the financial material as presented. Trustee Crowder seconded.**
 - **A motion was made by Trustee Powell for the Executive Committee to meet and prepare a proposal regarding the strategic direction of the organization to be presented to the full Board of Trustees at the next meeting. Trustee Hart seconded.**
 - **A motion was made by Trustee Hart for the Executive Committee to review the exemption rules for the Procurement Act and opportunities for multi-year funding. Trustee Wescott seconded.**

Grants Committee Report: Trustee Wescott provided the update.

- During the last Board meeting, Trustees revised the Ad Hoc Grants Policy to increase the award cap from \$3000 to \$5000 and to allow for both state and local activities related to FACT's mission.
- Since this change went into effect in July, FACT has received five ad hoc requests, all for local events.
 - The Pulaski Community Youth Center has requested \$2500 to support childcare, dinner, and material costs for their five upcoming "Tough Talks Parent Seminar Series."
 - Greater Richmond Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN) has requested \$5,000 to help host their third annual Community Resilience Block Party during Resilience Week 2025, in May.

**DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
(VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 24th, 2024**

- Children's Trust from Roanoke has requested \$5000 to support their Roanoke Valley Trauma Informed Community Network (RVTICN) "Trauma Basics" and "Trauma 2.0" training classes.
- The Fairfax Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Service Unit has requested \$5000 to continue their pilot program of the Skyward Fund that utilized 2023 FACT Emergency Funds.
- Project Horizon in Lexington, Virginia has requested \$3000 to provide scholarships for their Camp Mabon which is a weekend retreat for survivors of sexual trauma.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Hart to approve the ad hoc requests. Trustee Crowder seconded. Trustee Powell abstained from the vote for Project Horizon funding.**

VDSS Report: Ryan Kelly, VDSS Acting Chief of Staff and Acting Deputy Commissioner, provided the update for Trustee Ayers.

- Staffing updates
 - John Littel has moved from Secretary of Health and Human Resources to the Governor's Chief of Staff.
 - The new Secretary of Health and Human Resources is Janet Kelly, former Senior Advisor to the Governor.
 - James Williams has moved from Acting Commissioner for VDSS to Commissioner.
 - The new VDSS Director of Human Resources is Christy Roberson.
 - VDSS is looking for a Chief Technology Officer.
- As part of Commissioner Williams' Economic and Social Mobility priority, VDSS hosted an event focused on strengthening relationships with local workforce boards, local DSS (LDSS), and local employers.
- Commissioner Williams is also committed to enhancing agency operations. During May-July, the Finance Department reviewed spending, redundancies, and Return on Investment for VDSS. This review has helped VDSS look into potential funding reallocations and new opportunities for investment.
- The Chief Deputy Commissioner, Kevin Erskine, is helping to work towards a new structure and focus for both internal and external information technology services within VDSS.
- The Kinship Care Program has gone through reshaping over the last 18 months – since last October, Virginia has made substantial process.
 - The most recent data for July showed 17.4% of children placed with kin, compared to 11% last year.
 - The Division of Family Services is working with 19 LDSS who are leading the Commonwealth's efforts in this area.
 - During the previous General Assembly, Senate Bill 39 and House Bill 27 were passed to improve kinship care and supports for families prior to entering foster care. Additionally, the General Assembly significantly expanded relative maintenance payments, which increases financial supports for low-income Virginians who are engaged with the Child Welfare System. These changes were implemented in July, and in the first month more than 60 children entered kinship care.
- VDSS is in the process of completing the summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) program. A

**DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
(VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, September 24th, 2024**

\$120 benefit was sent out to 700,000 school-aged children geared towards food services outside of school hours.

- Virginia's Division of Child Support Enforcement was one of eight states to receive the Office of Child Support Services Next Generation grant, totaling around \$2.1 million across five years, which will be geared towards the Petersburg region.

FACT Problematic Sexual Behavior (PSB) Project Review: Nancy Oglesby provided the update.

- Phase I of the PSB Project occurred in 2023 and resulted in a guidance document that looked at the state of affairs regarding PSB, in ages 12 and under, across Virginia as well as other states. The guidance document and webinar recording can be found here:
<https://www.fact.virginia.gov/psb-project/>
- The project is currently in Phase II, which is divided into two parts.
 - The first part will involve bringing together a group of stakeholders to develop a three-day train-the-trainer program focused on PSB cases.
 - Once the program has been developed, it will be piloted with three multidisciplinary community teams from across Virginia. During the program, these communities will develop a response protocol to PSB cases in their area as well as a tailored training to bring back to their communities. The guidance document found that communities across the U.S. that were building programs from the ground up found the most success as response to these cases is unique to the communities the teams will serve.

Staff Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update.

- Staff is working to gain access to Oasis system to pull reports and investigation records for the CAN Committee subcommittee that will review the records.
- There have been changes with the Citizen Review Panels (CRP) under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The child fatality review team is no longer serving as a CRP which put Virginia out of compliance with CAPTA. VDSS has taken the lead on developing a new review panel focused on child safety.
- The contract for PSB Project was signed in June. They are hoping to have subcommittee of stakeholders pulled together soon to start the project.
- Previously the Board approved \$10,000 for a contractor to assist with FACT marketing. Executive Director Poulin is working with Chairperson Roberts to identify and interview contractors for this work.
- There was discussion around getting the Board packets sent out as early as possible for review prior to the meeting.

Adjournment/Wrap up: The next Board meeting will be December 10th, 2024, at 10:00 AM -1:00 PM, held virtually. Vice Chair Roberts concluded the meeting at 2:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Tarina Keene

Tarina Keene, Secretary

&

Taylor Hohle

Taylor Hohle, Senior Research Associate