

**MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (VA-
FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, December 10th, 2024,
Microsoft Teams**

Participation:

Trustees Present: Season Roberts (Chair), Abigail Wescott (Vice Chair – left 11:18AM), Tarina Keene (Secretary), Virginia Powell, Cherie Short, Allison Lawrence, Cindy Han, Maureen Coffey, Carl Ayers (arrived 10:38AM, left 11:20AM)

Trustees Absent: Tyler Hart, Beverly Crowder

Staff/Guests Present: Nicole Poulin (Executive Director), Michelle L'Hommedieu (Office of Attorney General - FACT Counsel), Taylor Hohle (Senior Research Associate), Lori Crouch (IntegrityInsights, LLC)

Opening: Chairperson Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. A quorum was present.

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

Guest Presentation: Lori Crouch provided a presentation about IntegrityInsights, LLC.

- Lori has been contracted to work on public relations with FACT. She provided information on her background working with media and government agencies. She is excited to work with FACT to advance the mission and garner more attention to the work.

Minutes Approval:

- Chairperson Roberts opened the floor for comments and corrections on the previous Board minutes from the September meeting.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the minutes as presented. Trustee Coffey seconded.**

Chair's Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the report.

- The Executive Committee met in October to discuss priority areas for FACT. There were 3 main areas of focus to work on this fiscal year:
 - 1) Increasing Administration Support-this year we'll be working on ways to update our accounting system so Board Members can get a clearer understanding of FACT finances during Board Meetings. The second issue related to administration included discussing ideas about how to increase support from VDSS for help with procurement processes required for FACT to make grant awards above \$10,000. Members of the Executive Committee have agreed to meet with VDSS Leadership to discuss this after we determine FACT's funding priorities for the next year.
 - 2) Determining Funding Priorities- The Grants Committee will be meeting twice before our next meeting in March to develop a plan for a large Request for Proposal to be developed over the next year with a goal awarding funding for work to begin fiscal year 2026.
 - 3) Gaining Support for FACT's Future Organization Structure- The recently approved Strategic Plan included changing the administrative structure of FACT to become an independent state agency. Part of the goal for hiring a PR Consultant is to increase awareness of FACT in order to begin to seek support for this change. In coming years, the FACT Board is also going to need to play a significant role in working with legislators and the next administration to be successful in achieving this goal. We currently have 5 openings on this Board and 5 more members will

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be cycling off in June of next year. Nicole has been in communication with the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office, Speaker Scott's Office and Senator Locke's Office to see what is needed to help facilitate new board member appointments for FACT. Chairperson Roberts will be following up with both offices on this. Board members should contact her if they would like to help with that.

- Chairperson Roberts provided a reminder to Board members to donate to FACT if they have not already. Donations can be made online at <https://www.fact.virginia.gov/donate/>

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

- The CAN Advisory Committee met on December 5th.
 - The Office of the Children's Ombudsman (OCO) provided updates on their third annual report released. OCO is preparing for the 2025 General Assembly session and continuing to develop relationships with other agencies in the broader child welfare world.
 - Executive Director Poulin provided updates on staff efforts related to the committee's work.
 - Staff are preparing a report on Child Fatality Review processes in Virginia. The purpose of the report is to create a single document that summarizes the efforts, resources, challenges, and promises of this practice, which is not well coordinated or consistent and difficult to navigate in Virginia.
 - The CAN Committee agreed to establish a sub-committee to develop a process and structure to review case records in the VDSS OASIS data tracking system, starting with child death cases, and to report back to the full committee as this process unfolds. This work will get underway early in 2025.
 - The Problematic Sexual Behavior Response Project, for which FACT has contracted with Justice 3D to take the lead on, is now focused on phase two of this project. Phase one resulted in the creation of a state and local best practice response framework to improve the responses to these challenging cases, phase two involves developing and piloting a curriculum for Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) to improve community responses.
 - A consultant has been hired to lead FACT's efforts to develop a state plan for Child Sexual Assault Prevention in Virginia. The subcommittee for this project has had their first meeting. The FACT Board will receive a draft of this plan by the March Board Meeting to review.
 - FACT is working on finding a contractor to manage social media communications, to build knowledge and familiarity with the work of FACT statewide and beyond. This position is expected to work closely with FACT's Public Relations Contractor to increase communication on FACT's work throughout the Commonwealth.
 - In response to the CAN Committee's 2024 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) report, VDSS updated the committee on the following.
 - Kirby Baughn, Prevention and In-Home Program Manager at VDSS, presented on the Departments ongoing effort to implement Family First Services in Virginia. Four years into this shift in policy and practice, Virginia has made significant progress in developing policy and guidance to assist local departments of social services as they shift away from a foster care placement model to one focused on in-home services to children and their families. There is more work to be done to build out these services and programs.
 - Brandi Peterson, Child Fatality Prevention Initiative Coordinator at VDSS, discussed efforts of Virginia's five regional fatality review teams. The Department is working

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closely with these teams to establish consistency across the five teams in terms of the cases reviewed, data collected, team membership, and the development of recommendations.

Grants Committee Report: Trustee Wescott provided the update.

- FACT has received six ad hoc requests.
 - The Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Center on Aging has requested \$5,000 to support focus groups for their elder justice shelter model in the greater Richmond region.
 - Triumph Over Trauma (Trauma Informed Community Network for the Winchester area), through the I'm Just Me Movement, has requested \$5,000 for food and supplies to support their annual Triumph Over Trauma summit in May.
 - Henrico Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has requested \$5,000 to obtain speaker Ms. Rhodes-Courter for an organizational 30th anniversary event held in spring 2025.
 - Rainy Day Fund has requested \$5,000 to support their direct support and financial assistance programming.
 - Families Forward Virginia has requested \$5,000 to support individuals with lived experience interested in speaking at the Virginia Department of Social Services Prevention Conference.
 - VA Coalition for the Prevention of Elder Abuse has requested \$5,000 for speaker fees to support their 28th annual conference held in May 2025.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the ad hoc requests with the addition that communication will occur with the Rainy Day Fund that the funds will only be used for individuals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Trustee Lawrence seconded.**
- The Grants Committee will be meeting twice prior to the next Board meeting to develop a plan for future grants.
 - Committee members will work with staff to develop a survey for stakeholders to provide input on possible priority funding areas for FACT to consider prior to the committee meeting.
- Executive Director Poulin presented an updated Ad Hoc policy to have clearer reporting guidelines and to align with recent changes made by the Board.
 - A few grammatical edits were made in addition to adding in Virginia specifics around fiscal year and use of funds.
 - **A motion to approve the Ad Hoc Policy as amended was made by Trustee Powell and seconded by Trustee Lawrence.**

VDSS Report: Trustee Ayers provided the update.

- Legislation was passed last General Assembly session focused on kinship care and engaging families prior to their children entering the foster care system. Trustee Ayers provided a history of kinship care work in Virginia.
- During the pandemic, the federal government paused redetermination for benefits. In January 2023, processes for redetermination were restarted and the unwinding process is now wrapping up. Virginia has 2 million individuals continuing on Medicaid which is a drastic increase from prior to the pandemic.
- Navigating trauma in the child welfare system while balancing prevention and safety for children is an ongoing conversation within VDSS.
- There was discussion on updating the child welfare technology system. A new Request for Proposal will be released after a change in direction from VDSS administration.

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- Trustee Short asked about consolidating the hotline contract with other call center contracts under VDSS. Trustee Ayers discussed previous attempts to do this. In the past, contractor have dropped the hotline due to unique staffing degree requirements.
- There was discussion on food security for communities. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits are set at the federal level and is currently \$29 for the base benefit. VDSS has worked with 100 vendors who will now accept SNAP benefits at restaurants to increase access.

Treasurer's Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update in place of Trustee Hart.

- Executive Director presented the profit and loss statement, balance sheet, and budget.
- Staff have obtained approval to update the subscription for Quickbooks to a higher tier which provides additional features.
- There was discussion about ongoing financial system challenges and efforts to update the system to provide additional clarity for Board reporting.

Staff Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update.

- The Child Fatality report is taking longer than anticipated due to the complexity of review practices across various agencies and different data collection methods.
 - Staff have obtained access to OASIS to view child fatality investigation information.
 - Many stakeholders are interested in the report and ways to support this work.
- FACT is a member of American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and will be helping to establish a Virginia section of APSAC.
- The state plan for Child Sexual Assault Prevention will be released in February for the CAN Committee and Board to review.
- Executive Director Poulin has been asked to serve on the Board for the Jenkins Foundation which has a focus on supporting efforts for improving health equity in creative ways.
- In addition to Lori being contracted to do public relations work, staff are working to contract with another individual to focus on social media efforts.

Board Announcements

- Updated ethics training and conflict of interest forms will be sent out to the Board soon.
- If you are interested in having conversations with legislators during the upcoming General Assembly session, please reach out to Chairperson Roberts or Executive Director Poulin.
- There was discussion about alerting new administration to stay the course to update the child welfare system. Trustee Powell made note to include this in the next CAPTA report.

Adjournment/Wrap up: The next Board meeting will be March 13th, 2025 at 10:30 AM -3:30 PM, held in-person. Vice Chair Roberts concluded the meeting at 12:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Hohle

Taylor Hohle, Senior Research Associate