

**DRAFT MINUTES, VA FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND  
(VA-FACT) Board of Trustees Meeting, June 12th, 2024,  
Microsoft Teams**

**Participation:**

Trustees Present: Season Roberts (Chair), Nichele Carver, Maria Salgado, Tiffany Garner, Virginia Powell, Cherie Short, Allison Lawrence, Maureen Coffey, Tyler Hart

Trustees Absent: Tarina Keene, Cindy Han, Abigail Wescott (Vice Chair), Deputy Commissioner Carl Ayers

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), Sonja Barisic (Sunflower Communications), Wendy Goldberg (WC Goldberg & Co)

**Opening:** Chairperson Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM. A quorum was present.

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

Three new members have been appointed to the Board of Trustees by Speaker of the House Scott: Nichele Carver, Maria Salgado and former board member Tiffany Garner. This will be the last Board meeting for five of the current Trustees whose terms are ending at the end of the month: Trustee Keene, Trustee Coffey, Trustee Crowder, Trustee Lawrence, and Trustee Powell.

Guest Presentation: Lori Crouch and Sonja Barisic provided a presentation on FACT's marketing strategy.

- Interviews were conducted between March 31<sup>st</sup>-May 21<sup>st</sup> to understand how FACT is seen across the Commonwealth. The following are key insights from those interviews.
  - There is a general lack of awareness or understanding of FACT's mission or operations among most participants.
  - Among those aware of FACT, there is a deep appreciation of the organization's prevention-focus and positive community impact.
  - Most participants would like to see FACT raise awareness of its work with the public and legislators. Several added grantees should also advocate on behalf of FACT and leveraging board members is essential.
  - FACT's grantmaking and reporting received mixed reviews. A few participants praised the grants as accessible and essential to fund emerging needs while others felt grants lacked alignment with FACT's strategic goals and reporting needed more detail and visibility.
  - A majority of participants did not support FACT becoming its own state agency. Several voiced skepticisms about whether it would improve effectiveness or increase political scrutiny.
  - Many participants would like to see improved training and more communications and collaboration among board members and FACT staff.
- A website audit was conducted in April. Recommendations included correcting hyperlinks and archiving outdated documents, leveraging banner for community-oriented images, updating the toolbar and dropdown menus, and improving webpage organization and navigation.
- Media relations
  - In March 2025, Augusta Free Press covered FACT's ad hoc grant announcements.
  - In April 2025, WVEC covered FACT's LEAP grant announcement.
  - In June 2025, WDBJ 7 interviewed FACT on elder abuse prevention and FACT support which

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will air soon.

- Social Media
  - FACT currently has a Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn and is sharing content focused on grant updates, community resources, events, and media coverage.
  - Since February, Facebook posts have reached 2,087 people. LinkedIn had a 32% growth in followers.
  - Sonja reminded Trustees to follow FACT on social media and like and share FACT's posts.

Minutes Approval:

- Chairperson Roberts opened the floor for comments and corrections on the previous Board minutes from the March meeting. Amendments were made to change Carl Ayers' title from Trustee to Deputy Commissioner/VDSS Commissioner Designee. There were additional clarification edits to the VDSS section on legislation.
- **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the minutes as amended. Trustee Coffey seconded.**

Chair's Report: Chairperson Roberts provided the report.

- The Nominating Committee met on May 28<sup>th</sup>.
  - The following is the slate of officers recommended to serve for Fiscal Year 2026.
    - Season Roberts for Chair
    - Abigail Wescott for Vice Chair
    - Tyler Hart for Treasurer
    - Tiffany Garner for Secretary
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Short to approve the recommended slate of officers for Fiscal Year 2026. Trustee Coffey seconded.**
  - The Committee Chairs for Fiscal Year 2026 will be the following:
    - Trustee Roberts will replace Trustee Powell as Co-Chair of the Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee.
    - Trustee Wescott will continue serving as Chair of the Grants Committee.
    - Trustee Carver will serve as Chair for the Editorial and Planning Committee which will begin meeting later this summer to continue the current series on Special Populations.
    - Please let Executive Director Poulin know if you are interested in joining any of the committees.
  - There was discussion to review the standing committees in the bylaws and see if any changes need to be made.
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to expand the Grants Committee scope to include marketing and outreach efforts. Trustee Garner seconded.**
- FACT will be celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. The Grants Committee would like to develop a proposal of events for the Board's consideration in September.
- There are still two vacant seats remaining for this fiscal year and five additional seats will become vacant on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Chairperson Roberts and Executive Director Poulin have been in

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contact with staff for the Chair of the Senate Rules Committee and Speaker of the House about the vacancies. One of the upcoming vacant seats will be appointed by the Governor.

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

- The CAN Advisory Committee met on June 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - At the meeting, members received updates from the Office of the Children's Ombudsman. These updates included an overview of potential legislative and budget proposals for the 2026 General Assembly, ongoing efforts to develop relationships with other agencies, and the publishing of their next annual report in the fall.
  - Committee Members received the following updates from Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) staff on the issues outlined in the 2024-2025 CAN Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Report.
    - Virginia continues to struggle to hire and retain Family Services Specialists (FSS), aka CPS workers. Turnover rates hover around 40% and the current vacancy rate is 20%. FSS stay on the job for an average of two years. Currently, it takes over a year to complete all of the training required for the position.
    - The average salary is \$36,000/year for FSS. The goal is to increase this to around \$52,000/year.
    - There have been no national studies or data collected for 25 years on what an appropriate and accurate workload looks like for FSS. A workload study is being conducted by VDSS for both CPS and in-home staff.
    - In 2024, CPS received 94,728 reports of suspicion for child abuse and neglect. Roughly 39%, 36,846 of these cases, were valid and required a CPS response. Of those, 27,000 resulted in a Family Assessment (FA). Roughly 8800, or 33%, resulted in an investigation and 2400, or 27%, were founded.
    - There are different required response times based on the case circumstances. Response Time (RT) 1 requires first contact with the family within 24 hours. RT 2 requires first contact within 48 hours. RT 3 first contact must be made within 40 working hours. Virginia's completed timely response is at 87.6%. The national average is 95%.
    - There has been an increase in child fatalities reported to CPS, especially among families with prior child welfare involvement. Only 23% of high or very-high assessed risk cases are being opened to in-home services. VDSS staff is working on a plan to understand the scope of the issue and why these cases are not being opening to in-home services and how the structured decision-making tools are being utilized.
  - Committee members also heard from the Office of Trauma and Resilience Policy (OTRP) at VDSS on their efforts to support Virginia's child welfare workforce.
    - OTRP staff will be partnering with the Division of Local Training and Development to host six sessions on the Community Resilience Model. This model focuses on skills to use for well-being day-to-day and also following critical incidents.
    - State funding for the peer support line was not approved. This would consist of a support line staffed by retired family services workers for current workers to reach out during difficult cases. The VDSS Office of Research and Planning is working to obtain the overall cost of family services staff turnover, including the cost of training and on-boarding new staff.

Grants Committee Report: Trustee Roberts provided the update for Trustee Wescott.

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- The Grants Committee met on May 29<sup>th</sup> to discuss proposed grants for Fiscal Year 2026.
  - The Committee is recommending that FACT modify its ad hoc grant funding cycle to twice a year instead of quarterly and allow for two categories of funding to be considering during each cycle. The first category will be for requests up to \$5000 to support trainings and organizational capacity building. The second will be for requests up to \$10,000 for service support. A total of \$300,000 is recommended to support this new grant opportunity.
    - The Grants Committee will meet prior to the September and March Board meetings to review the applications and determine which applications will be recommended to the full board for funding.
    - The Committee will work with Executive Director Poulin to develop an application for this new system and will work with our marketing consultants to share the new application process broadly.
  - The Committee also recommends that FACT develop and release a large Request for Proposal (RFP) for two-year grants, for up to \$200,000-\$300,000 per award for a total of \$1.5 million dollars. FACT will work with VDSS Procurement Staff to develop the RFP during FY 2026 for services to begin on July 1, 2026. Services supported through this grant funding will be board in scope and prioritize the following:
    - Those focused across the family violence prevention spectrum- primordial/primary (universal), secondary (targeted toward vulnerable populations and tertiary (intervention)
    - Those focused across the lifespan- Child abuse, DV/SV, Abuse Against Elder
    - Those which support family violence prevention efforts across the which Statewide- 5 Regional VDSS Areas
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the Grants Committee Recommendations. Trustee Carver seconded. Trustee Short opposed.**
- FACT has received one ad hoc request from the Child Advocacy Centers of Virginia for \$5000 to support their annual conference. FACT has a long history of supporting this conference.
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Powell to approve the ad hoc request. Trustee Coffey seconded.**

Treasurer's Report: Trustee Hart provided the update.

- Trustee Hart and Executive Director Poulin have been working with our consultant, Wendy Goldberg, to develop a plan for updates to FACT's financial system. Wendy shared her recommendations with the Board.
  - Streamline Quickbooks by adjusting categories to better match FACT's needs.
  - A report from Quickbooks comparing the budget to actual spending with an additional breakdown on what is happening with funding and payments will be presented to the Board in September.
- Trustee Hart reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget which includes costs to cover the grants approved and funding to allow FACT to continue working with marketing consultants, bookkeeper, and financial system upgrade consultant.
  - **A motion was made by Trustee Hart to approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget as presented. Trustee Lawrence seconded.**
- The Board reviewed the financial reports for the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2025 and a copy of the

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current budget with the QuickBooks categories.

- **A motion was made by Trustee Hart to accept the first three quarters of Fiscal Year 2025 documents. Trustee Coffey seconded.**

Staff Report: Executive Director Poulin provided the update.

- The report on Child Fatality Investigations and Review will be released by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Child Abuse and Neglect Advisory Committee has developed a workgroup to look at case files for a sampling of child fatalities across the five VDSS regions.
- Executive Director Poulin shared updates on developing a Virginia section of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC).
- A biannual report will be released this summer to showcase how FACT's funding has been distributed across the Commonwealth.
- Executive Director Poulin has been in contact with the Joint Commission on Healthcare, a research group for the legislature. They are currently looking at opioid substance use disorder which has been highlighted in the fatality report as a contributing factor to child fatalities.
- Executive Director Poulin attended the Virginia Funders Network conference.
- FACT's support for the Leadership for Empowerment and Abuse Prevention (LEAP) program expansion has received great media coverage recently.

Adjournment/Wrap up: Meeting dates for Fiscal Year 2026 will be scheduled through a Doodle poll that will be sent out in the next few weeks. Chairperson Roberts concluded the meeting at 12:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Taylor Hohle*

Taylor Hohle, Senior Research Associate