

Service Advisory Council & Strategic Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 25, 2025

10:00 – 11:00am/ 2551 Eltham Ave, Ste Q, Norfolk, VA 23513

In-person/Teams

Service Advisory Council/ Strategic Planning Committee				Staff	
Caryn West, Chair	P	Suzanne Puryear	P	Steve Zollos, CEO Ex-Officio	P
Brenda Cobb, Vice-Chair	P	Rebecca Riordan	A	Brigid Miller, CFO	P
Madeline Dunstan	A	Larhonda Ross	P	Charnitta Waters, SDO	P
Nila Holleman	A	Rachael Trussel	A	Leila Willis, EA	P
George Jones	P	Mark Bragg	P		
Tanya McDonald	P	Ariane Williams	A		

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Call to Order

The Service Advisory Council and Strategic Planning Committee Meeting was called to order by **Caryn West**, who asked all participants for a short introduction.

Consent Agenda Approval

Caryn West requested a motion to approve the consent agenda that included the **8.27.24 SAC Meeting Minutes**.

The motion was given by **Suzanne Puryear**, seconded by **Larhonda Ross**, and **all were in favor**.

Presentation: Board and Staff Analysis

Steve introduced a PowerPoint presentation, Staff and Board of Directors Analysis, the focus was on future directions for Senior Services. The presentation outlined ideas generated from both Board of Directors and Staff retreats.

Steve emphasized the need for the organization to adapt to maintain its status as a primary influencer in the Hampton Roads. Key trends identified included the rising influence of social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, while traditional media, such as

print and standard television, are declining. To stay relevant, the organization aims to enhance its presence on trending platforms, consider hiring a social media coordinator, and explore creating a podcast to engage with community leaders and amplify their message.

The discussion then led to funding strategies and innovative opportunities for Senior Services. Key points included the exploration of fee-for-service models, particularly in transit and Meals on Wheels, to generate revenue while providing essential services to those in need.

Steve expressed the potential of electric vehicles as the next step for the transportation department. He discussed the emergence of self-driving cars, which could soon enhance the transportation fleet, and noted the future possibilities of incorporating drones into operations.

Steve mentioned that the role of AI and robotic companions in assisting seniors with personal care, highlighting their potential to reduce loneliness by providing companionship and support. Additionally, the use of personal health devices was addressed, noting their capability to alert options counselors when seniors neglect their health or forget to take medication, thereby ensuring timely support and intervention.

Steve discussed future initiatives, including the concept of "Dine & Chat," which aims to incorporate virtual reality dining experiences into socialization activities. Additionally, the potential implementation of a drone delivery system for meals was explored, as this would enhance productivity, improve time management, and expand delivery coverage for seniors in the local area.

Steve also highlighted several technological advancements aimed at improving services for seniors such as the use of voice recognition AI for its potential to facilitate communication, along with earpieces that translate languages to ensure seniors have easy access to support, implementing AI assistance to reduce the volume of calls to the front desk, and a cross-bot connection between neighboring organization's AI to serve as a referral system.

Updates from the Community

Tanya McDonald expressed during her recent volunteer work with the Comfort Call program, she identified concerns raised by a client regarding meal delivery service, Mom's Meals. The client was told her food would arrive the day before but did not receive it until the next day. She found it outside her door without a doorbell ring or signature, unsure how long it had been there. She expressed the hardships of planning her day around the delivery and asked Tanya if she should cancel or switch to a different service. Tanya highlighted this issue to address the need for more reliable delivery and communication.

Steve agreed with the sentiment, asked for the client's information, and promised to correct the issue, ensuring better service moving forward. Steve encouraged everyone that if they hear concerns like this from the community, please come forward. That's one of the reasons our council meets, and the goal is for everyone to receive great service.

Charnitta added that housing remains a huge challenge in the Hampton Roads, and building enough affordable housing has not been easy. Charnitta emphasizes that addressing systemic barriers is crucial and that our advocacy efforts should include pushing for rent controls, push education around affordable housing, and creating opportunities for legislators and stakeholders to engage with experts and those directly impacted by housing challenges.

Lastly, Larhonda added to the conversation that many seniors struggle with mortgages, as there are more programs for rent relief than for mortgage assistance. She suggested creating more mortgage programs to help seniors avoid losing their homes. Additionally, she proposed an initiative focused on older adults staying in their homes, offering programs for mortgage relief, rehab, and repairs, like rental assistance programs.

Upcoming Events

Leila updated the council that the Annual Meeting is a couple of weeks away and is taking place on **January 24th, 2025** at the **Town Center City Club**. This meeting will be an official Board meeting. The members were asked to connect and build relationships with partners and spread awareness on SSSEVA services.

Lastly, Leila announces that our 2nd Annual Gala will take place on **March 7th, 2025** at the **Neon House in Downtown Norfolk**. It is a new location with a unique atmosphere. As the date of the comes closer, Leila emphasized the importance of sponsorships for the Gala and encourages the council to reach out to potential sponsors.

Adjourn

With no further questions or business, **Caryn West** asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by **Larhonda Ross**, seconded by **Brenda Cobb** and **all were in favor**.