

Service Advisory Council & Strategic Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 20th, 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, COO	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 **11.25.24 SAC Meeting Minutes**.

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

Senior Services Update

Steve started the meeting with updating the council on the **Annual Meeting** which took place on **January 24, 2025**. Steve informed the council that the meeting was a success with a very good turnout and a very pleased crowd. He also mentioned that Brad, Brigid and Herb were given recognition for their dedicated service to the organization and seniors in the community.

Steve announced progress with establishing a foundation and is making moves to understanding available options. Steve explained that he would like to present a more detailed

proposal during the next Executive Committee meeting, with the goal of having an established plan to present to the board in April. The Board will decide whether to proceed with the foundation, and, if approved, the strategic plan will be fully implemented. If approved, the foundation could potentially launch around the same time next year.

Regarding finances, most of the estate funds have been received. However, Chartway funding is expected to arrive soon, totaling approximately \$100,000. The team is ready to allocate the funds as directed by the board once approval is given.

Next, Steve mentioned that DARS provided an update on the Area Plan, noting significant changes this year that will require starting from scratch. The council's input is crucial, and DARS has simplified forms to facilitate the process. While DARS is working to ease the transition, it will still be a challenge to maneuver, but the team is prepared. The Public Hearing, scheduled for June, will be a key component to the Area Plan, with input from the council, community updates, and public hearings shaping the plan. The main focus will be meeting the needs of older adults, caregivers, and veterans in the community.

Operation Update

Charnitta then presented a few updates to the council on the various departments. A new Virginia Beach meal vendor will start in March to address concerns in the Western Tidewater and Virginia Beach areas, easing pressure on the current demand for meals. The demand for home-delivered meals continues to rise, with a waitlist of 50 people, highlighting ongoing food insecurity in the older adult community.

In Transportation, the RideCo partnership remains successful, with adjustments being made based on client feedback, including slowing down the optimization process to prevent delays. The system continues to improve by managing the wide range of routes and supporting the demand for rides in our area.

In Business Development, the demand for care is growing in several areas, including the Veterans Directed Care program, which added a new counselor and reached 216 active enrollments last month. The program continues to expand, alongside updates to the Managed Care Organization program.

Hayden has partnered with Franklin Technical Works for an intergenerational program, where youth assist seniors at Hayden Village, helping with maintenance and other duties to meet service hours.

In Home Services, internal promotions have led to a new director and manager, with a supervisor position now being open as Brad retirement closes in. Brads' close training with his team has led to a smooth transition and the team is looking forward to continued growth in the department.

Lastly, the organization is also focusing on expanding homeless services and housing for older adults, with two new roles being recruited and a strategic plan underway to enhance focus on this area.

Steve then explained that the team plans to take a more targeted approach this fall when presenting to jurisdictional hearings. Instead of a general request for funding, they will focus on specific issues, like food insecurity, and provide heartfelt examples to add to the plea. This approach aims to highlight the urgent need for funding and better demonstrate the importance of the services provided.

Updates from the Community

Larhonda inquired about the MOW waitlist and how the team is communicating it to the public, as the Norfolk APS have been receiving many calls regarding MOWs and need to find a resource to direct seniors to. Charnitta answered that the team is actively adding to the MOW waitlist and has reopened it after a brief hold in November. They are transparent with the public, explaining there is no guaranteed timeframe for service and offering emergency food resources when needed. Clients are also connected to food banks and other community services as appropriate.

Steve suggested to LaRhonda that it would be beneficial for her to attend and present at a jurisdictional hearing or sign a letter of support to emphasize the need for jurisdictional backing on food insecurity. LaRhonda agreed to attend and will also provide relevant statistics for the letter. She also shared information about a Winter Shelter initiative led by faith-based communities, which would help to support the homeless initiative.

Steve then asked George Fleming if he could think of any influential individuals connected with the merger of ODU and EVMS and who he thinks would be a great addition to the board. He emphasized the need for a diverse range of players, noting that EVMS and ODU as a good place to start. George Fleming noted Steve's request and will follow up with potential EVMS/ODU contacts. Leila will provide George with additional details about the Board and a Board Packet to share with potential candidates.

Steve also presented to the council a proposal that was brought to him a few months ago for an affordable senior housing project in Norfolk that includes 24 tiny houses. He plans to rework the proposal and will bring it to the Full Board in April for input and approval. If approved, the project would be a multi-year effort, with the organization potentially taking the lead. Housing remains a key focus, and support, along with an outlined budget, will be important for moving forward with the project.

Brenda Cobb also added to the conversation that she will be hosting her annual **Mother's Day celebration** for all who have lost their mothers. The celebration will be held **May 3rd at the Holiday Inn on 39th Street in Virginia Beach** with more details to come about this event. Steve expressed deep gratitude for Brenda's dedication and initiative, praising her for recognizing and addressing a critical need.

Upcoming Events

Leila announced that our **2nd Annual Gala** is only 2 weeks away and will take place on **March 7th, 2025** at the **Neon House in Downtown Norfolk**. The team has already chosen a menu, decorations have been finalized, and now the Gala is in the final stages. As the date comes closer, Leila informs the members that there are approximately 60 individual tickets left to reach the 200-attendee goal. Leila asked the council to contact any partners or individuals that they think might be interested in the Gala and direct them to our website to purchase tickets.

Adjourn

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