

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

### Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, June 28, 2007

#### COMMISSIONERS

(The names of those present are highlighted)

**Commissioner Hilda M. Barg**  
**Commissioner Sharon Bulova**  
Commissioner Gerald E. Connolly, NVRC Vice Chairman  
Commissioner W. S. Covington, III  
**Commissioner Joan Cross**  
**Commissioner Steve DeBenedittis**  
Commissioner Joan DuBois  
**Commissioner Barbara A. Favola, NVRC Chairman**  
**Commissioner Penelope A. Gross**  
**Commissioner Catherine Hudgins**  
**Commissioner Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.**  
Commissioner Harold Lippman  
Commissioner Elaine N. McConnell  
Commissioner Martin E. Nohe  
Commissioner Harry J. Parrish, II, NVRC Treasurer  
**Commissioner Redella S. Pepper**  
**Commissioner M. Jane Seeman**  
Commissioner Paul C. Smedberg  
**Commissioner Linda Smyth**  
Commissioner Stephen Snow  
Commissioner J. Walter Tejada  
Commissioner William J. Treuting, Jr.  
**Commissioner Bruce E. Tulloch**  
Commissioner Kristen C. Umstatt  
**Commissioner Fred E. Yohey, Jr.**

**County of Prince William**  
**County of Fairfax**  
County of Fairfax  
County of Prince William  
**City of Fairfax**  
**Town of Herndon**  
County of Fairfax  
**County of Arlington**  
**County of Fairfax**  
**County of Fairfax**  
**Town of Purcellville**  
City of Falls Church  
County of Fairfax  
County of Prince William  
City of Manassas  
**City of Alexandria**  
**Town of Vienna**  
City of Alexandria  
**County of Fairfax**  
County of Loudoun  
County of Arlington  
City of Manassas Park  
**County of Loudoun**  
Town of Leesburg  
**Town of Dumfries**

#### STAFF PRESENT

G. Mark Gibb  
Linda M. Tenney  
Heather Shackley  
Ken Billingsley  
Barbara Gordon  
Todd Huntley  
Doug Pickford  
David Schwengel  
Michelle Simmons  
Debbie Spiliotopoulos  
James Van Zee

Executive Director  
Deputy Director  
Executive Assistant  
Director, Demographics  
Director, Communications  
HIV/AIDS Resource Specialist  
Director, Environmental and Heritage Resources  
Director, Regional Emergency Planning Services  
Director, Human Services  
Senior Environmental Planner  
Director, Regional Planning Services

#### GUESTS PRESENT

Susan Beeman  
Bruce Bennett  
Katie Boyle  
Michael Gilmore, Ph.D.  
Anne Heald  
Dennis Hunt, Ph.D.  
Patricia Mook, RN, MSN, CNA, BC  
Davene Nelson, LCSW  
Shirley Repta, Ph.D.  
Sue Rowland  
Addison Smith  
Leslie Weisman, MSW, LCSW  
Liz Wixson, LCSW

Fairfax-Falls Church CSB Representative for Mason District  
Hunter Mill Road Traffic Calming Committee  
Fairfax County Staff  
Alexandria CSB  
Center for Multicultural Human Services  
Executive Director, Center for Multicultural Human Services  
AVP, Chief Nurse Executive, INOVA Mount Vernon Hospital  
Fairfax-Falls Church CSB  
INOVA Mount Vernon and Fairfax Hospitals  
SR Consulting, Inc.  
Fairfax County Resident  
Client Services Entry Supervisor for the Arlington CSB  
Director of Acute Care for the Alexandria CSB

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Favola called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

ROLL CALL The roll was called and all members present or absent were noted for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Commissioner Barg moved approval of the minutes of the May 24, 2007 meeting. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION PANEL DISCUSSION OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Chairman Favola introduced the guest speakers who had been invited to provide the Commission with information on mental health issues in Northern Virginia.

*Liz Wixson* Ms. Wixson defined mental health and provided some statistics on the occurrence of mental illness. She noted that barriers to treatment include the stigma associated with mental illness, access to treatment, and that the symptoms themselves can be barriers. Ms. Wixson stressed that services need to exist and be available. The consequences of a lack of available services may include tragedies such as the Virginia Tech shootings as well as low productivity, and financial consequences, estimated to be \$100 billion, for untreated mental illness. Seventy percent of inmates in local jails have had mental illness issues. There is also increased emergency room treatment because of lack of adequate access.

*Dennis Hunt* Dr. Hunt noted the enormous disparity in services received by immigrants and those in low-income situations. Immigrants from war-torn countries are dealing with a host of trauma-related issues. In addition, many are living in severe poverty, in high-crime neighborhoods, are uncertain over their immigration status, face language barriers, and no longer have extended family networks. Children must deal with trauma, poverty, and language and education deficits. Adjustment problems manifest themselves in domestic violence, gang involvement, poor parenting, school failure, unemployment, homelessness, social isolation, self-destructive behavior, physical complaints and the excessive use of the emergency room.

Dr. Hunt observed that the solution is for the mental health community to be proactive, to connect with the community, put together preventive programs, deal with issues which are "in front" such as eviction or school expulsion, and to find staff who come from the same cultural backgrounds as the immigrants. In addition, staff must be trained to work with clients who are children, those who are experiencing severe trauma, and those who are in need of multicultural services. Also, insurance is a barrier to access to mental health because the working poor don't know how to use the insurance they have. Reimbursement levels in Virginia are very poor, there is a lack of basic services available such as transportation and childcare, and there is difficulty in finding trained professionals to provide mental health services.

*Leslie Weisman* Ms. Weisman explained that there are five community service boards in Northern Virginia and each has a slightly different way in which people access services. She explained how access to mental health services works in Arlington County and the steps which are taken to ensure quality care.

*Addison Smith* Mr. Smith provided the Commission with a family perspective on mental illness. Mr. Smith's wife has been diagnosed with bi-polar disorder/manic depression. He spoke about how Virginia mental health laws are interpreted in Fairfax County and explained how the civil commitment process works. He noted that the privacy laws, designed to protect patients, inhibit the family's ability to help and to learn about prognosis, prescribed medicines, or patient status such as location. Mr. Smith encouraged Commission

*Questions &  
Answers*

members to seek mental health reform in Virginia. He observed that issues with the mental health system need to be resolved in order to prevent future tragedies.

Chairman Favola asked the panel to comment on Mr. Smith's experiences and suggestions. Ms. Weisman noted that the Code of Virginia is interpreted in vastly different ways throughout Virginia. She noted that local agencies need to be creative in their response. In addition, psychiatric advance directives, which allow the family to guide and participate in the treatment, are increasingly being discussed. In response to a question from Commissioner Bulova about how his wife would react to an advance directive, Mr. Smith noted that that would not work in his situation. In a follow-up question, Commissioner Bulova asked how advance directives would be enforced; Mr. Smith cited examples from other states which have court-ordered medication compliance following hospitalization.

Commissioner Gross commented on the apparent disparity in process among jurisdictions in Northern Virginia and asked why it is easier in Arlington than it is in Fairfax. Mr. Smith expressed his opinion that the sense in Arlington is that the judges are a part of a team approach, whereas in Fairfax, the judges see themselves as adversaries of the petitioners (family members) in involuntary commitment hearings.

Commissioner Hudgins noted that there needs to be consistency in the way this process is addressed. There needs to be training for the special justices and a clarification of their role. In addition, there must be an acknowledgement of the need for comprehensive services in the community. Finally, the local jurisdictions and the region need to equate the cost of delivering services with the cost of not delivering services.

Several commissioners shared personal stories about their extended families' experiences in the mental health system. It was shared that privacy laws often prohibited family members from seeking treatment for their loved ones because the patients were adults. It was noted that there needs to be a federal solution to this issue, and that Commissioners should contact federal representatives for assistance. Finally, it was expressed that the Commission's legislative packet should include a priority on increasing the number of mental health beds in Northern Virginia.

Commissioner Bulova stated that the Commission is committed to pursue why the system is so adversarial and to make changes to improve it.

In her concluding comments, Commissioner Favola expressed her desire to work to make the situation better in Northern Virginia and the need to encourage reform at the state level. She encouraged Commission members to discuss this issue within their membership groups. She then thanked the speakers, particularly Mr. Smith, for his strength in sharing such a personal story. She also thanked the Commissioners who helped to assemble tonight's program.

**CONSENT AGENDA** Commissioner Tulloch moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items outlined below. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

- A. Financial Reports for May 2007
- B. Resolution No. P07-27: Authorization to Submit a Grant Proposal to the Federal Highways Administration to Develop the Northern Virginia Regional Environmental Framework
- C. Resolution No. P07-28: Authorization to Submit a Grant Proposal to the US Environmental Protection Agency Region III Source Reduction Assistance Program to Improve the Management of Discarded Mercury Lamps and Electronics

- D. Resolution No. P07-29: Authorization for the Executive Director to Accept Funding from the National Park Service to Provide Technical Assistance in the Development of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in Virginia

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT

Mr. Gibb distributed a copy of his report. Highlights include:

- Water Supply Study Update: NVRC staff briefed the region's health directors earlier this month on the Regional Water Supply Plan. Environmental health staff were enthusiastic about providing data for the study; NVRC will "pilot" the data gathering methodology with Fairfax County.
- German Marshall Fund Forum: Mr. Gibb recently spoke to the Foundation Leadership Network at a forum sponsored by the German Marshall Fund. The overarching theme of the forum was Urban & Regional Policy Challenges.
- MMRS Update: Northern Virginia completed the development phase of the Metropolitan Medical Response System expansion in March, and is engaged in the first step of the sustainment phase. Arrangements for the purchase and storage of pharmaceuticals are still being finalized. Need to diversify funding streams to include national MMRS funding and a local funding option.
- Ryan White Update: Ryan White vendor subcontracts are being amended to incorporate the Supplemental Funds awarded to Virginia. Advance funds are anticipated to be on hand at NVRC by July 6, 2007. The Northern Virginia HIV Consortium finished prioritizing types of services and funding allocations a full month ahead of schedule.
- VAPDC Summer Conference will be held July 18-20 in Virginia Beach. Sessions include Rural Economic Development, Regional Tourism Promotion, Water Supply Issues for Virginia, and Energy Conservation/Climate Change. Hon. James Webb is the featured speaker at conference. Commissioner Tulloch is the current president of Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions.
- Regional Stormwater Education Campaign: "The Call" radio ad, featuring a tough-talking stormdrain, ran approximately 950 times during March and April 2007. Surveys were conducted before and after the ad ran to assess its effectiveness. 2008 focus will be on developing bi-lingual promotional material to promote recycling used motor oil.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Solid Waste Survey found that the regional recycling rate increased to almost 36%, that all except one jurisdiction offer electronics and household hazardous materials recycling and that collection fees vary widely between jurisdictions. Jurisdictions report that commercial and multifamily sectors are the greatest challenge to increased recycling, and that construction and demolition debris in the municipal waste stream is a problem.
- NVRC in History: Today marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Barbara Booker, NVRC's Accounting Data Manager, who began her service with the Commission in 1972.

Mr. Gibb also noted that Jim Van Zee, NVRC's Director of Regional Planning Services, is leaving to take a position with the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, working on the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project.

FY 2008 BUDGET  
AND WORK PLAN

Commissioner Bulova introduced the FY 2008 budget in place of Operations Committee Chairman, Hal Parrish. Commissioner Bulova noted that a letter from the Executive Director Mark Gibb, summarizing the budget document, was placed at the table.

Commissioner Bulova noted that some of the highlights of the budget document include NVRC's discontinued support of the NVTAs now that it has funding and are organizing themselves. However, the Commission anticipates that it will be requesting reimbursement of approximately \$12,000 in transitional costs from NVTAs. With this budget, the three year phase in of the increase in dues is complete. In addition, there is \$50,000 allocated for web design and web development, which had been previously discussed. Commissioner Bulova noted that this budget does not include a COLA, but there is funding in the budget

for a new salary plan, which will be brought before the Commission at its next meeting. This new salary plan is based on merits and benchmarking and represents a change in policy wherein COLAs would be eliminated and staff would be provided with a different type of compensation.

Commissioner Bulova moved adoption of the FY 2008 Budget and Work Plan. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE  
REPORTS  
*Communications*

NVRC Communications Director, Barbara Gordon, reported the following items on behalf of Commissioner Smedberg:

The NVRC website redesign plans are moving forward. An RFP was issued in the spring, eight vendors responded, and three top offerors were interviewed. A staff review committee, which included participation by a member of Fairfax County's IT Department, concluded that Civic Plus, in Manhattan, Kansas, was the vendor of choice. The next step will be to negotiate with Civic Plus on contract price, final scope of work, and timeline.

For the past five years, NVRC staff have designed and maintained the NVTA website. NVTA launched its own website earlier this week.

The Regional Stormwater Education Campaign ads, as mentioned in the Executive Director's report, ran over 900 times this spring encouraging residents to put "only rain down the drain."

Media outreach by NVRC during the past month has included news releases about the Four Mile Run cleanup day, and about the regional waste survey results. News stories about NVRC programs continue to appear in various media outlets.

Staff drafted a communications strategy for the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions to help coordinate publicity about issues such as regional government legislative initiatives.

*Energy*

Commissioner Lazaro reported that he met last week with NVRC staff about developing a strategy for the *ad hoc* Energy Committee. Action items from that meeting include:

- Examination of the State code with respect to barriers and what can be changed.
- Commissioner Lazaro and NVRC's Director of Environmental and Heritage Resources, Doug Pickford, will participate on an SCC energy efficiency panel.
- Exploration of grant sources for regional distribution of compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Increased educational efforts.
- Making use of website tools such as those used on the Home Depot website that allow consumers to see how much energy can be saved by employing simple strategies.
- Participation in the Global Climate Change conference next spring.

ELECTION OF  
OFFICERS

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Commissioner Bulova, moved election of officers as follows:

**Chairman** Gerald Connolly  
**Vice Chairman** Harry J. "Hal" Parrish, II  
**Treasurer** Martine E. Nohe

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bulova presented Chairman Favola with a gift on behalf of the members and staff, and thanked Chairman Favola for her skillful guidance during the past two years.

- OTHER BUSINESS
- Commissioner Lazaro noted that towns in Northern Virginia have gotten together to discuss transportation issues in light of recent changes to NVTA. One of the concerns that has been raised is the impact of NVTA on NVRC. NVRC has been an important player in NVTA and NVRC should not be left behind. Commissioner Lazaro expressed his concern that the process is going in the wrong direction quickly; he hopes that NVTA will slow down a little bit and recognize the importance of NVRC.

Commissioner Bulova expressed her concern over duplication of effort; that a new organization is being created as an advisory group to NVTA which has the same composition as NVRC, and questioned whether this is really the best idea.

Commissioner Tulloch noted that there is a lot of concern in Loudoun County with NVTA and the fast-paced approach that is being taken. The Chairman of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors asked Commissioner Tulloch to raise two points tonight regarding NVTA: 1) In light of the fact that NVTA has not yet adopted its governance bylaws, why is NVTA already advertising for an Executive Director? 2) While it is important to get this job done, it is also important that NVTA be respectful of NVRC and allow NVRC and NVTA to have a dialogue.

Commissioner Tulloch further expressed that the citizens of Loudoun County are troubled by the way NVTA is proceeding. The County is particularly concerned with the financial aspects of this arrangement. Today, one of the debt rating agencies reported to the County that the debt that will be incurred by NVTA will be overlapping debt which will go against local jurisdiction debt capacity. Commissioner Tulloch emphasized that while Loudoun County is in favor of regional perspectives and transportation issues, overlapping debt would be devastating for Loudoun County. Loudoun County wants to walk in lock-step with Northern Virginia but cannot do so at the peril of building schools.

Chairman Favola expressed her feeling that Commission members need to go back to their jurisdictional representatives on NVTA and voice two concerns: 1) There is a question about whether or not NVRC could serve as the advisory committee that NVTA appears to be creating and; 2) There is a question about the allocation of debt to local governments which could count against debt capacity. Chairman Favola said that she would call Chris Zimmerman, Chairman of NVTA and her colleague on the Arlington County Board to discuss this issue.

Commissioner Tulloch suggested that the region should take a stance that the State should be responsible for debt that is issued by NVTA because legislation was enabled the without the funds to support it.

- Commissioner DeBenedittis expressed his concern that the presentation to the Commission on May 24, 2007, on the topic of illegal immigration, was not impartial as was promised. His feeling was that the presentation was an advocacy-type presentation without accurate information about what is happening in the Town of Herndon. Chairman Favola acknowledged Commissioner DeBenedittis' comments and noted that the Commission needs to counsel its committees, when preparing programs, to be sensitive to all sides of an issue.

ADJOURNMENT      There being no further business, Chairman Favola adjourned the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

G. Mark Gibb  
Executive Director

Approved by:

Barbara A. Favola  
Chairman