



## VA Caucus Minutes June 24, 2021; 1-4 pm Via Zoom

### Attendance:

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Lisa Barton	AppCAA	Angela Stephens	Fahe
Renetta Robinette	AppCAA	Colby Lilly	Fahe
Samantha Livesay	CHP	Jackie Weiss	Fahe
Andy Kegley	HOPE, Inc.	Jim King	Fahe
Jordan Atwood	HOPE, Inc.	Joshua Stewart	Fahe
Jamie Gross	People, Inc.	Drew Pritchard	Fahe
Cherry Wilson	SERCAP	Jose Quinonez	Fahe/PRT
Lisa Porter	Guest - BRHA	Katy Stigers	Fahe
Lynn Pannell	Guest - BRHA	Pam Johnson	Fahe
Jeanie Barbrow	Guest - USDA RD	Sara Morgan	Fahe
Cliff Millirons	Guest - VH	Ted Boyatt	Fahe
Sam Hanks	Guest - VH	Vonda Poynter	Fahe
Brian Koziol	Guest - VHA	Christina Tetrick	UChi, Inst.of Politics, Intern
Molly Jacobson	Guest - VHA	Claire Silberman	App CARES AC/VISTA
Alex Dadok	Fahe	Sarah Weintraub	Fahe AmeriCorps

**5 of 5 Members present = 100% Attendance!**

- 1) **Welcome and Special Guest Introductions** (Jamie Gross, Vonda Poynter)  
Jeanie Barbrow, USDA RD; Cliff Millirons, Sam Hanks – VH; Molly Jacobson, Brian Koziol, VHA; Lynn Pannell, BRHA
- 2) **Review Previous Minutes and Action Items** - Andy moved that minutes be approved as presented, Cherry seconded, all approved.
- 3) **REED & NeighborWorks Tableau Fellowship** – Katy Stigers  
Wants to share the NWA training with Members, tell our impact stories better! Sara M. and Katy talks about the information asked of Fahe, but we don't track unless it is meaningful. We want to track and measure what we want to. Tableau is a good tool and we want to determine how best to use it. Thank you to CHP and their recent presentation on Tableau. REED committee – **Research, Evaluation, Evaluation, Data Committee – REED**. With the Fellowship comes some funding – want to provide Members that participate in a shared impact practice, we will share a license for Tableau (need the right technology and a person to invest time and effort). Another example for research related activity – University of Georgia request – what might be available for the Members. See Memo Attached. Your knowledge and expertise should be compensated for. If funded, will form an advisory board and you will be compensated as an expectation even if not all of your time is covered. Foster work across the network. Invitation to research work – elevate this work but need the Members to form the questions that a funder might ask, that we could answer. Communicate by July 1 via Vonda/Jackie if interested in joining.  
Jamie – information is worth something – good thing to have the stipend.  
Andy – any ideas on model projects of best practices?  
Katy proposed “how Fahe as a network is doing on some housing areas”. Loan Servicing delinquency rates were low – some due to stimulus, but some because they were e in

affordable homes. Important to know if we are helping build equity. Supports Fahe's case building efforts as to why we do what we do and makes a difference in people's lives. Supports Fahe advocacy work and our ability to fundraise and impact yours Members/our ability to fundraise. Create space for us to ask better questions. We have an opportunity to get really good information – need to ask better questions – we need to show what we know to be true with evidence. Provide a flavor to build a bridge for case building.

#### 4) **Health Initiative – Ballard Collaboration Update** (Andy Kegley)

There was an article and shelter force just came out over the weekend and, as a result of that, it was an interview that I think they interviewed certain people back in the winter. I hadn't seen it but some friends of mine in Northern Virginia with the Northern Virginia housing Alliance, read it and got in touch with me and they're looking for some of us to be participating in a little online panel to talk with people in Fairfax about what we've done with Ballard. I think that's kind of fascinating that Northern Virginia housers and healthcare providers want to know what we're doing out here in SW Virginia and NE TN with Ballard so if anybody's interested in that I can certainly forward you the information that they've sent me but they've scheduled this meeting for 7/22 at 2:30 pm.

Ballad has dedicated a new person Rebecca Stilton as our contact.

At HOPE, doing a piece of work with intakes, particularly from Smythe Co. Any intakes that we're getting we're asking if there's a health related cause to the problem that's presenting whether it's rents or repairs or homelessness, whatever if we hear if we hear the intake person, identify that there's a health issue that's part of the cause of what's causing them to be looking for assistance. We're flagging it and we're doing a little bit of dedicated financial assistance in Smythe Co. and with Wythe Co., with both the anticipation of the Ballard funds as well as some with Bland Foundation monies we have here that can sort of tailor it for the same, goal of addressing health and housing at the same time. It'll be really interesting to see what all the different Members that seven or eight different participants in the Ballard footprint, come up because none of none of us do the same thing right with those funds so I'm, I'm kind of excited about it where it will end up.

#### 5) **State Legislative Updates** (Andy Kegley, Brian Koziol) - moved up on the agenda

Brian - We did make an ask of the administration to dedicate **10% of the AARP funding to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**, 0% of that is 430 million. We didn't get a No, we didn't get a yes. But there's a there's a foot in the door and they, they know that that is what we're going to be working with a legislator on in this special session in August. Our thinking there was that, politically, it's like the most viable route to go and just try and get a chunk of resources and put it in trust fund in them work with DHCD to figure out how best to allocate that in the coming know those funds. They need to be used within three years. So, how to, deploy those in the interim.

The other update was that there is finally been some consensus around or achieved around the **Opportunity Housing tax credit**. There was some language here, that was added to the bill by conference committee staff that really kind of limited what we had an intended. So, essentially what we have is a state opportunity housing tax credit. \$15 million a year for five years so a total allocation of \$75 million. So we'll be back this January to stand up something that is kind of a pilot program.

Josh: Brian on that, 10% of the states, they RP money on the job, any language to DHCD or the administration about a carve out just for admin to build capacity and not as of yet, we are, that is certainly something that we're that we're working on, just like the capacity component is definitely in their worth trying to figure out how best to move forward with that.

Brian: We're trying to figure out how best to move forward with that. And will you will we

know before the General Assembly gets together in August about what the governor's proposal is or will it be on. I think he's budget goes to print at the end of this week. Soon after, I don't know when it's going to be is, is the proposal is going to be released. I've been hearing, two different things. One is that the funding so half of it will be allocated in this special session and then half will be in January so I'm still trying to figure out exactly what is going on, nobody seems to know to be to be totally transparent. We were told this is not the only opportunity. As soon as we get a budget we can make sure that you all have a copy of it as well.

Josh: Yeah we ought to be positioning to talk to our very small delegation of legislators but maybe more importantly a Duane Yancey threat of Thompson, get him to help us because I'm pretty sure he would happily write a tutorial or Alex and crew, help us write an editorial, or both.

Brian: Yes, we can you know we can certainly assist with that, in terms of, you know, drafting an op ed. So, you know, you would like to eat the author of that we can happily provide you with a draft that, but yeah so once we get. We are going to be putting in drafting talking points and distributing and starting our kind of our legislative advocacy in July.

## **6) Member Discussion - American Rescue Plan, other Federal funds**

Vonda - Call with folks at DHCD about the American rescue plan funding, what their thoughts were we I have reached out to Willie Fobbs to see if there's an opportunity for CHDO organizations across Virginia . One of the things that came up in the DHCD conversation was in the home for homelessness, was the fact that there's not a total set aside required, but if, if, Virginia DHCD chose to set aside funding for CHDO, would they participate. So that's one of the follow ups that I don't have currently.

Tossed this to Jim yesterday because there's been this bigger conversation about how can we make this money work for Fahe Member/organizations to be stronger in three years by the use of this money. How do we, how does it need to be invested best with the organization so we build capacity and are stronger, going forward.

Jim: I think we're all aware and you may want to chime in here as well, because in my mind we started a conversation with all the caucuses and we've been we've been looking at sort of a boilerplate approach to how to how to approach each state with the enormity of resources coming in. I think the that where we saw that, where we started those conversations first was in Kentucky and we were hearing they were hiring like 70 people they have temps and all kinds of stuff and it just seemed a waste of resources for our good partners at the state level. Chasing down people to do stuff when, when I think there's a real delivery capacity with different caucuses as well as it would be a lost opportunity if some of this money didn't help build our capacity for the, for the future. I think Andy took some initiative then to reach out to the staff at DHCD and set up the call that that bond to just reference that we were all on and I think it was a really positive call I think we got a really good reaction about like yes they would be interested in hearing ideas and partnering. The time is ripe! So Vonda I assume that what you want is a conversation so I don't want to say much more but I would invite Andy to add anything else to it if I missed something, something of value there.

Andy, Need to use the money right because we will never see it again there is a lot of pressure on the HOME program federally to just completely get rid of the CHDO set aside because of the issues that are just having with folks, not using the total money, so let's let's all get the word out that that's there and get it spent.

**Rental Assistance program** is pushing out dollars.

Lynn: We have applied as landlord on behalf of quite a few of our tenants who are behind in rental payments. And we've had quite a few to be approved we've received money already from them. The application has changed as the pots of money has changed there's been the first application wasn't too bad. And then the second one

wasn't too bad and now it's quite a bear. I'm thankful to be able to apply for that because our, our average tenant could not do that application maneuvering through that they just could not trying to work on their phone as most of them do they just they just couldn't do it. Also through our Envision center, have been able to help some private landlords to access the money on behalf of their tenants who are behind. Some of our landlords are really having a hard time through all of this, they're, they're the ones who've had real difficulty.

Andy: And the Legal Aid office is doing the same thing when the state of Virginia, I think, but yeah, as you were speaking in an email bounced or landed from legal aid, talking about the eviction extension.

Lynn: Legal Aid is also going to be having some time in our envision center so expanding, what they do and serving folks down in this way so we're in good contact with legal aid, it's a good partnership.

What about **Homeowner Assistance Fund**? Treasury is asking everybody plans for how you use them, and I just hadn't heard anything coming from, from Virginia I didn't know if that was our not.

Brian: So nobody knows anything about that Homeowners Asst. Fund.

Molly: I've heard Virginia Housing is working on putting together their outline to submit, but I think that's as far as they've gotten.

Lynn: We've heard that too. We were approached by the City of Bristol here and to partner with them. And so we were given about \$65,000, to help with the Rental Relief Program, but it also does cover mortgage relief. So for those of our folks who on that does have to be the City of Bristol who were having rent problems or mortgage problems directly resulting from covered we were able to help them through the Envision center with that, we have those funds.

Andy: There been a few emergency housing vouchers issued by Virginia housing for homeless individuals but they have to run through the continuum of care. And, there has been an MOU between the PHA or whoever's administering the Section 8 vouchers, with the continuum of care.

Lynn: All the training that we've had about these emergency vouchers indicate that they have to be used in our service area so referrals could come from anywhere but the vouchers would have to be used here in Bristol. There's a lot of differences this program rolled out very quickly and they said that if we have any ideas, let them know. I've never heard that coming from HUD before right so that was really odd, but they did say it twice. It's a quick done program, we've been told that if we use things we could probably get more.

## **7) Around the Horn – Staffing issues – new staff, needed staff**

Jamie: Hired a temp with Homeownership – HUD certified staff is short and limits capacity to spend down funds from the ARPA. Having a difficult time finding staff. Temps are difficult.

Andy – interviewing for a new position – Housing Program Director – have one prospect – lost another counselor to People, Inc. in the CARES program. It is hard to find people who know anything about housing counseling. Would love to think about how to build that bench.

Lisa Barton, new Executive Director of the Appalachian Community Action Agency – staffing – just hired a new Finance Director; looking to hire a couple of staff as some of these monies are coming down. Weatherization program – advertising through a temp service for a year – only a couple of inquiries.

Lynn noted they have a couple of temps and an intern. New Director of Transportation – need bus drivers – no extra anywhere. Seeing difficulty in several areas.

Cherry – Beth Pusha is no longer over the Housing/Development Dept. (moved to loan

dept.); interviews this week. At this time we're hiring for a Director of Housing and Community. Hoping that candidates will show up for appointment.

Jamie noted people are not showing up for interviews.

Samantha: Our homeownership division is the four of us that have been on staff have been a team for six years now so within our home ownership division, we're not experiencing any type of employment or hiring challenges. However we have 400 employees in our maintenance and property management, I think we're having trouble with our property management staff too we're struggling there.

## **8) USDA Updates (Jeannie Barbrow)**

American Rescue Plan – refinancing 248 loans in the next few months, but can reduce to a lower interest rate and help them be better homeowners. It's huge. Hope to open office in August, slowly open; state director anticipated mid-July. 504 and 502 funds still available – will have until the end of the year, but 502 will likely run out/thin August – likely run out. Right now money in everything. HPG applications/NOSA. New to Jeanie, moved to SF a month or so ago. Open until July 9<sup>th</sup>! Plan is to be scored quickly. Jackie shared on Innovation Matters Newsletter that have a couple of funding applications that may be of interest from Anne Herring at USDA.

## **9) Advocacy (Alex Dadok, Josh Stewart)**

- a. Josh – Federal updates – ARPA funding – HOME for Homeless – we know that we will not see regulations until the new Federal FY. Some HUD staff noted that the Sec. Office isn't happy with the time of the rollout of the program, would like for that to move more quickly. Certainly not later than the end of the FY. Eligibility on the HOME for Homeless – 5 definitions – 2 are McKinney Vento (30% AMI) and hoping that the catchall of housing instability. Asking that HUD not to restrict to 30% AMI and work with state level partners also maintained maximum flexibility. Talking to HUD to keep them out of it, have heard that they are not restricting in any way but let the states decide.

HAF – related income limit issue – create a priority for service for HH making less than the national median income (Yay!) Treasury putt a ceiling of 150% of AMI – they didn't have to but Advocacy has been banging on the door to make them aware that they negated the intent of Congress and have made thousands of HH ineligible – we are expecting that they will roll back the eligibility ceiling and may be corrected in the regulations. We have been digging in this year and this is the work of the income eligibility issue from the Members with BPPC.

Infrastructure – back and forth – blown past deadlines – bipartisan, democratic deal. First bill that may be passed will be hard or traditional infrastructure, not housing (part of earlier conversations); however, building out rural broadband will be included. A meaningful investment of \$45 to \$100B for rural buildout. Bipartisan bill this morning is \$45-\$65B. Serious broadband discussion and we are watching.

- b. Reenergize Southwest VA, Public Comments to VA Dept. of Mines, Minerals and Energy due Sept. 30. Energy Affordability, Workforce Issues Listening Session Rept.
- c. Hiring update – Still looking for a director of advocacy. Hired a SW Virginia for a leadership development director – Andrea Hash from Virginia, he will start mid-July. If anyone has any ideas/recommendations, send them to [adadok@fahe.org](mailto:adadok@fahe.org)

## **10) Communications – Ted Boyatt**

Alex introduced the new Director. Wide variety of experience, recruitment and setting procedures and media practices. Topline message redevelopment and rebranding to note our identity to our external audiences in a succinct message. Work pipelines and an overhauled web presence. Good guidance from a handful of Members, lots of opportunities to provide support to Members -

Alex shared a shout-out to Shannan Howley, AmeriCorps-VISTA Summer Associate, Christina Tetrick, Institute of Politics intern from the University of Chicago; last meeting for our AmeriCorps Sarah Weintraub and Appalachia Cares AmeriCorps-VISTA Clair Silberman.

**11) Caucus Chair Election for 2022** Jamie has agreed that she will serve again. And if that's the pleasure of the caucus, but she also noted that you know someone else's interested please speak up. We can certainly vote and make that and make our decision. Cherry moved to nominate Jamie to serve another term as Caucus Chair, Samantha seconded the motion, all approved!

**12) Nominating Committee Discussion** (Samantha Livesay) We met a few weeks ago just to kind of to kind of put out the expectations of the committee and then how will be moving forward with the nominations for caucus chairs. I don't believe I have anything to share at this point, Working on the committee to have a better understanding of:

- a. Who is interested in serving?
- b. How hard is it to fill your Board seats and other commitments, like Caucus Chair?
- c. What would make the lift easier?

We will survey the caucus on these questions.

**13) Virginia Housing Updates** (Cliff Millirons, Sam Hanks)

Cliff: Our offices are still close to the public and probably another couple months probably until September. We are however working very diligently on my dad, from our offices to help people. We've had grant money become available directly to the planning district Commission's throughout the state. It was substantial I'm talking about quite a bit of money to save, and the flexibility is really the key to this, the PTC can have been can identify projects within their service area, and they can work directly with the folks that have projects that need assistance. We are continuing to work with the relief program that is handled out of Richmond, but they're having a lot of success with that. Sam: Homeownership is BUSY; we're just doing as much business as we can do as quickly as we can. On the rental side here in SW Virginia we have quite a few large projects in process and only got maybe three that's actually bricks and mortar at this point, the one of the problems that we're running into, I'm sure this to diverse but with getting contractors to commit to a contract obviously the because to do a project contract cost is basically what we need to approve alone. Because of the volatility in the lumber prices of building materials in general, it's very difficult for a contract to say, well I'll do this build this project for X number of dollars but he don't know what his cars are going to be. That's a real problem but it appears based on future contracts remember that at least lumber will be coming down significantly in the coming months, that's what I understand.

**14) Fahe Updates – Memo Attached**

- a. No Board Report - both representatives had to leave the meeting (Andy, Jake)
- b. Member Updates (Vonda) - In our conversations with the Membership Committee, we are doing evaluations on Membership now as renewal season is here. We're working through just reviewing the memberships adherence to kind of the three things that we always talked about that are, you know, are the compliance pieces one Have you paid your dues and have you submitted all your documents. We also look at the participation, are you attending caucus meetings, Spring retreat, Annual meeting. The third leg of that compliance is reporting, are you reporting every quarter, so that we know what you're doing, as far as some of the activities in your local communities. It's important because we compile that together so we can talk about what the Fahe network does.
  - Reporting – QE 3-31-21 - Reporting last we did really great about two quarters ago, then we've been, you know, in the kind of in the 80 80% pieces. Overall, with all the

membership lately, we would really like to make sure that as we hit into this, this fiscal year, which is the quarter ending June 30. Please make a point to get your reporting in, it's not due until the 15th of the, of the following month. So it's important that that information gets submitted.

- Membership Renewals, (Jackie Weiss) Materials went out on the 11th. Items A-D, which includes dues have a deadline of July 31 - all remaining materials no later than Aug. 31. If you haven't seen this in your inbox, please check Junk mail. Jackie can resend if needed, also, can be found on the Member website:

<https://www.fahemembers.com/member-resources/fahe-membership-renewal/>

- Annual Meeting - Really excited to see everyone in person in September. We are working out the final details of the Hotel registration site and the event registration will open up in July; watch for information coming out on that. Also watch for information on the Annual Awards, we look to the Members for nominations, please be thinking about who you'd like to nominate!

Registration opens around 9:30 on the first day (Tues. 9/21) but the meeting doesn't start until Noon. The Membership Meeting is the first thing on the agenda after lunch, that's the required part of the Annual Meeting for the Members.

- c. Resource Plan Working Group (Sara Morgan)- We have received about eight people who volunteered to participate in that committee and the purpose of the committee will be to inform our fundraising and investment seeking strategies, so that we're aligning those with the kinds of resources you are me, where we can. If anybody else is just dying to participate. Send me your name or send to Colby and we'll be more than happy to add you to the team. We should be trying to set that up in the next couple of weeks. I also wanted to address really quick reporting because I know, I know reporting probably is the bane of your existence. And I know we also recognize that the reporting that you send in only encapsulate only encompasses a small portion of the work you do but it is critically important for our ability to be able to represent the networks work in the region. When Alex and Josh and their teams are, are advocating for what's needed in the region.

d. Lending: Community Lending and JustChoice Lending

e. Jose, Partners for Rural Transformation: Issued a report of the success over the last year – case study of the 6 organizations in PRT. I think you will find it very interesting, so whenever you have time, or you want to go to sleep just take it to bed and read.

[Link to Case Study](#)

Cherry - Updates/Announcements from SERCAP:

ELI program - Entrepreneurial mind-set program; Well Fund Program - \$111,000 in Well Fund Loans by 9-15-21; DHCD review- 5 IPR programs. Lead removal. Continuing issues with contractors, materials package - \$30,000-\$40,000 more than budget. Fair Housing Training on June 30th – link/phone in the chat – call and register, it's free.

**Next Caucus Meeting** – Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021 – Per Cliff - Jackie to touch base with office to reserve the date.

### **Upcoming Events**

- **2020 MIT Student Report/Review Webinar** coming soon
- **Sept. 21/22/23 – Fahe Annual Meeting**
- **Thursday, Oct. 28** - VA Caucus Meeting

**Sept. 21-22-23 - SAVE THE DATES!!**

**2021 Fahe Annual Meeting, MeadowView Conference Center, Kingsport, TN**