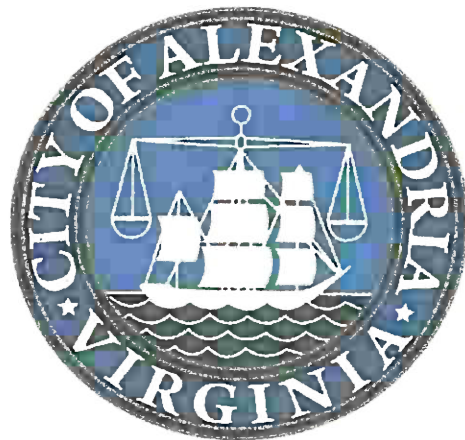


**The Alexandria Commission on Aging**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
July 2022—June 2023**

**to**

**The Alexandria City Council**



**Respectfully Submitted**

**By**

**Michael R. Schuster, Chair**

**August 2023**

# **COMMISSION ON AGING ANNUAL REPORT**

**JULY 2022—JUNE 2023**

## **SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

What an exciting year it has been for the Alexandria Commission on Aging (COA), due in great part to the COA's transition back to in-person meetings. Each committee worked assiduously to achieve the ambitious goals established in the Age Friendly Plan, the Commission's three-year strategic plan and began evaluating and planning for the next three-year strategic plan that will begin in the 2024 fiscal year.

There were numerous opportunities for commissioners to participate in weekly webinars hosted by Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), as well as monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly seminars hosted by other organizations. The Commission heard dynamic speakers from Legal Services of Northern Virginia on eviction prevention, and the Alexandria Department of Health on the Healthy Homes initiative. Commission members also attended webinars and programs to enrich their understanding of complex topics in senior affordable housing, social isolation of older adults, transportation issues pertaining to safety for older pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers as more electronic bikes and scooters became a greater part of the mix of road users in the City. The Commission succeeded in securing additional funding for the Division on Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) in the event it lost Older American Act funding due to a new intra-state funding formula.

This year the Commission celebrated Older Americans Month and honored members of the Alexandria community for their dedicated work that enhanced the lives of older members of the population. This year's Excellence in Aging award ceremony was at City Hall on June 9th, presided over by Mayor Justin Wilson.

## **Commission on Aging Liaison Commissions and Organizations**

1. Alexandria Department of Community & Human Services
2. Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services
3. Alexandria Housing Affordability Advisory Committee (AHAAC)
4. Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
5. Alexandria Adult Day Services Center
6. Alexandria Commission on Persons With Disabilities (ACPD)
7. Alexandria Commission for Women
8. Alexandria Human Rights Commission
9. Alexandria Police Department
10. Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities
11. Alexandria Transportation & Environmental Services
12. Alexandria Commission on Employment
13. Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance
14. Community Health Assessment
15. AARP
16. Arlington County Commission on Aging
17. At Home in Alexandria (AHA)
18. Alexandria Redevelopment & Housing Authority (ARHA)
19. Goodwin Living (formerly Goodwin House)
20. INOVA Alexandria Hospital
21. Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN)
22. Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
23. Public Health Advisory Committee
24. Senior Center at Charles Houston
25. Senior Services of Alexandria
26. St. Martin de Porres Senior Center
27. Successful Aging
28. VHC Health (formerly Virginia Hospital Center)

## **Outreach Committee**

The Outreach Committee is comprised of seven members. Members met five times during the July 2022 – June 2023 session. Most Outreach Committee meetings were held in-person.

During this past year, our major partner, Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA), along with its Senior Ambassadors, was instrumental in disseminating information about city services and events to older adults of Alexandria. Over 120 Senior Ambassadors have been trained by SSA, partnering with DAAS, greatly exceeding the 2021 Age Friendly Plan goal of 60. These Senior Ambassadors represent condominium communities, homeowner associations, houses of worship/faith-based communities, non-profits, businesses, and senior residences in the City of Alexandria. All Outreach Committee members have committed to becoming Senior Ambassadors as well as Dementia Friends.

In 2023, a major effort of the committee was an extensive evaluation of its accomplishments for the Alexandria Age Friendly Plan 2019 – 2021. The Committee then collaboratively made substantial progress on the development of a new plan for Outreach with four (4) proposed goals moving forward. These goals were inspired by the previous plan with the focus on social participation and communication. We hope to build on the accomplishments and lessons learned from the previous three years.

The two (2) proposed goals listed under social participation include:

1. People of diverse culture, race, color, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and persons with disabilities in Alexandria have information about and access to the range of services available in the city and are engaged in civic and community life.
2. Create inclusive services for LGBTQ older adults.

The two (2) proposed goals listed under communication include:

1. Communication about programs and services available to older Alexandrians and adults with disabilities is readily accessible to all in a variety of formats and languages and is presented in many and diverse venues.
2. Continue our relationship with SSA and establish relationships with other organizations to assist in the dissemination of information on programs and services.

Other accomplishments in the past year include:

The committee explored a new idea regarding a Mindfulness Project with the community, examining how we can create more awareness of the needs of the older adult community, and the programs that exist for them, along with an awareness of Alexandria's Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) and the Commission on Aging (COA). Older adults are at an increased level of risk for loneliness and social isolation because they are more likely to face factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness, and hearing loss. The idea is still in the planning stage and would use spaces readily accessible by the public to allow provision of information and for interaction with the community on older adult issues.

The committee collaborated with the Office of Housing on identifying and distributing information on housing specifically for older adults, including accessory dwelling units.

It used social media, radio, and news articles to bring attention to important activities and resources for older adults. SSA has actively reached out to the non-English speaking communities in the city. SSA volunteers stocked over 20 Senior Information Corners at local libraries, recreation and community centers with literature about programs and services for older adults offered by the City and non-profit agencies. SSA's Senior

Academy provided a four-week program to introduce older adults to City agencies and nonprofits, encouraging civic engagement.

SSA sponsored a monthly speaker series, as well as Senior Law Day in partnership with the Alexandria Bar Association. The Senior Law Day on June 3, 2023, was titled, “Expect the Unexpected – When Life Throws You a Curveball.” Over 150 individuals attended this year’s event.

The committee also reached out to Ebony Fleming, the new Communications Director with the City of Alexandria, to explore help with outreach and communication. Technology and the pandemic have changed some of the ways we traditionally communicate.

The committee participated as a member of the Alexandria LGBTQ+ Task Force and Initiated discussions on how the Task Force and the COA could collaborate on issues related to older LGBTQ adults. As part of its participation in the June 3, 2023, Annual Alexandria LGBTQ+ Pride Fair at City Hall, the committee updated a flyer for the DAAS table at the Pride Fair, “Older LGBTQ+ Adults – We’re in This Together!”, highlighting the need to address some of the challenges facing older (and typically hidden) LGBTQ members of our community and the role of the COA and DAAS.

Finally, DAAS conducted a successful Aging and Adult Services Town hall Meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup>, at which DAAS explained the services it provides to Alexandrians and received public comments on how to improve and expand its delivery of aging and adult services.

## **Housing Committee**

During the period July 2022 through June 2023, the COA eight (8) member Housing Committee met ten (10) times. The City of Alexandria continued to make substantial progress in expanding affordable housing for older Alexandrians, as well as in preventing many evictions. The chair of the Housing Committee testified before the City Council in support of the City Manager's Proposed FY 2024 Budget. The Commission supported additional funding for eviction prevention and rental relief. The City Council approved \$170,000 for eviction prevention and \$100,000 in one-time funding for the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) to continue rental assistance services for the community.

The Housing Goals are:

- A. Determine prospective benefits and challenges regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- B. Develop public and private mechanisms to enhance availability of affordable assisted living in Alexandria.
- C. Work with key organizations and individuals to incorporate "housing for a lifetime" features in both new and redeveloped housing.
- D. Establish guidelines for the inclusion of accessibility features in new affordable multi-family development that receives City funding.

In the Housing Committee meetings, the following issues were discussed.

The committee received updates on the Landmark Development, which may include affordable housing - some funded through Auxiliary Grants (AG). The committee reviewed the relocation plan for residents of the Ladrey Senior Facility during its demolition and

rebuilding. The committee will monitor the implementation of the relocation process to ensure resident safety. The current residents are at 30% of Area Median Income (AMI) and will have a right to return to the new facility at the same income level as before.

The committee also had several meetings discussing the use of up to twenty units at the newly acquired The View-Alexandria by Goodwin Living. The meetings included the director and project manager from the Office of Housing, as well as the director of the Division of Aging and Adult Services, and the Executive Director of The View-Alexandria. The discussions focused on turning some of these units into affordable assisted living for Auxiliary Grant recipients.

The committee also discussed the inclusion of affordable assisted living within the Power Plant Redevelopment in North Old Town.

Finally, the committee agreed on proposed new goals for the 2024-2026 Age Friendly Plan, to: develop a Mixed Income Affordable Assisted Living Facility (MIAALF) in Alexandria; increase funding for the rental relief program; and prevent unnecessary institutionalization of older adults. The MIAALF concept is part of Alexandria's current Master Housing Plan.

## **Transportation Committee**

### **Policy and Membership**

Back to in-person meetings, the seven active members were able to schedule several speakers on transportation updates, including the Duke Street in Motion initiative, pedestrian and cyclist safety, DASH's plans to electrify its entire bus fleet by 2037, as well as its efforts



to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act compliance for all bus stops. DASH sponsored meetings for the Transportation Committee and the full Commission during this reporting period. Primary activities were around monitoring implementation of the Vision Zero goal of attaining zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, and advocacy for a Rainbow Crosswalk in Alexandria.

**The Transportation goals are:**

- A. Assist the City to attain its Vision Zero goal of eliminating all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2028 through attainment of interim year benchmarks.
- B. Those who walk, drive, and ride a bicycle in Alexandria can do so safely.
- C. DASH and WMATA provide safe, reliable, and frequent transit service for people who live, work, and play in Alexandria.

Here are of the major Transportation activities and achievements:

**Vision Zero Goal**

The COA has an ongoing relationship with an Alexandria Police Department liaison who briefs the COA on issues of interest to older Alexandrians, including traffic safety issues.

Other activities included, but were not limited to:

- Actively engaged with City of Alexandria Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES). Detailed discussions and presentations were held with T&ES at Transportation Committee bi-monthly meetings with focus on aspects of the Alexandria Complete Streets (ACS), Duke Street in Motion, and Alexandria Mobility Plan (AMP). In particular, discussions were held on how the travel choices and strategies in these plans will benefit older people.

- COA members participated in the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Alexandria Families for Safe Streets (AFSS) meetings and activities.

### **Walking and Biking Goal**

Advocated that e-scooters should not be allowed to operate on sidewalks, that there is dedicated street parking for scooters, and that the city dedicate appropriate enforcement resources.

Promoted the June 6<sup>th</sup> walking tour of the Potomac Yard neighborhood, sponsored by the Coalition for Smarter Growth. Among other benefits, this was a celebration of the opening of the new Potomac Yard Metro Station.

### **Transit Goal**

The COA is represented on the Alexandria Transit Vision Stakeholder Group (ATV). This group participates in the development of a study being undertaken to improve the City's current transit network and better serve City and regional transit needs.

A member of the COA chairs the DASH Board that oversees the DASH system.

## **Health Committee**

The Health Committee increased its membership during the 2022-2023 year from 7 members to 9 members, in addition to the COA hosting staff member. Like other committees of the COA, members of the Health Committee successfully conducted their business in-person during the year. The committee met 8 times during this period.

The mission of the committee is to provide training and education on dementia and older adult health within Alexandria. During its meetings, the committee agreed to focus on health gaps facing older adults, including oral, eye and hearing care. Since there is already a Dementia Friendly Committee in Alexandria, the Health Committee will focus less on dementia issues.

### **Activities and Goals:**

- Continue participation in Dementia Friendly training in collaboration with Goodwin Living and other nonprofits. Continue to encourage all COA members to be trained as Dementia Friends.
- Focus on health care gaps facing older adults, including oral, eye and hearing care, which contribute to healthy brains.
- Defer to Dementia Friendly Alexandria on dementia issues, but maintain a close relationship with this group.
- Evaluate the current Age-Friendly Plan and begin the process to write the new Age-Friendly Plan.
- Support programs for caregivers of those with dementia and help disseminate the information of available resources.
- Participate in the Department of Health's Healthy Homes initiative.
- Engage with local media, Senior Services of Alexandria, The Zebra Press, and news outlets to spread the word about Dementia Friends and age-friendly activities.

- Actively participate in dementia and age-friendly expos and community events.
- Develop a greater voice and presence for the age-friendly health needs of the public.
- Consider how we might move forward with greater involvement with community engagement.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration with other like-minded non-profit groups in Northern Virginia, such as AARP, that are engaged in activities that foster Dementia Friendly Community programs, within the state.

## **Civic Engagement and Employment Committee**

### **Civic Engagement**

**During the 2022-23 year, the successes of the committee are as follows:**

- Revitalized the “**Silver Service Card Program**”, which offers discounts to Alexandria residents 60+ years old. Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA) connected with the businesses that had participated in the program pre-pandemic, and 43 businesses agreed to continue with the program. SSA continues to produce and distribute the card, along with information about services for older adults in the community.

**Priority for the coming year is to add 15 additional businesses, working through the Chamber ALX and local business associations.**

- **SNAP** outreach to eligible older adults continued by SSA, DAAS and WDC. Information about the simplified form was shared through Senior Ambassadors and directly to residents. In preparation for the reduction in benefits in the spring of 2023, SSA and ALIVE! developed a joint program for SNAP clients enrolled in SSA’s grocery delivery program. Free groceries from the ALIVE warehouse are delivered monthly by SSA volunteers, so the clients can use their reduced benefits for their second delivery later in the month.
- There are now 26 **Senior Information Corners** stocked with literature related to services and programs for older adults. SSA volunteers stock them with updated information monthly.

**Priority for the coming year is to add five additional Senior Information Corners sites.**

- The **Senior Ambassador Program** continued to grow, with 25 new ambassadors trained in 2022-23. There are now more than 120 Ambassadors, who receive weekly emails with information to share with their communities and provide feedback on concerns. They also are invited to participate in a weekly zoom meeting with a local expert talking about how their organization helps older adults. The zoom calls are recorded and shared with all ambassadors the following week.

**Priority for the coming year is to reach out to all trained ambassadors to confirm their activity level and provide them with additional support for in-person presentations and Senior Information Corners.**

## **Employment**

### **Workforce Development Center (WDC)**

- The Center, as a result of the Age Friendly Plan and City Council approval, has a full-time employment specialist who serves applicants who are 50 plus.
- WDC offered 13 different Career Readiness Workshops several times per week, including three held in Spanish, and three held specifically for 50+, covering topics such as:
  - Networking Skills
  - Essential Skills & Transferable Skills
  - Preparing for and Navigating the Virtual Job Fair
  - Job Search Skills (also offered in Spanish)
  - Resume Building (also offered in Spanish)
  - Master the Interview (also offered in Spanish)
  - Soft Skills
  - Interview Prep

**Additional activities included the following:**

- 1:1 Job Coaching
- Mock Interview (offered virtually and in-person)
- 50+ ‘Take Your Career Planning Toolkit to the Next Level’ (50+ specific)
- 50+ Employment Strategies (50+ specific)
- 50+ ‘Presenting “You” at Your Personal Best (50+ specific)
- WDC staff facilitated 70 Hiring/Recruitment Events
- WDC Staff participated in various community events including:
  - ACPD-sponsored Community Cookouts
  - Alexandria Sheriff’s Re-Entry Fair
  - Alexandria Library-sponsored events
  - Community Food Drives
- One-Hundred Ninety-Two older adults received assistance via various programs and services
- Forty older adults received intensive case management, job search support and/or training and permanent job placement
- Twenty older adults were enrolled in the WDC’s Work-Based Learning program (WBL)
- Average wage during 12-week work experience was \$19.00/hr
- So far, 12 of the 20 WBL participants were placed in permanent jobs following their work experience, earning an average wage of \$23.88/hr
- WDC’s 50+ Specialist became a Senior Ambassador through the Senior Services of Alexandria’s Senior Ambassador Program
- Maintained on-going representation on the Commission on Aging’s Economic Development Committee (COA EDC)

- Connected COA EDC members with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership’s Small Business Development Center for guidance and assistance with their business plan
- Liaised between the City of Alexandria Workforce Development Center (WDC) and the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services, the National Council on Aging, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCEP)

**The priority areas for the coming year are:**

- Working to increase employer awareness and incentives to employ older adults
- Expanding workshops with a focus on:
  - Confidence building
  - Mental health and wellness
  - Image consultation
  - Peer to peer mentoring and support groups

**Annual Commission on Aging Awards**

Alexandria Commission on Aging (COA) held its annual Excellence in Aging Awards Program on May 9, 2023, at City Hall.

The COA uses the awards to honor individuals — regardless of age — as well as an organization, who have provided service to older Alexandrians or demonstrated superior contributions in advancing issues and projects that favorably affect older Alexandrians.

Mayor Justin Wilson recognized winners in four award categories:

- **Annie B. Rose Lifetime Award** – Presented to an individual who has served older adults for at least 10 years. - *Mary Lee Anderson* - Since 2013, Mary Lee served as executive director of the non-profit Senior Services of Alexandria (SSA). In her role of executive director, she coordinated, in collaboration with the Alexandria Health



Department, the delivery of lifesaving vaccines to older Alexandrians who were in isolation, playing an instrumental role in getting clients vaccinated.

- **Lois Van Valkenburgh Excellence in Aging Award** – Presented to an individual citizen with at least one year of service to older adults. - *Jackie Barbarito* - With the Commission on Aging, Jackie Barbarito, Administrator at Goodwin House Alexandria, co-founded Dementia Friendly Alexandria, and facilitates its Action Team, consisting of nonprofit organizations, providers of services, advocacy organizations, local government entities, and others.
- **Excellence in Aging Award for an Organization** – Presented to an organization that has made an outstanding contribution to older Alexandrians. - *Alexandria Health Department's Long-Term Care (LTC) Team* - Throughout the pandemic, the Alexandria Health Department LTC team quickly answered questions around the clock. The City of Alexandria attributes much of its success in managing the spread of COVID-19 in Alexandria to its advice and help.
- **Public Service Award** – Presented to three City employees who have advanced, improved, or otherwise contributed to making Alexandria a more livable community for all ages during the course of their jobs. –
- *Natalie Talis* led community outreach and community strategy in response to Covid-19. As the manager of the Community Health Assessment and the Community Health Improvement Plan process, she understood the various constituencies that would need to be addressed to support management of the Covid 19 pandemic among diverse populations.

- *Kathryn Mendenhall*, “Ms. Kay,” has been a City of Alexandria employee since 1989. In her more than thirty (30) years of service, she has developed an admirable record for outstanding customer services to the public.
- *Evelyn Quiles*, is the City’s expert on the employment of older adults. Evelyn has been with the Workforce Development Center since the early 2000’s. Through her leadership on the “Fifty Plus Program,” Evelyn has helped to prepare and place many older Alexandrians in meaningful employment. She has also played an important role in the City’s “Reemployment and Upskilling Initiative”, an American Rescue Plan initiative to help DCHS clients access job training, certifications, and assistance.

### **Legislative Accomplishments**

- The City Council approved \$19,000 as a contingency for DCHS’ Aging and Adult Services in the event the State does not replace the loss of Older American Act funds to Alexandria due to the new intra-state funding formula.
- Eviction Prevention Funding - As part of the FY 2024 City Council Add/Delete process, the City Council added \$170,000 in general fund support to provide eviction prevention assistance.
- One-Time Rental Assistance - The FY 2024 budget allocates \$100,000 in one-time funding for DCHS to continue rental assistance services for the community.

*See attached supporting documents.*

## **Leadership**

### **Officers**

Michael Schuster, Chair

Barbara D'Agostino, Vice Chair

Barbara Huelat, Secretary

### **Expirations, Resignations and New Memberships**

Michael Kamin — June 2022 (R)

Michael Krebs – December 2022 (E)

Barbara (Babs) Waters – January 2023 (R)

Ellen Nelson – February 2023 (E)

Dawn Higgins — 2023 (R)

Karen McKeon — 2023 (R)

Mary Lee Anderson – June 2023 (E)

Joanne Broderick – June 2023 (Deceased)

### **New Members**

Joy Kone – December 2022

Alan Dinsmore – March 2023

Enid Borden — April 2023

Kathleen Demik – April 2023

James Bruen – May 2023

Jane King – June 2023

### **Membership during the reporting year**

Barbara D’Agostino	Ellen Nelson	Mary Lee Anderson
Barbara Heulat	Geraldine Wallace	Michael Kamin
Barbara Waters	Jennifer Stowe	Michael Kreps
Canek Aguirre	Joanne Broderick	Michael Schuster
David Kaplan	Jim Lindsay	Ray Biegun
Dawn Higgins	Karen Mckeon	William Campbell
Joy Kone	Lois Steele	William Thomas Reeder
Alan Dinsmore	Enid Borden	Kathleen Demik
James Bruen	Jane King	

### **Staff Liaisons to COA 2022-2023**

Christopher C. Moore, Director, Division of Aging and Adult Services

Ashley Johnson – Long Term Care Coordinator, Division of Aging and Adult Services

Pamela Austin – Aging and Disability Resources Coordinator, Division of Aging and Adult Services beginning January 2022

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A sincere thank you to all who have contributed to the success of the COA's mission during the July 2022- June 2023 year. Your dedication to the mission has been invaluable.

To the new members of the COA, a hearty welcome and thank you in advance for your contributions that will enhance the lives of older Alexandrians.

A sincere thank you is also extended to each city staff member who provided on-going support in many thoughtful ways during the year, especially Division of Aging and Adult Services staff: Chris Moore, Pam Austin, and Ashley Johnson.

Jane King deserves special kudos for her work on several committees, and as the guiding light on the Age-Friendly Plan. Although she was not officially a member of the COA during this reporting period, she regularly attended meetings, and provided the COA with her expertise on aging issues. She is now back on the commission and will continue to make significant contributions to aging in Alexandria.

The Commission continues to acknowledge the special debt of gratitude to the mayor, members of City Council and City Staff for their annual investment of personal and practical support. In so doing, you have enabled the COA to make a positive contribution in helping ensure Alexandria remains a livable City where its residents' quality of life ranks among the highest in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Nation.

**Alexandria Commission on Aging**  
**Testimony to City Council 01-21-2023**

Good morning, Mayor Wilson and Members of City Council – my name is Michael Schuster. I am the Chair of the Alexandria Commission on Aging, and I am here this morning representing the Alexandria Commission on Aging. The Commission voted at its last meeting to alert you to a funding situation that has arisen since you adopted your legislative platform for 2023.

The Director of the City's Division of Aging and Adult Services has learned that the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (or DARS) has altered its intrastate funding formula (IFF) as it is required to do every 10 years after the decennial census. The IFF determines how DARS will allocate federal and state funding to local area agencies on aging for the next 10 years. DARS has changed the IFF by adding a new category based on the percentage of a jurisdiction's population of persons aged 60 or older. That, and other formula changes, will cause the City of Alexandria to lose about \$19,000 in funding for the next fiscal year. Losing that amount of funding amounts to 12 fewer older adults receiving a meal – a total of 2750 meals, 591 hours of homemaker services, and a 4% reduction in personal care services. The current waiting list of 40 older adults will only grow, having a ripple effect, since many of these individuals may need government funded nursing home care.

Statewide, 11 of the 25 local area agencies on aging stand to lose funding under this new formula. The Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) has secured patrons in the House of Delegates and the Senate to introduce budget amendments that would add \$700,000 for DARS to address this funding change and hold all agencies harmless due to this change. We know you have already adopted your legislative platform for 2023, but we would like to ask for your support of these budget amendments to prevent Alexandria and 10 other jurisdictions – including Arlington – from losing any [Older American Act] funding this year. We know this will be a tight budget year for the City, so we ask that you make a statement in support of the amendments. If that is not something you can do at this late date, then we request that the Commission on Aging be allowed to advocate for this amendment with our legislators. Thank you for your consideration.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL ON MARCH 13, 2023, IN SUPPORT OF THE CITY  
MANAGER’S PROPOSED FY 2024 BUDGET**

My name is Michael Schuster. I am the Chair of the Alexandria City Commission on Aging. I am testifying on behalf of the Commission on Aging

First, we thank the city government for its generous support of older Alexandrians over the years. In particular, we appreciate the contributions of the City Manager and the Office of Management of the Budget, in putting together this proposed budget. The director and staff of the Budget office met with our commission recently to brief us on the proposed budget. We also thank the Director of the Department of Community and Human Services for the department’s proposal in this budget to increase the funding for rent relief by \$100,000. We enthusiastically support this proposal. This money will ensure there will be no waiting list for those who are struggling to pay ever increasing rent in the city. The most recent information from DCHS shows that without rent assistance, participants in the rent relief program spend 95% of their income on rent – with the rent assistance it is 70% - this is still a lot to pay for rent, but a substantial improvement. Only one medical or financial crisis could put some of them perilously close to facing eviction for non-payment of rent.

One item not in the budget is a provision for covering the gap in aging funding caused by the new intrastate funding formula for Older American Act funds. The Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (or DARS) has altered its intrastate funding formula (IFF) as it is required to do every 10 years after the decennial census. The IFF determines how DARS will allocate federal and state funding to local area agencies on aging for the next 10 years. DARS has changed the IFF by adding a new category based on the percentage of a jurisdiction’s population of persons aged 60 or older. That, and other formula changes, will cause the City of Alexandria to lose about \$19,000 in funding for the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, the Virginia General Assembly failed to pass a budget amendment that would hold jurisdictions like Alexandria harmless from these cuts. Losing that amount of funding amounts to 12

fewer older adults receiving a meal – a total of 2750 meals, 591 hours of homemaker services, and a 4% reduction in personal care services. The current waiting list of 40 older adults will only grow, having a ripple effect, since many of these individuals may need government funded nursing home care. The Commission on Aging requests that the City Manager’s final budget include this funding for the Division of Aging and Adult Services. If the General Assembly ultimately approves funding to cover these cuts, and this is a big if, then that money could be used to reduce the waiting list for personal care services.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your attention.



**CITY OF ALEXANDRIA**  
**BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**  
**MEETINGS ATTENDANCE REPORT**  
July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

**COMMISSION ON AGING**

**Chairperson: Michael Schuster**

**Per City Council Guidelines, Members are expected to attend 75% of Meetings**

**X – present      E – excused      U - unexcused**

<b>Member's Name</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
Michael Schuster, Chair	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barbara D'Agostino Vice Chair	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Barbara Huelat, Secretary	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X
Alan Dinsmore							E	X	X	X
Babs Waters	E	X	E	E						
Canek Aguirre	E	E	E	E	X	X	E	E	X	E
David Kaplan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	X
Dawn Higgins	X	X	X	X	X	E				
Ellen Nelson	E	E	E	E	E	E				
Enid Borden								E	X	X
Geraldine Wallace	X	X	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X
James T Bruen									E	X
Jane King										
Jennifer Stowe	X	X	E	U	X	X	X	E	E	X
Jessica Lefevre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Jim Lindsay	X	U	X	E	X	X	X	E	X	E

Joanne Broderick	X	X	X	U	X	X	X	X	X	U
Joy Kone					X	X	E	X	U	X
Karen Mckeon	X	X	E	U	X	X	X			
Kathleen Demik								E	X	U
Lois Steele	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E
Mary Lee Anderson	E	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Michael Kamin	U	E	U	U						
Michael Kreps	X	X	X	U						
Raymond Biegun	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
William Campbell	X	X	X	U	X	U	U	U	X	X
William Thomas Reeder	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

**LIST OF THOSE WHO DID NOT ATTEND 75% OF MEETINGS:**

Ellen Nelson, Michael Kamin, William Campbell

**APPROVED:**



**Michael Schuster, Chair**

**Date: August 28, 2023**

**(FORM MUST BE SIGNED BY CHAIRPERSON)**