

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING

Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2026 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

Location: Mark Center
Del Pepper Community Center, 4850 Mark Center Drive 9th Floor
Alexandria VA 22311

Members Attending In-Person:

Co-Chairs Michael Schuster, DT Oliver, Alan Dinsmore, Barbara D'Agostino, Barbara Huelat, Canek Aguirre, Ginny Kalish, Jim Lindsay, Kathleen Demik, Kim Koch, Marshall Hespe, Michele McLaughlin, Ray Biegun, William Thomas Reeder

Members Attending Remotely with Approval From The Co-Chairs:

Gerri Wallace, James Bruen, Jane M. King, Secretary Kimberly Koch, Victoria Rutson

Members Excused:

Ana Rivas Beck, Jessica Lefevre

Members Unexcused:

None

Liaisons Present:

Ian Torrance, Police Department; Bob Eiffert, AHA; Juanita Balenger, St. Martins Senior Center; Tricia Rodgers, Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria; Pamela Guerra, Senior Center @ Charles Houston; Darrell Wesley, Adult Day Services Center

Guests Present:

Lois Steele, Housing Committee; Richard Merritt

Staff Members Present:

Chris Moore, Ashley Johnson, Pam Austin, Division of Aging and Adult Services; Michael Briscoe, Workforce Development Center

Call to Order Meeting called to order at 4:32 pm

Approval of Agenda as is.

Approval of Thursday, February 12, 2026 Minutes approved as is.

Welcome of new AOC Members – DT Oliver

DT shared the appointment of two new Commission members: Tricia Rodgers and Richard Merritt.

Alexandria Police Department Liaison Report – Sgt. Ian Torrance

No report.

Special Presentation: Dr. Laurel Beedon Senior Services of Alexandria, Board of Directors, and Wiser Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement on “Managing Finances for both Caregivers and Cared For”

Highlights of Dr. Beedon’s presentation include:

- *One, you're going to be a caregiver, you are a caregiver, or you're going to be cared for.* – Rosalyn Carter
- She currently works with WISER, Women's Institute for Secure Retirement, a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. They provide financial education for women. They have an Administration on Aging grant through the Administration on Community Living. There is a caregiving hub on their website (wiserwomen.org.)
- Topics covered included:
 - Cost of care and the influence on decision making
 - Who are the caregivers – is caring for another person and caring for themselves
 - 38M Americans provide unpaid care to a relative or friend age 50 or older; 59% of those providing care are women
 - Financial Impact of caregiving
 - Caregivers pay an estimated \$7200 annually in out-of-pocket expenses
 - 61% of caregivers report adjusting their work (e.g. cut hour, take leave, etc.)
 - Over their lifetime, caregivers 50 and older who leave the workforce lose over \$300,000 in wages, Social Security benefits, employer-provided retirement benefits, individual savings
 - Steps caregivers can take
 - Think carefully about quitting your job; check with your employer on options available to continue working
 - Outline your retirement needs
 - Determine what you have (e.g. Social Security, retirement income plan, savings, home) **and** what you owe (e.g. mortgage, loans, credit card debt)
 - Ask for help with your caregiving responsibilities
 - Important legal documents to have:
 - Durable Power of Attorney
 - Healthcare Proxy and Healthcare Power of Attorney
 - Living Trust
 - Last Will and Testament
 - Living Will
 - Use of care agreements to establish shared caregiving responsibilities
 - Resource and tools
 - WISER (wiserwomen.org)
 - National Council on Aging
 - Eldercare locator (eldercare.acl.gov)
 - Benefits Checkup (benefitscheckup.org)
 - National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (naela.org)
 - AARP
 - Senior Services of Alexandria

There was time at the end for Q&A.

Ashley provided the following updates:

- Her team is working with the 5th Floor, Center for Economic Support, to discuss the work requirements for SNAP.
- The SNAP grant from NCOA is ending in mid-May.
- They just hired a full-time nutrition supervisor. This was a big win for the team.

The question was raised: is there any progress in the idea of counting caregiving as volunteer hours for purposes of the work requirements? Ashley shared: AARP did draft up some language to try to advocate for that. She will check back on the status. They are working closely with Workforce Development to brainstorm the best way to support the 55 to 65, age group and making sure that benefits are kept.

Discussion and Action Items

Age Friendly Plan – Update and Next Steps – DAAS staff –

The Age Friendly Plan will be presented on March 24th to the City Council. Chris and team are working on the presentation and finalizing the draft.

Excellence in Aging Awards – Barbara D’Agostino and Ana Rivas Beck

The email blast announcing that nominations are open went out last week. To date none have been received. Accepting nominations for both individuals and organizations. Pam shared on the different channels the information is being pushed out through (e.g. online, e-push, website.) Committee members were also encouraged to do their own grassroots promotion of the awards and process.

Approval of Testimony on Proposed City Budget

Michael testified at the initial budget hearing on Monday. He asked that as a next step the written testimony he provided be approved for the record. So moved, seconded and approved as is.

Future Speakers

We are still booking speakers for April and June. For May we have a panel lined up.

The Health Committee would like to pursue having the intern working with Natalie (Health Department) present on dental, health in older adults. Natalie is coordinating with the intern for an April presentation (virtual).

Michelle recommended food security issues and older adults, and she has a speaker in mind.

Other suggestions include: Adult Protective Services, technology and aging, eligibility for inpatient rehab under Medicare (note: there was robust discussion on the last topic.)

Committee Updates

Housing Committee - Co-Chairs, Michael Schuster and Lois Steele

In February, the Committee had a presentation by Tamara Jovovic, program manager, Office of Housing - re: the 2040 Housing plan. They also heard from the consultant doing the analysis around what the needs are and housing models that we might be considering in the 2040 plan. There was a

Master Housing Plan 2040 open house in February. Lois shared the details laid out in Goal 7 of the plan.

Outreach Committee – Co-Chairs, Marshall Hesper & Barbara D’Agostino

The next meeting is next Thursday and will be virtual.

Economic Security and Civic Engagement – Chair, Jessica Lefevre

DT provided an update. The committee had a conversation on employment. Jim has 3 shark tanks going at the moment. The City is moving to a new screening tool for the Workplace Development Center 50-plus program. There is an upcoming workshop focused on handling job rejection and next steps. They also had a conversation around the goals of the age-friendly plan and city goals. The how is perhaps more important than the how many, in terms of results and impact.

We continue to see cuts to the Seniors Farmer Market vouchers – down to 175 from 500 two years ago.

Health /Dementia Friendly Committee – Chair, Barbara Huelat

The Committee met today at 3:00 PM. They had report outs on:

- Medicare and Medicaid
- The dementia-friendly initiative
- Mental health wellness initiative

As a follow on to something Barbara shared, Tricia shared a joint work group between the Commission and the Public Health Advisory Commission is forming to come up with a panel to discuss the oral health issues facing public health.

Liaison Reports

Please refer to submitted reports for additional details.

Alexandria Adult Day Services Center, ADSC – Darrell Wesley

Darrell shared additional information on the Caregivers Support Group. They are reposting for the therapeutic recreation leader position.

Other Business

None

New Business

None

Public comments

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Next Commission on Aging Meetings:

Executive Committee: March 30, 2026 – 1:30 – Virtual

Commission on Aging: April 9, 2026 - 4:30 – Virtual

Northern Virginia Network Meetings

Meeting Schedule / Rotation of Chairmanship	
2025- 2026	
September 16, 2025	Arlington
November 18, 2025	Loudoun
January 20, 2026	Prince William
March 17, 2026	Alexandria
April 21, 2026	Legislative Brainstorming
May 19, 2026	Legislative Platform
July 21, 2026	Fairfax

COMMISSION OFFICERS: Michael Schuster, Co-Chair
DT Oliver – Co-Chair
Ana Rivas Beck, Vice Chair
Kim Koch, Secretary

The business of the Commission on Aging is largely conducted by its committees. ALL COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Please call the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703.746.5999 for more information. In addition, the Commission has official liaisons with several other commissions, organizations or activities.

The City of Alexandria complies with the terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). An individual with a disability who wishes to request a reasonable accommodation may contact the Division of Aging and Adult Services at 703.746.5999, email DAAS@alexandriava.gov

Visit the Division of Aging and Adult Services website for Commission on Aging agendas and minutes and other aging information: www.Alexandriava.gov/aging

**The Alexandria Commission on Aging Racial Social Equity Committee
(as of June 01, 2021)**

No one should be denied the opportunity to engage fully in our community.

We encourage people of different cultures, races, nationalities, immigration status, ages, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identities, and religious affiliation in Alexandria to be informed about and have access to the range of services available in the City, and to be engaged in civic life.

We are committed to representing a diverse community that represents the rich heritage of our city.

We are committed to ensuring older persons have access: to affordable housing, transportation, health care, broadband, nutrition services and to opportunities for meaningful employment and related training.

Older adults and persons with serious medical conditions often experience various degrees of inequity, particularly in obtaining access to health care. It is essential to support older persons, family caregivers, and direct care workers since these residents face additional biases and hurdles.