



**December 10th, 2020
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Virtual WebEX Call

Meeting Minutes

Video Conference Information:

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Meeting Number: 171 936 9784

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Access code: 171 936 9784

In Attendance:

Virginia Asian Advisory Board Members: Mr. Tae Aderman; Ms. Melody Agbisit, Ms. Suja Amir; Ms. Laura Beldin; Mr. Paul Chhabra; Ms. Julia Chun; Dr. Nina Ha; Mr. Razi Hashmi; Ms. Hyun Lee; Mr. Justin Lo; Mr. Bao Ly; Mr. Praveendharan Meyyan (Secretary); Mr. Patrick Mulloy; Ms. May Nivar (Chair); Ms. Carla Okouchi; Dr. Marie Sankaran Raval; Mr. Ssunny Shah; Ms. Da Lin Sheth; Mr. Pient Tran

Governor's Office Staff: Ms. Suzanne Holland (Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration); Mr. Shawn Soares (AAPI Outreach), Ms. Maribel Castañeda (Director of Appointments and Director of Latino Outreach)

Legal Counsel: Mr. Justin Bell (Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of VA)

Guests: Ms. Kelly Thomasson (Secretary of the Commonwealth of VA); Ms. Tracey Wiley (Director of Small Business and Supplier Diversity); Mr. Howard Pisons (Director of Small Business Finance Authority). Dr. Daniel Carey (Secretary of Human and Health Services); Dr. Janice Underwood (Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer); Ms. Courtney Dozier (Policy Director, Office of Governor Ralph S. Northam);

Welcome and Meeting Overview

- Ms. Holland went over the housekeeping rules for the meeting

Virginia Asian Advisory Board General Meeting

- Ms. Nivar (Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.
- Ms. Nivar notified the Board that Ms. Siddique had recently accepted a new position with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as Chief Deputy Officer and Policy Advisor and therefore resigned from the Board.
- Mr. Meyyan (Secretary) conducted a roll call for meeting attendance.
- Mr. Meyyan noted that Mr. Tiwari sent him a message that he would be unable to attend the meeting.
- Mr. Meyyan informed the Board that there was a quorum of board members at the meeting.
- Ms. Amir (Vice-Chair) introduced herself. She mentioned she has been on the Virginia Asian Advisory Board for a year and served also on the Health Equity taskforce. She said she hoped to meet everyone in person soon.
- Ms. Nivar thanked Ms. Amir for stepping into the Vice Chair role.

September Meeting Minutes Approval and December Meeting Agenda Adoption

- September 10th, 2020 meeting minutes were reviewed by the Board.
- The September 10th, 2020 Minutes were moved to be adopted.
- Mr. Meyyan conducted a roll call vote to adopt the minutes.

Voting in the Affirmative: Mr. Tae Aderman; Ms. Melody Agbisit, Ms. Suja Amir; Ms. Julia Chun; Dr. Nina Ha; Ms. Hyun Lee; Mr. Justin Lo; Mr. Bao Ly; Mr. Praveendharan Meyyan ; Mr. Patrick Mulloy; Ms. May Nivar; Ms. Carla Okouchi; Mr. Ssunny Shah; Ms. Da Lin Sheth; Mr. Pient Tran

Voting in the Negative: None

Voting to Abstain: None

- Mr. Meyyan previewed the December Meeting Agenda and a roll call vote was taken to adopt it

Voting in the Affirmative: Mr. Tae Aderman; Ms. Melody Agbisit, Ms. Suja Amir; Ms. Laura Beldin; Ms. Julia Chun; Dr. Nina Ha; Mr. Razi Hashmi; Ms. Hyun Lee; Mr. Justin Lo; Mr. Bao Ly; Mr. Praveendharan Meyyan ; Mr. Patrick Mulloy; Ms. May Nivar; Ms. Carla Okouchi; Mr. Ssunny Shah; Ms. Da Lin Sheth; Mr. Pient Tran

Voting in the Negative: None

Voting to Abstain: None

Public Comments:

- Mr. Meyyan announced that public comments were now being accepted.
- Mr. Meyyan noted that there were no members of the general public on the call and no questions were submitted prior.
- The public comments period ended without any comments recorded.

Chair Report:

- Ms. Nivar mentioned the creation of the Office of New Americans and the New Americans Advisory Board. Mr. Eric Lin, who served on the Virginia Asian Advisory Board is on the new board. We will work closely with the new board. The inaugural meeting is in January.
- Ms. Nivar is ex-officio of the New Americans Board as are all the chairs of the other Advisory Boards.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned working with Secretary Qarni on addressing school segregation. Ms. Nivar moderated a panel discussion with Secretary Qarni on racism and anti-blackness in the Asian community. Ms. Nivar mentioned the 4 other panelists and said there is a two-hour recording available for those who are interested.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned her key takeaway was that the model minority myth is being used to divide us and other communities of color.
- Ms. Nivar asked Ms. Holland to share the link to the discussion with the board.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned that Ms. Amir she represented the Virginia Asian Advisory Board at the API community conversation on preparation and distribution of the COVID 19 vaccine. The Governor is providing further information about COVID-19 policy including additional restrictions at his 2PM press conference.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned that Ms. Amir also represented the Virginia Asian Advisory Board at ASCEND Greater Richmond (a professional pan-Asian development organization) and provided remarks.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned that later on in the meeting we will be adopting Board election procedures for officers. Elections will happen in January.

Administration Update and Asian American and Pacific Islander Outreach:

- Ms. Holland introduced herself to the Board and mentioned her prior positions.
- Ms. Holland asked Board members who still need a headshot and bio on the website to please submit those to her as soon as possible.
- Ms. Holland mentioned that this is the first time that all the Advisory Boards are under the Secretary of the Commonwealth.
- Ms. Holland talked about guidelines and frameworks for guiding the work that the Boards do
- Ms. Holland went over the annual report timeline and congratulated the Virginia Asian Advisory Board on submitting last year's report on time.
 - Jan-Apr Subcommittee brainstorming
 - Apr-Jul Start writing recommendations
 - Jun Finalize recommendations
 - Jul-Aug Submit Draft for review by entire Board

- Aug-Sept Report sent to Board Liaison
 - Oct-Nov Final Report submitted to the Governor
 - Oct-Nov Report released to the public
- Ms. Nivar thanked Ms. Holland for her service and help to the Board.
- Ms. Holland mentioned that the next Virginia Asian Advisory Board meeting will be January 28th. Subcommittee meetings will be a week before that. Ms. Holland will send the board an email about these dates.
- Mr. Mulloy asked if the meeting was from 1PM – 5PM and Ms. Holland replied that it was.
- Mr. Mulloy requested that all future correspondence be sent to pamulloy@aol.com.
- Ms. Okouchi asked if there was a listing of meeting dates for all of 2021. Ms. Holland replied that she will send tentative dates for the rest of the year after the meeting.
- Mr. Hashmi asked if they will be virtual. Ms. Holland replied that they will be for the foreseeable future.
- Mr. Soares introduced himself and his duties and responsibilities as the AAPI Outreach Director.
- Mr. Soares discussed the Rebuild VA programs. Grants were increased to \$100,000 from \$10,000. \$100 million was distributed to 2500 businesses and nonprofits. Approximately \$50 million of the grant money was awarded to women and minority owned business. 45% or more was awarded to about 1,000 businesses located in low income and economically disadvantaged communities. There were 15,700 applications and the average grants was \$35,636. All available funding has now been committed.
- Mr. Soares discussed the Virginia Rent and Mortgage Relief Program.
- Mr. Soares also mentioned the Governor’s Roadmap to end Hunger. The report can be found on the Governor’s website.
- Mr. Soares mentioned a report on Paid Family and Medical Leave Study that can be found on the Governor’s website.
- Mr. Soares mentioned that the Governor signed a proclamation on Diwali.
- Mr. Soares also mentioned the panel on racism and anti-blackness in the Asian community that Ms. Nivar moderated.
- Mr. Soares mentioned the COVID-19 conservation series. VDH is focused on distributing the vaccine as quickly and equitably as possible.
- Mr. Soares mentioned some community engagement events he has participated in.
- Mr. Soares mentioned the openings on the boards and commissions. Only 95 AAPI applicants applied this past year. He and the administration would like to see more applicants and thanked and asked the Board for help.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned that AAPI applicants should be encouraged to apply to all the board and commissions not just the Virginia Asian Advisory Board. It’s about diversity in perspectives as well.
- Mr. Lo mentioned that Civic Engagement committee could be helpful to help spread some of this information
- Ms. Nivar mentioned to send events from all over the Commonwealth; geographical and ethnic diversity are both important

Rebuild VA Update

- Mr. Pisons greeted the Board.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that they have reached their limit on available funds and it has all been committed. The second expansion on October 28th really helped open the program for applicants. All the applications that were in the portal awaiting approval when funding ran out were notified or are in the process of being notified.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned the Governor's website has a link to provide feedback. It's important for them to know how they can improve the process in the event that there is further stimulus and further funds are made available.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that applications that were already submitted will stay in the queue.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that more than 45% of the funds were distributed to low income communities.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that over 15,000 applications were received, and 75-80 people reviewed and sorted through them including setting up a salesforce portal to accept applications.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned they partnered with all the agencies and other stakeholders and did numerous webinars and press release to get information out.
- Mr. Tran asked about statistics on how many AAPI businesses were able to apply or access the program. Mr. Pisons replied that they used the Federal Government's study on where low-income communities are and they hoped that they reached different minority groups.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that the applications had options to identify by race as well as options to indicate if they were in a low-income community. They also captured information on if applicants were women, military but those statistics are voluntarily supplied.
- Mr. Shah commended the outreach efforts and mentioned that his experience was that emails and phone calls went unanswered. He also mentioned that it was not clear how to apply for more funds after the cap was increased to \$100,000 nor was it transparent on how they calculated funds for each applicant.
- Mr. Pisons mentioned that due to how the application process works, that the initial recommended number for funds may not end up being the amount allocated. When the final amount is approved, then the email gets sent out with the final amount.
- Ms. Chun asked if there were discussions on commercial rent relief being discussed by the administration. Mr. Pisons answered they reimbursed three months for small businesses and some of it was significant. Ms. Wiley answered that is an area that the Dept of Housing and Community Development may have more information on. She mentioned they can take that information back to those two agencies.
- Mr. Ly commented on the need for this program and others to have translated information and getting the information out via community leaders, religious organizations, Asian Chambers of Commerce etc. Ms. Wiley mentioned that they worked with Chris Lay on translations for all documents in Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Arabic. They also partnered with the Virginia Chambers of Commerce in the Virginia Beach area.
- Mr. Pisons and Ms. Miley are optimistic that with a new round of stimulus that they can push via more outlets.

The Virginia Asian Advisory Board took a break from 2:31-2:40.

Administration Update – Commonwealth:

- Secretary Thomasson thanked Ms. Holland and Mr. Soares for stepping into their roles seamlessly.
- Secretary Thomasson went over the Governor's orders which include curfew from midnight to 5am except for emergencies, no social gatherings over 10 people and modified mask requirements.
- Secretary Thomasson mentioned that there is a legislative session coming up to consider the budget and other legislation.
- Secretary Thomasson mentioned the Census is finally complete. Secretary Thomasson thanked the Board for their outreach efforts on the Census.
- Secretary Thomasson mentioned the need for recommendations to fill Boards and Commissions
- Mr. Lo asked on the status of the proposed LGBTQIA+ Advisory Board. Secretary Thomasson mentioned that the Governor will submit a bill to establish the Board.
- Ms. Nivar asked if there are any new Boards being proposed. Secretary Thomasson mentioned nothing to report as of now, but she'd like for new boards to be meaningful and serve a constituency that needs greater representation. There are also other avenues like task forces, working groups etc. for some of the proposed boards.

Committee Update – Civic Engagement

- Mr. Lo reported updates from the Civic Engagement Committee.
- Since September the committee has been working on building on the recommendations in the annual report.
 - Look at ways to make outreach more effective including building out a calendar of API Community events.
 - Keep key stakeholders engaged across the API community. Help identify sources of funding.
 - Following up on language access for voting and election information.
 - Looking at levels on civic engagement within the API community and distilling useful data points
- Mr. Lo reported that at their October meeting they met with Deputy Commission of the Department of Elections Jessica Bowman on translation of the citizen's portal. They discussed how they can collect better data when it comes to race, ethnicity and language. They also met with Secretary Thomasson and Mr. Soares about outreach events and the community events calendar.
- Mr. Lo reported that at their November meeting they met with Senator Jennifer McClellan and Delegate Kathy Tran on the house bill on voting and election materials. They had meaningful further discussion on translating the citizen's portal.

Administration Update – Health and Human Resources:

- Secretary Carey greeted the board and mentioned that he would like to cover three things; review where we are with pandemic including current numbers, the additional mitigations steps the administration and Governor made and hope about the vaccine.
- Secretary Carey mentioned that Virginia is the 6th lowest state in terms of cases. There are about 3800 new infections every day. A lot of the new infections are in younger people.
- Secretary Carey mentioned the importance of washing hands, physical distancing and wearing a mask. Staying home if you are sick is also important.
- Secretary Carey mentioned that the Commonwealth is averaging 25,000 tests per day plus 7-8,000 antibody test.
- Secretary Carey mentioned that the Governor announced a modified stay at home order between midnight and 5 am. A limit of 10 people for social gatherings.
- Secretary Carey mentioned a decrease in spectator sports to 25 persons who may attend
- Secretary Carey the administration has been aggressively enforcing these guidelines through various agencies.
- Secretary Carey mentioned there are waiting on FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine; Moderna is a week behind and Astra Zeneca behind that.
- Secretary Carey mentioned they are working thorough an early lens in terms of distributing the vaccine; the highest risk and most vulnerable will receive the vaccine first.
- Ms. Okouchi asked if they are looking at correlation rates between areas of high infection and in person learning. She asked a second question if the Governor is going back to considering virtual learning for all after the holidays. Secretary Carey answered that we need to increase testing even higher than current levels, but they believe they have all the data they need to make decisions currently and continue to monitor the situation. Younger children are not immune to COVID-19 but it seems more of a problem in higher education. Kids bring it to school; they don't get it at school. Governor currently believes it's best that the decision be left up to local school boards and public health officials. The Administration posts outbreak and infection rates publicly so they believe they have provided the data for local officials to act. Secretary Carey added that things could change if things got worse.
- Ms. Okouchi added that there is a school system that did a study that showed that COVID does in fact, spreads in schools and she hopes that that the Governor will take a look at that study. She mentioned that it's distressing to see that school systems in Virginia are going as high as 8-10% rates when CDC recommends 5%. Secretary Carey mentioned that he is opening to learning and asked that the study be sent to him and that he and the Governor hope to make decisions based on the data and science they do have.

Administration Update – DEI:

- Dr. Underwood mentioned that Ms. Siddique as well as her other new hires have settled into their roles and hit the ground running
- Dr. Underwood mentioned the panels on COVID-19 that the administration has organized

- Dr. Underwood mentioned that the Department will do a second round of webinars and outreach
- Dr. Underwood mentioned that the One Virginia plan will launch next year. All of the final assets are being finalized. All state agency, local governments and private businesses are encouraged to reach out for support on diversity and inclusion best practices and policies. They can help come up with a diversity and inclusion strategic plan. Dr. Underwood will do a follow up with the Board once the plan is rolled out.
- Dr. Underwood that they will do a virtual townhall with the Governor on the plan.
- Dr. Underwood mentioned that the One Virginia plan has 5 goals, starts with diversifying and retaining the workforce and ends with community engagement.
- Dr. Underwood asked that the Board please send any comments, thoughts or concerns to her. They want to make sure the plan works for all communities.
- Mr. Hashmi mentioned that his work in the Federal space also cover a lot of the issues concerning diversity and inclusion. He mentioned he is happy to be a resource.
- Dr. Underwood mentioned that the Governor is making sure Virginia is inclusive for everyone including our undocumented immigrants.
- Dr. Underwood mentioned that the Department is watching to see if there will Federal office to tackle these issues and that she will work closely with them if so. At the local level she is only aware of one other state that has an Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- Dr. Underwood hope for national leadership on the issue and hopes to also follow up with private corporations to make sure they are using these best practices in addition to their public statements of support.
- Ms. Nivar will follow up with the Board on information concerning a fellowship on diversity and inclusion in the corporate space.
- Dr. Ha asked if they're working with criminal justice reforms and mental health advocates. Dr. Underwood mentioned that she is working with Secretary Moran and his team. She mentioned the recent bills passed in the special session on criminal justice reforms. The assembly passed "Breonna's Law", which is that no knock warrants are banned.

Special Session Debrief:

- Ms. Dozier thanked the Board for their work.
- Ms. Dozier mentioned that the special session (84 days) contained a lot of emphasis on police reform and criminal justice reform.
- Ms. Dozier mentioned that Virginia became the third state to ban no knock warrants. She also mentioned creation of Marcus alerts, which pair police responses with individuals who need mental health intervention. Also, new laws on new accountability measures for officers who move around localities.
- Ms. Dozier mentioned the other focus was COVID and response to COVID. Passed legislation on transparency regarding pandemics moving forward.
- Ms. Dozier mentioned the Governor introduced protections against evictions and keeping access to utilities. There are also continued investments around early childhood education and other priorities. The Governor will soon lay out the priorities in his next budget soon to the legislature.

- Ms. Nivar asked about budget and the ability to provide multilingual language translations to make it into a standard process and not just during the pandemic. Ms. Dozier said it will definitely be a priority at all times moving forward.
- Ms. Dozier encouraged the Board to start advocating for their priorities now since everything is virtual, and this will be a shorter session. There will not be traditional in person lobbying and advocacy.
- Ms. Nivar mentioned that she would like to lean on the civic engagement committee and other board members to keep us all informed on the issues important to the API community.
- Ms. Holland mentioned that she resent the annual reports to the cabinet secretaries again to keep the recommendations fresh in their minds.

Committee Update – Education

- Ms. Okouchi mentioned that the committee had a meeting on December 1st with Secretary Qarni on making the Governor’s Schools more equitable and desegregating the school system. They also discussed how board members can help educate our communities with outreach on these issues.
- Ms. Okouchi mentioned the committee is looking to following up on the recommendations in the annual report and also working with the other Advisory Boards where appropriate.
- Ms. Okouchi mentioned discussion on updating education materials to include Latinx, API and LGBTQIA+ issues to school curriculums.
- Ms. Okouchi thanked Ms. Nivar for moderating the panel on school desegregation. She encouraged everyone to attend the COVID 19 panels

Committee Update – Health

- Ms. Agbisit mentioned that she followed up with committee members on the recommendations in the annual report.
- Ms. Agbisit mentioned that she has not seen anything on the legislative agenda based on their recommendations.
- Ms. Agbisit mentioned the need for disaggregated API data in other areas, not just COVID data
- Ms. Agbisit mentioned that she plans to do more research on mental health funding

Committee Update – Business and Trade

- Mr. Ly mentioned he would like to continue to stimulate more trade between the Commonwealth and Asian nations.
- Mr. Ly has set up meetings with the administration and various embassies. He is working with everyone to facilitate Virginia making and acquiring more PPE.
- Mr. Ly thanked the administration for the Rent and Mortgage Relief Program and Rebuild Va program but mentioned that outreach into the API community left more to be desired.
- Mr. Ly would like to work with churches, temples and other religious and community-based organizations to build an outreach list. He would like to partner with those organizations on in language information dissemination.

- Mr. Mulloy mentioned that President-Elect Biden has nominated Ms. Katherine Tai to be the United States Trade Representative. He would like to highlight that in the next report.
- Mr. Hashmi commented that there have also been other API appointments by the incoming federal administration, and he will send a list to the Board.
- Mr. Lo commented on the opportunities for the Business and Trade committee to partner with the other committees on issues like licensing etc. Mr. Ly welcomed the opportunity to partner with other committees.
- Ms. Holland reminded everyone to cc the board email account so that she can facilitate work across the different Advisory Boards where appropriate.

Vote to Adopt Election Procedures

- Mr. Meyyan went over the proposed rules and guidelines for the Election at the next Board meeting of Board officers.
- Mr. Lo asked if the vote had always been a roll call vote. Ms. Holland mentioned the guidelines were prepared in consultation with Mr. Bell on voting in a virtual environment. She mentioned that votes must be public.
- The Board had a spirited conversation on secret ballots vs. open votes.
- Ms. Sheth asked about the order of the vote or what happens if there is an overwhelming number of abstentions. Ms. Holland replied that there is no restriction on voting order and the winner will be by majority.
- Ms. Okouchi proposed secret ballots then roll call to confirm that a person has voted.
- The Board decided to seek additional counsel from Mr. Bell.
- Mr. Bell said votes must be public and cast in a roll call and there is no way around that.
- The Board took a vote on proposed election procedures:

Voting in the Affirmative: Mr. Tae Aderman; Ms. Melody Agbisit, Ms. Laura Beldin; Ms. Julia Chun; Ms. Hyun Lee; Mr. Praveendharan Meyyan ; Mr. Patrick Mulloy; Ms. May Nivar; Ms. Carla Okouchi; Dr. Marie Sankaran Raval; Mr. Ssunny Shah;

Voting in the Negative: None*

Voting to Abstain: Mr. Justin Lo; Ms. Da Lin Sheth, Mr. Razi Hashmi

*Note – Mr. Hashmi voted no during the meeting but changed his vote to abstain after

Adjournment

- Ms. Nivar adjourned the meeting at 5:28 PM