



Virginia Asian Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, December 2, 2021
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
West Reading Room – Patrick Henry Building
1111 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
Virtual Meeting Details: vaab.virginia.gov/meetings

Minutes

In Attendance:

Virginia Asian Advisory Board Members: Dr. Melody Agbisit (Secretary), Ms. Suja Amir (Vice Chair); Ms. Laura Beldin; Mr. Paul Chhabra; Ms. Rowena Finn; Mr. Tom Fitzpatrick; Dr. Nina Ha; Mr. Razi Hashmi; Mr. Justin Lo; Ms. Salinna Lor; Mr. Bao “Bobby” Ly; Mr. Praveendharan Meyyan; Ms. Carla Okouchi; Dr. Marie Sankaran Raval; Ms. Da Lin Sheth; Ms. Quan Schneider; Mr. Jewan Tiwari; Mr. Henry Yuan

Governor’s Office Staff: Governor Ralph Northam; Ms. Suzanne Holland (Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration); Mr. Shawn Soares (Director of AAPI Outreach); Ms. Traci DeShazor (Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth)

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

Guests: JR Smith

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Board Social

1:00 p.m. Welcome and Call to Order Suja Amir, Vice Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board Meeting Overview

1:05 p.m. September Meeting Minutes and Agenda Approval and December Meeting Agenda Adoption, Melody Agbisit, Secretary, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

December Meeting Agenda Adoption

- Vote to Approve Minutes: Motion Carla Okouchi, Second Praveen
- Vote Approve Agenda: Motion Nina Ha, Second Salinna Lor

1:10 p.m. Public Comment Melody Agbisit, Secretary, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

- No public comments

1:20 p.m. Chair’s Report Suja Amir, Vice Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

Suja Amir opened the floor for comments

- Salina Lor shared that she is nervous about the new administration
- Suzanne Holland and Suja Amir encouraged to look for common ground and encouraged to look at this as an opportunity
- Rowena Finn shared that she participates in racial conversations and that it is important to have these conversations
- Carla Okouchi shared that we need to continue to advocate for the safety and health of our

- students and educators in the public school system
- Justin Lo asked, “is there still a way that the board can organize and convene to comply with FOIA and still be able to do work?”
- Suzanne Holland shared that the committee chairs and chairs call the meetings. We can figure out a way to comply with FOIA because there is more than one way. We will designate a member to be in charge of the FB.
- Laura Beldin shared that we can find our way to align with the new administration we can still have a voice. She encouraged that all administrations wants to do a good job.
- Suja Amir encouraged that we need to start looking at our report and legislative bills. Suggested to look at how each committee impacts the state and think about the VAAB board purpose.

1:30 p.m. Board Administration Update Suzanne Holland, Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration

- Reminder to use board email, utilize social media to share your work and also share the page to friends and colleagues
- New board members need to update your bio and headshot ASAP prior to archiving the current website.
- New administration will set up the new schedule. There is no yearly schedule yet.
- Committee meetings- We are allowed to meet with committees throughout the year virtually as there is no voting during committee meetings.
- It is never too early to start thinking about your new year’s report.

Comments:

- Suja Amir added that JR Smith is coming to speak about the AAPI Caucus

2:01 p.m. AAPI Outreach Update, Shawn Soares, Director of AAPI Outreach

- Accomplishments: Created a newsletter with AAPI updates, events, and resources
- Administrative achievements: Approved undocumented immigrants to have drivers licence; Created RebuildVA to assist small business; Governor released Roadmat to End Hunger- a program to reduce hunger, increase nutrition programs, investment in food desserts and more; Governor created a One VA plan, a strategic plan to increase diversity and equity in the government workforce;
- Legislation passed: Equal Rights Amendment; Virginia Voting Rights Act; Creation of Office of New Americans and the Office of New Americans Advisory Board; Broadband Accessibility and increased broadband infrastructure
- Secretary of the Commonwealth accomplishments: Through the recommendation of the VAAB Anti-Asian Hate climate, the Governor’s administration held six meetings; AAPI history in curriculum; CUltural inclusive meals and calendars; VA historical markers contest
- Secretary of the Commonwealth events: Held AAPI panels for Businesses during Covid-19, Mental Health in AAPI communities and AAPI Heritage Month; Immigrant Heritage Month Panel
- Time Capsule- Governor Northam’s administration included 39 artifacts, one picture that was approved to be in the time capsule is a picture of the Stop Asian Hate Rally
- Board and Commission: Remember about the importance of AAPI being included in the government service. Governor’s Northam’s Administration appointed the most diverse appointments

Comments:

- Henry Yuan asked that if there is state or federal legislation on the horizon that the board should be aware of.
- Suzanne Holland responded that there is movement with language access. Look at the budget

to look for opportunities and look at legislative bills.

- Suja Amir said to Go to the WhiteHouse initiative to get updates
- Nina Ha- Shared about the China Initiative- Concerted effort to identify researchers as spys, even if they are not spys. Has a dampening effect on research and scholars. It affects K-12 and higher education, as well. Worried about curriculum and bans on books.
- Laura Beldin shared that the UCA United Chinese Association is fighting to advocate and stand up for Chinese Educators.

2:00 p.m. Statements from Executive Officer Nominees

- Vote to Approve Virtual Voting- Motion Carla Okouchi; Second Marie Sankaran Raval
- Candidates shared statements

2:15 p.m. Executive Officer Elections Suzanne Holland, Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration

- Vote to elect Chair and Vice Chair without voting: Motion Tom Fitzpatrick, Second Rowena Finn
- Vote to Vote for Secretary: Motion Carla Okouchi, Second Quan Scheider
- Vote for Melody Agbisit for Secretary: Melody Agbisit; Paul Chhabra; Rowena Finn; Justin Lo; Salinna Lor; Da Lin Sheth
- Vote for Nina Ha for Secretary: Suja Amir; Tom Fitzpatrick; Nina Ha; Bobby Ly; Praveen Meyyan; Carla Okouchi; Marie Raval; Quan Schneider; Jewan Tiwari; Henry
- Vote to Abstain: Laura Beldin

3:00 AAPI Budget and Caucus, JR Smith

- Former VAAB Chair and still active in the AAPI Community
- The board has about 30K from a fundraiser. The funds were raised in 2013-14 in connection to the VA Summit. Need to decide what to do with the funds. The “new Dennis Johnson” can help with accessing the funds.
- Suggested the VAAB to consider using the funds for the AAPI caucus which gives you certain rights to propose legislation and advocacy. The caucus leadership would like to hire someone to help the caucus function and are currently fundraising to support the position. They need about 60K annually for the position. The AAPI caucus initiative aligns with VAAB’s work and advocacy.
- Board discussed logistics of the AAPI caucus funding.
- Traci shared considerations that the funds were raised for a specific purpose and that they need to look into how to access and transfer those funds
- Motion to donate 10K to the AAPI Caucus: Motion Tom Fitzpatrick; Second Praveen

Comments:

- Justin Lo shared that he is in support of the spirit of the initiative, but wants to make sure the legality of it
- Suzanne Holland shared that there are still a lot of questions but the board can still vote to make decisions on how to position the VAAB in relation to the AAPI caucus.
- Suja Amir shared that it also depends on how the resolution is worded.
- Justin Bell shared that he still needs to do research on the feasibility and legality of this but it is safe to say that we are interested in looking into this further.
- Traci DeShazor shared that the Office of Support Services is in charge but it may not be feasible to get an answer right away due to the transition.

3:46 p.m. Committee Breakouts Business & Trade; Civic Engagement; Education; Health

3:15 p.m. Break

4:30 p.m. Board Discussi on Planning for the year ahead: Suja Amir Vice Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

- Business and Trade, Praveen Meyyan- Continue to work on last year's recommendation, want to do SWAM workshops to sign up people with language access
- Education, Carla Okouchi- Put together committee dates, continue with real talk series- AAPI in higher ed, mixed race, immigrants and refugees, art students, racial profiling, and other issues
- Civic Engagement, Justin Lo- Identified four projects- AAPI judicial representation- mentorship of AAPI lawyers, logistics of process, bar association participation, election process and election integrity; Language access bills; QQualitative study on outreach strategies
- Health- Continue to look at current initiatives and ways to expand to include more aspects of healthcare and the healthcare workforce.

Comments:

- Traci DeShazor- Be mindful of incoming position on guns

4:45 p.m. Budget 101 and Policy Process Overview, Suzanne Holland, Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration

- Discussed the Legislative and Budget timeline. Virginia has a balanced budget which means that 3/4th of the budget is promised money, and the rest is discretionary spending.
- Traci DeShazor shared that she wants us to know the process so we can be more effective during the transition. Cautioned that language really does matter and that information isn't always received the way it is being presented.

4:45 p.m. Closing Remarks and Announcements Newly Elected Chair

5:00 p.m. Adjournment Virginia Asian Advisory Board

- Vote to end the meeting; Motion Melody Agbisit; Second Quan Schneider

Additional Announcements & Notes:

- 📅 Next VAAB Meeting:
 - TBD 2022 – Schedule with new Administration
- 📅 Next Committee Meetings: TBD; virtual
- 📅 Annual Report Timeline:
 - December – March: Information gathering; preliminary idea formation
- 📅 Board Website: VAAB.Virginia.Gov
- 📅 Board Email: VAAB@Governor.Virginia.Gov