



General Membership Meeting via Zoom
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m.

Summary of South County Federation General Membership Meeting

Quick recap

During the meeting, many topics were discussed, including administrative reports. The February meeting minutes were approved unanimously, and the March financial report was presented. The members also received an update from the newest delegate, Rozia Henson Jr., who shared recent activities and stressed the importance of constituent services, keeping everyone informed and engaged. Mateo Dunne, the Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) Mount Vernon District representative, gave updates on a virtual town hall meeting and state budget negotiations, a topic of significant importance that keeps the audience informed about the current political landscape. He emphasized the significance of the state budget and the need to be mindful of increasing property taxes, further highlighting the relevance of his updates.

Summary

Call to Order and Financial Report

The South County Federation (SCF) President Wendy Henley called the meeting to order. She also motioned to have the February minutes approved. Nick Firth seconded the motion, and there were no abstentions. The minutes were then unanimously approved. In the absence of the treasurer, James Fenton, Ms. Henley presented the financial report, providing a comprehensive overview of the organization's economic health. She noted no changes to either account and an expected increase in the money market account at the end of the month. The treasurer's report indicated that the organization had \$6,354.21 in the Nuveen (TIA CREFF) money market account and \$1017.31 in the Truist checking account. Finally, they departed from the agenda to hear an update from Delegate Henson.

19th District, Virginia State Delegate Update

Delegate Rozia Henson Jr., representing House District 19, has been actively engaging with the public, discussing his platform with women in Virginia and meeting with mayors and city council members in Washington, DC. His crucial role in passing a budget that addressed teacher salaries and mental health needs across the Commonwealth underscores the impact of his work. During the meeting, he reiterated his focus on constituent services, promising to find the best answers or direct people to the appropriate person. Ms. Henley welcomed Max Jenkins, Delegate Henson's Chief of Staff, to attend the monthly meetings if the delegate was unavailable, ensuring our continued engagement. Delegate Henson also expressed his plans to organize a July Fourth parade and encouraged constituents to contact his office for one-on-one meetings and further discussions about his campaign platforms, fostering a sense of inclusivity and participation.

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Mount Vernon District School Board Report

Mateo Dunne, the representative for the FCPS Mt. Vernon District School Board, recently provided an update on the Mt. Vernon Virtual Budget Town Hall meeting and the ongoing negotiations regarding the State budget. He emphasized the importance of the state budget, which can potentially address a \$90 million deficit in the FCPS budget. Additionally, he highlighted that the state has underfunded Fairfax County by around \$568 million in recent years.

Representative Dunne discussed the issue of increasing property taxes, particularly affecting residents on fixed or low incomes. He highlighted the need to be mindful of this as they strive to improve schools. He also spoke about the capital improvement plan for school construction and renovation, expressing his intention to reform procurement contracts to expedite the process and improve facilities' quality. Representative Dunne further emphasized the urgency of the Fentanyl crisis, urging caution when purchasing pills and raising awareness about the dangers of the drug. He concluded by expressing his openness to questions from the audience. A community member and SCF Vice President, Nick Firth, expressed his appreciation to Representative Dunne for his assistance with an issue involving a third party, a public school vendor.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Report

Ms. Henley handed over the floor to Supervisor Dan Storck. He talked about his recent work on the Economic Development Committee and the Land Use Committee. He also discussed a new resource that entrepreneurs and small businesses can use. Additionally, he explained the decision-making process related to data center reports. Supervisor Storck emphasized the importance of maintaining environmental regulations and involving the community in discussions on the placement of future data centers. He discussed the potential for developing data centers in the Mount Vernon district, emphasizing the substantial tax benefits it could bring, as seen in Loudoun County's successful model. He expressed concern over the high real estate tax rate and the need to find alternative sources of income.

Supervisor Storck stressed the importance of state funding for education, noting that Fairfax County is underfunded by the state, resulting in a higher real estate tax rate. He suggested that if the state allocated more funds, it could lead to a 10% real estate tax rate reduction. Furthermore, he shared information about the county's budget, stating that the county executive asked departments for their preferred and lower budgets, leading to the identification of 80 positions to cut. Larry Clark questioned the legality and motivations behind operating at a profit, prompting Supervisor Storck to promise to gather more information. The Supervisor also discussed the decision to retain the name of Fort Belvoir, emphasizing its non-Confederate history and its association with Quaker farming methods.

South Fairfax Chamber Report

The meeting continued with Mr. Casey Whitmarsh's South Fairfax Chamber report. Mr. Whitmarsh reported on the March small business spotlight featuring ENJ Diagnostics, a patient service center that provides drug and alcohol, DNA, and clinical laboratory testing. He encouraged attendees to establish connections with them.

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Mr. Whitmarsh addressed upcoming events, such as the ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house for the Adapt Clubhouse and Fairfax Service Hub with brain injury services on March 20th, the 7th Annual Ides of Bark Dog Festival at Grist Mill Park, and the 3rd Annual Lorton Spring Fling at South County High School on April 20th. He also introduced a new program called Talent Up Fairfax. This program helps Fairfax County business owners connect with Fairfax County residents to allow for the placement of employees and allow the business owners to potentially qualify for funding to go towards aspects of their newly qualified employee's income.

Fairfax County Park Authority Update

From the Park Authority's perspective, Mr. Linwood Gorham expressed his satisfaction with the current year's budget. He attributed this success to better organization and improved communication with the county executive and board members. Additionally, Mr. Gorham updated the team on the status of various projects in the Mount Vernon district. He assured everyone that all these projects were on schedule and hoped to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony in a few months.

During the meeting, Marty Schirmacher raised several issues that Mr. Gorham addressed. These issues included concerns about buildings on Lorton Road and construction in the woods near the apple orchard. Mr. Gorham clarified that the construction tape was for a townhouse approved three years ago, and there was no need for concern. Moreover, he assured everyone that the old statue found on the bike trails would not be disturbed without proper knowledge of its origin.

Special Presentation- Workforce Dwelling Units Program Update

Ms. Meghan Van Dam, the Director of the Affordable Housing Development Division, gave a presentation on the Workforce Dwelling Units Program and answered questions from the attendees. She also shared a link to the program's website in the chat. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/homeownership>

Important Note

Members of the South County Federation, I am very disappointed to inform you that our recording of the March meeting was unsuccessful, and we could only capture the first few updates presented during the meeting. As an organization, we understand the importance of transparency and openness in our work, and we are taking the necessary steps to investigate the cause of this issue and prevent it from happening again. We want to assure you that we are committed to capturing the minutes of the upcoming April meeting accurately, reflecting the spirit and content of the proceedings. We appreciate your support, participation, and understanding during this time as we strive to deliver the highest service standards. Thank you for your continued commitment to the South County Federation.

Wendy Henley
President

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