

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION

MEETING NOTES – SEPTEMBER 10, 2025
DEL PEPPER COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

ATTENDANCE

Kate Garvey	Dan Edwards	Isabel Schultz
Suzanne Hess	Angi Green (Chair)	
Rose Dawson	Dr. Marcia Jackson	
Dr. Michelle Reif	Daniel Daponte	
Kobie Griffin	Catherine Clinger	
Laura Durham	Terry Glover	

Excused Absent

Julie Murphy	Councilwoman Sarah Bagley
Amanda Ruff	Councilwoman Alyia Gaskins
Nicole Davi	Christine Raino
Meredith Forbes	Donna Kenley
Ursula Rocha	
Carrie Phillips	

Unexcused Absent

Laura Funes Quinones
Gennet Negussie

Staff

Barbara Paulson
Chelsea Eickert (Virtual)
Noraine Buttar

Guests

Allen Lomax
Wendy Ginsberg

Sean Curry

WELCOME

The Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC) Chair, Angi Green, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She stated that planning and level-setting would take place over the first couple of Commission meetings. She introduced the first speaker, Wendy Ginsburg, who represents the city in Richmond and in D.C. on state and federal issues.

PRESENTATION BY WENDY GINSBURG, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR, CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE, ON THE CITY'S LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

Ms. Ginsberg stated that she was currently gathering legislative proposals for the city's Legislative Package to be submitted to our representatives in Richmond. These proposals should fall into one of three categories: 1) key priorities, which are issues that members can patron, or sponsor; 2) ideas or other legislative priorities, for which we'd seek a lower level of support; and 3) general principles, or statements such as "we believe in reproductive freedom," etc.

She stated that the deadline for these comments is **October 3rd**. She cautioned that we should narrow our priorities to one or two key ideas.

Ms. Ginsburg then takes the submitted comments and creates a master document which she will give to the Mayor and Mr. McPike. It is presented before the City Council in November and voted on in late November/December. She then uses this document to guide her work in Richmond beginning 1/15/26.

Allen Lomax asked if there was a public hearing before the City Council voted on this. Ms. Ginsburg said there is. Allen said that he remembered that there was a low attendance for this hearing and that it would be valuable, in his view, for us to attend the hearing.

Dan Edwards said that an organization called Voices for Children advocates on the state level for many of the issues that concern us.

PRESENTATION BY SEAN CURRY, PUBLIC HEALTH PLANNER, ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT, ON THE RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Sean Curry discussed the results of the recently completed Community Health Assessment conducted by the Alexandria Health Department. He stated that while the overall health of the citizens of Alexandria is good, there are large neighborhood differences. Therefore, while in previous years the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) sought to address broad city-wide issues, health leaders saw an opportunity this year to focus on specific neighborhoods in need: Arlandria and Landmark/Van Dorn, as well as continuing to focus on mental health as an issue of concern across the entire city.

CHIP is a community-driven process, so its leaders are now in the recruitment and coalition-building phase, seeking to engage individuals and organizations interested in tackling these issues. The coalitions will take the lead on helping these neighborhoods and the issue of mental health, developing plans, metrics, and methods. He encouraged CYFCC members to join CHIP in this effort.

Allen Lomax pointed out that CHIP leaders are working with Chelsea and ACPS leaders in the development of the CHIP, the CYFCC 5-year plan (the CYCP) and the ACPS 5-year strategic plan as part of a "Unified Planning Team" so that the plans complement each other. Community voice – particularly youth voices – is a priority, and Youth Speak Up events will be held in both targeted neighborhoods.

Dr. Marcia Jackson stated that mental health is a key component of the ACPS strategic plan as well.

Allen stated that addressing mental health, or nurturing kids, happens not only at school but also after school, and we need to focus on out of school time programs as well.

Isabel Shultz stated that students getting their nursing certification at ACHS might be very interested in participating in the CHIP process.

PRESENTATION BY CHELSEA EICKERT, COORDINATOR OF THE ALEXANDRIA CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN

Chelsea walked the Commission through a series of slides that examined the results of the CYCP Priority-Setting Rubric. This rubric reflected the Commissioners' views on which issues from the Youth Needs Assessment were the ones that the Commission should prioritize in the development of the next Children and Youth Community Plan.

She shared a slide that showed that the CYFCC Executive Committee had recommended that the Commission focus on the issues that were identified by youth completing the survey as the most important. These issues were violence prevention, cost of living, and school facilities.

Catherine Clinger stated that the "feeling valued or heard" issue could be a through-line as we focus on these issues, if we incorporate procedures ensuring that youth voice is heard throughout our processes.

Isabel stated that if we pick these youth-identified issues, students will feel heard. She stated that the school nutrition budget has been cut, and therefore we might be able to address that issue. She had heard from many students that the size of ACHS – nearly 5,000 students – bears some responsibility for students' feeling unsafe.

Kobie Griffin asked for clarification regarding which issues related to ACPS and which related more to the City of Alexandria. He also pointed out that he saw equity issues with regard to students' feeling valued and with regard to post-secondary planning.

Isabel asked if NVCC could partner with ACPS to provide more guidance.

Kate Garvey stated that we should define the terms that we're using when we discuss our priorities and ensure that we know specifically what we are referring to.

Chelsea provided more guidance about what the terms "cost of living" and "school facilities" meant to those who completed the Youth Needs Assessment. "Cost of Living" referred to economic security, food security, health care, housing and child care. "School Facilities" referred to maintenance and custodial services, crowded infrastructure, school bus transportation, lunch services and loss of the Lunch and Learn program. Examples of Violence Prevention included bullying, safe and walkable neighborhoods, school safety, fights, gun violence, and sexual assault on campus.

Dr. Michelle Rief stated that there are many initiatives underway that address the Commission's identified priorities, such as ALX Beyond, ACT for Alexandria's Youth Employment

workgroup, the City's Parks and Rec Department's emphasis on developing creative spaces and programs for teens and middle schoolers, and the ACPS initiative to expand middle school sports. She also highlighted the Academies (smaller learning communities), the Peer Advocates program, and the student representatives on the School Board.

She stated that after-school activities could be seen as a key component of violence prevention.

Catherine stated that after-school programs were one of our priorities last year, and that it made sense to continue that focus in the upcoming CYCP. Dan, Angi and Dr. Jackson agreed.

Laura Durham stated that she agreed that we should further define our priorities – define the terms.

Catherine Clinger made a motion to adopt the following statement: "The main priorities of the CYFCC are:

- **Violence Prevention**, with a focus on out of school time activities
- **Cost of Living**, with a focus on post-secondary plans and economic security for families
- **School Climate**

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Angi stated that the 2025-2026 Commission would have a group of Commissioners focusing on advocacy. Catherine offered to lead this group.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.