

**Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Minutes of Membership Meeting on September 19, 2002**

Call to Order. Art Wells called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. in the Packard Center. Members attending are listed on the attached sign-in sheet. A.Wells reminded everyone that The Federation newsletter had been mailed and then introduced the guest speakers Delegate Vivian Watts, Supervisor Gerald Connolly and County Executive, Anthony Griffin.

Delegate Vivian Watts spoke to the two proposed State Constitutional Amendments and the two proposed Statewide Bond issues.

Proposed State Constitutional Amendments

Question 1: Shall the Constitution of Virginia be amended to permit the Supreme Court to consider, as part of its original jurisdiction, claims of actual innocence presented by convicted felons in the cases and manner provided by the General Assembly? Delegate Watts: Virginia has the 21-day rule. From the time someone is convicted and sentenced, the person would only have 21 days to appeal that conviction by presenting new evidence. Rather than capital offenses going through the Governor's Office, this Constitutional Amendment will relieve the Governor from the process of pardoning felons. The Circuit Court will look at DNA and other scientific evidence. If the courts agree that there is merit, then the case will be passed on to the State Supreme Court. The reason the State Supreme Court will handle all of the cases is to give an even look at the evidence.

Question 2: Shall the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow localities by ordinance rather than the General Assembly by law, to exempt property from taxation that is used for charitable and certain other purposes, subject to the restrictions and conditions provided by general law? ? Delegate Watts: Currently under the Constitution the General Assembly has to approve any tax exemption from local real estate taxes. Every now and then the General Assembly would come up with a proposal to exempt property that the local government did not agree should be exempted. This amendment takes the General Assembly out of the process. If the local government decides that they want this exemption, it is their decision.

Proposed Statewide Bond Issues

Question 1: Shall Chapters 827 and 859, Acts of the General Assembly of 2002, authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the maximum amount of \$900,488,645 pursuant to Article X, Section 9(b) of the Constitution of Virginia for capital projects for educational facilities, take effect? Delegate Watts: These bonds are for capital improvements for higher education. Just as we have to improve the facilities of our local schools as they get older, our higher education facilities face the same problems in renovating and expanding. There will be \$100M for James Madison, \$80M for George Mason, \$72M for Virginia Tech, \$67M for the University of Virginia and \$185M for community colleges. [Delegate Watts passed out a 10-page list of every project.]

Question 2: Shall Chapters 854 and 884, Acts of the General Assembly of 2002, authorizing the issuance of general obligation bonds of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the maximum amount of \$119,040,000 pursuant to Article X, Section 9(b) of the Constitution of Virginia for capital projects for parks and recreational facilities, take effect? Delegate Watts: Virginia is either last or second to the last in the amount spent on parks. \$30M will be for land acquisition, \$30M for the Chesapeake Bay cleanup which should be considerably more and the remainder will be for renovation projects within the parks.

Supervisor Gerald Connolly complimented The Federation on the good work it does; acknowledged a number of colleagues and then spoke to the regional issues.

Fairfax County Referenda

Question: Shall the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, contract a debt, borrow money, and issue bonds of Fairfax County, Virginia, in addition to the parks and park facilities bonds previously authorized in the maximum aggregate principal amount of \$20,000,000 for the purpose of providing funds with any other available funds, to finance, including reimbursement to the County for temporary financing for, the cost of providing additional parks and park facilities, including the acquisition, construction, development and equipment of additional parks and park facilities and the development and improvement of existing parks and park facilities by the Fairfax County Park Authority? Supervisor Connolly: This is an unscheduled bond referendum that was added because the price of land has escalated and because the County is running out of opportunities. The County did not want to miss out on purchasing a parcel in the future because of a lack of resources. \$15M will be for acquisition and \$5M for development of park facilities

Question: Shall the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, contract a debt, borrow money, and issue bonds of Fairfax County, Virginia, in addition to the public safety facilities bonds previously authorized, in the maximum aggregate principal amount of \$60,000,000 for the purpose of providing funds, with any other available funds, to finance the cost of providing funds, with any other available funds, to finance the cost of providing additional public safety facilities, including the construction of a public safety communications center and an emergency operations center, renovation of court facilities and construction, reconstruction, enlargement and equipment of fire and rescue stations, including fire and rescue stations owned by volunteer organizations? Supervisor Connolly: \$29M is for a public safety command center. After September 11, 2001 there was a wakeup call that Fairfax County needed to revamp its emergency command center. The phone banks need to be upgraded and while the County has received federal dollars, the Federal Government has stipulated that money be spent for training. There is \$6M in this bond referendum for the Fire Department for the operation of existing stations and money for appropriating a new Hazmat unit. During the anthrax scare, there were a lot of copycat letters and the Hazmat unit, already a busy unit, received about a thousand calls to examine those letters. Fairfax County only has one Hazmat unit and the County would like to relocate it. \$25M is for the Jennings Judicial Court renovation. Security is an issue as well as changes in the building code and updated requirements make the need for this imminent.

Regional Referendum

Question: Shall an additional sales and use tax of one-half of one percent be imposed in Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Fairfax, the City of Falls Church, the City of Manassas, and the City of Manassas Park, with the revenues to be used solely for the regional transportation projects and programs as specified in Chapter 853 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2002? Supervisor Connolly: The expectation if this passes is that there will be \$5B dollars for transportation for Northern Virginia; \$2.8B of that is specified by the General Assembly in terms of what projects will be funded. About 40 percent of the designated funds are for transit. Of the \$2.2B undesignated known as "Paygo", the new Northern Virginia Transportation Authority has said that at least 50 percent of that will be for transit. The critics have said that this is a road bill. Not true. My legacy, should I live long enough, will be to get rail to Tysons. This bill, if we pass it, will give us more money than at any time in the history of Virginia. This money can also be used for operations. It will allow us to fund, along with the special tax district funds, Fairfax County's share of rail to Dulles; it will allow us to fund the rail on the median to Centreville down Highway 66; it will allow us to fund the infrastructure

renewal for Metro. Fairfax County's share of the cost over the next five years for Metro is \$118M and The County does not have it. This will keep us from competing with the general funds for things like education.

All of the funds will stay in Northern Virginia. The state, by law, must maintain its current level of effort in the funding formula. Delegate Watts addressed this issue as well with a detailed background of how The state appropriates funds to the localities including how gasoline taxes are allocated, how road miles, secondary, urban and primary, are counted. In the end, this bill is not the only way funds can be raised for transportation in Virginia. There are a combination of federal, state, user fees (gasoline tax), private sector (special taxing districts) and the local funding bill which will help to meet the needs of the region.

Audit Report of the Treasurer's Records. Tom Stanners, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave a resounding positive response to the Federation for the good job done on meeting the six recommendations from last year's audit. The audit committee found that all receipts and expenses were clearly documented and reasonable. There was a finding that the 2003 budget had not been approved and because of that finding a recommendation that perhaps the bylaws should be changed to reflect how the Federation does its work. The audit report was turned over to the President who, in turn, complimented C. Dane, Treasurer, for the fine job he did. C. Dane stated that the budget had been approved for 2003 and the proposed budget for FY 02-03 was included in the treasurer's records. However, documentation that the budget was approved at the May meeting, as stipulated in the Federation By-laws, was not in the treasurer's records. He was asked to submit an addendum to the report and the motion to approve was passed unanimously.

Representatives to Committees and Task Forces. Art Wells introduced Maya Huber who is serving as the Federation's representative to the Occoquan Watershed New Millennium Task Force. She announced that the Task Force has had its first meeting with its new Chair, David Bulova. A. Wells is our representative to the 2002 Bond Referendum Citizens Committee. It is organized and chartered by the Board of Supervisors to go out to the various communities between now and Election Day to explain the referenda. Jim Davis is the Federation representative on the Engineering Standards Review Committee. He gave an extensive report that will be included in the next Federation Bulletin.

Website: A. Wells brought a printed page of The Federation web site located at www.Fairfaxfederation.org. The sample was shown to the membership with a request to visit this web site frequently. Merrily Pierce maintains the web site, keeps it current and special appreciation was expressed for her work.

Approval of the Minutes for the Membership Meeting on June 20. After a motion and second, the minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Charles Dane distributed and reviewed his report. While The Federation is in much better shape this year compared to last year because bills are being paid on time, The Federation still has a major effort to make on membership.

New Business.

- October 17, 2002 will be the next membership meeting. The topic will be the 2003 Legislative Agenda
- November 21, 2002 will be on the FY 2004 County and State Budgets
- December 19, 2002 will be on emergency preparedness and public safety.
- Working on Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Handout from the web site about the topics covered over the summer.

Committee Reports:

1. Education Committee – C. Dane
Education Committee is having a meeting next Monday, September 23, 7:30 at the Packard Building
Need a Representative to the Human Relations Advisory Committee for Public Schools
2. Human Services Committee – R. Steele
The FY2003 budget stays the course; the FY2004 budget is looking for another decrease.
The next meeting will be next Monday night September 23; Tony Griffin will be presenting his perspective on the FY2004 budget. Anyone interested in joining the Federation's Human Services Committee is welcome.
3. Legislative Committee – S. Ormsby
The next membership meeting will consider the legislative program. The 2002 legislative program is on the web. Any suggestions for the 2003 program are welcome.
4. Transportation Committee – G. Smith
Jack Herry plans to sue the VRPT because they did not adequately include bus rail rapid transit; the Federation has also stated that they did not adequately address monorail in the Dulles Corridor Transit Draft EIS. Jack Herry is also challenging the thirteen plan amendment nominations in and around the proposed Metro stations at Tysons.

Invitation from the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce

The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce has invited the Federation to partner with them and the Northern Virginia Roundtable to co-sponsor a debate on the transportation referendum to be held Thursday, September 26, 2002 at a luncheon held from noon to 2:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Premiere in Tysons Corner.

The Chamber of Commerce has asked only to use the name of the Federation on the marketing materials and to supply the materials to the Federation membership.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment – J. Parnes

The Fairfax County Park Authority is negotiating to partner with DC United to build nine soccer fields and an administrative building in the Residential Conservation [R-C] zoning district. The zoning ordinance has to be modified to allow the facility to be constructed. The Sully District Council is going to review this at its next land use committee meeting. The Western Fairfax County Citizens Association will also be reviewing this proposal. This has Fairfax County implications and the Federation needs to be involved.

Membership – C. Hawn

The Office of Public Affairs is reconstituting the Task Force and they will be sending out a survey to every Homeowner Association. Please fill it out; follow the directions and get it back to the OPA.

Adjournment. The membership meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Dolores Moseke, Recording Secretary.