

REDUCING VACANCY RATES OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



Prepared for: Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

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On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment.



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KEY ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

BACs-an all-encompassing, collective abbreviation for a county's various boards, committees, authorities, commissions and Task Forces.

BOS- Board of Supervisors; unless indicated otherwise will always refer to the elected Albemarle County Board of Supervisors

CAC- Community Advisory Committee -In Albemarle County, seven different neighborhood community advisory committees serve to collaborate with stakeholders to determine ways to improve their respective communities. Working through an inclusive selection process, CACs make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for improvements that have strong community support. The funding for the projects comes from the Neighborhood Improvement Funding Initiative (see below).

CIP- Capital Improvement Program

CNE-Center for Nonprofit Excellence

COI-Conflict of Interest

CTAC-Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee

EDA-Economic Development Authority

FOIA-Freedom of Information Act is a federal (and state) law that generally provides that any person has a right, enforceable in court, to obtain access to public records and documents.

NIFI- Neighborhood Improvement Funding initiative -provides funding for quality of life projects in the County's development areas.

Meeting: Under Virginia Freedom of Information Act, a "meeting" is any gathering of three or more members of a public body (or a quorum, if quorum is less than three) to discuss or transact business of the public body. The law applies to all discussions, deliberations, and formal action.

Quorum: The minimum number of members of an organization that must be present at any of the meetings to make the proceedings of the meeting valid.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Albemarle County, Virginia has consistently been unable to populate its numerous county boards, committees, and authorities (BACs) fully with citizen volunteers. Successfully engaging citizens to serve on these civic boards is one of the County's overarching strategic priorities. Those that are serving tend to fill multiple board positions or are reappointed due to lack of application from new volunteers. The County seeks input from a wide, diverse citizenry for innovative solutions to problems, and inclusive decision-making. This policy paper provides background information and research on the potential causes for and answers to low volunteer rates, discusses volunteer motivation and reviews volunteer programs from peer municipalities.

In this report, I provide four options for increasing the volunteer rate in Albemarle County. I propose the following options:

1. Let Present Trends Continue-maintaining the status quo
2. Develop a Comprehensive Outreach Program
3. Initiate a Volunteer Training Program
4. Hire a Volunteer Coordinator

I evaluated each of the above alternatives based on four established criteria: (1) Meeting the Goal (2) Political Feasibility (3) Administrative Feasibility, and (4) Estimated Costs

Based on my analysis and comprehensive comparison of each alternative, I recommend that Albemarle County, Virginia can best recruit new volunteers to their boards and commissions by implementing a comprehensive outreach program-Option #2. The range of possibilities with which to enact this program are extensive depending on the immediate objectives of the County.

"Whatever community organization, whether it's a woman's organization, or fighting for racial justice...you will get satisfaction out of doing something to give back to the community that you never get in any other way."

-Ruth Bader Ginsburg

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Albemarle County, Virginia is a municipality with approximately 107,000 residents located in Central Virginia. To engage the community in an advisory and participatory manner, the County attempts to appoint more than two hundred and fifty citizen volunteers to serve on approximately fifty different boards, committees, and commissions that are constituted in the County. These can range in number from fifteen volunteers on a neighborhood community advisory committee to one volunteer on a Criminal Justice Board. Some of these boards are state-mandated, the County has initiated others over the years. Like many municipalities across the nation, it has become increasingly difficult to identify and attract volunteers willing to serve, particularly as a representational cohort of the County's diverse neighborhoods, occupations, and income levels. According to the County's website, on average, 20% or more of board positions are vacant at any given time. The goal is to have no more than a 5% vacancy rate at any given time.

Albemarle County has made numerous attempts to increase and retain volunteers who are willing and able to serve, with minimal success. Serving as both advisors, and in some instances, as subject matter experts, to the Board of Supervisors, and as a representative voice from the community in which they reside or work, these volunteers are critical to policy innovation and effective, inclusive decision-making. Equally important is having a meeting that follows the Virginia public meeting requirements; if there is no quorum then discussions are limited and voting for an action or policy cannot be consummated. Until the boards and commissions are appropriately populated with non-elected participants, the County is unable to maximize and benefit from its citizen input.

BACKGROUND

Albemarle County, Virginia

Albemarle County, Virginia was founded by the Virginia General Assembly in 1744. The county was named after the titular Governor of Virginia at that time, Willem Anne van Keppel, 2nd Earl of Albemarle. After several partitions, the county's boundaries were finalized in 1777. Albemarle County is in central Virginia, 110 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. and 70 miles west of Richmond, the state capital. In the center of the County is the City of Charlottesville. Albemarle County is located within the Charlottesville Metropolitan Statistical Area which also include the Fluvanna County, Greene County and the City of Charlottesville.

Albemarle County spans 726 square miles with a population density of 137.3 people per square mile. Five percent of the County is designed for growth with the remaining ninety-five to be maintained in a rural zoning complement. 107,000 citizens make Albemarle County home; with 20.1% under the age of eighteen and 17.8% over the age of sixty-five. Albemarle County's population is projected to increase by 42.7% by 2040, to more than 142,000 people (Burton, Echols & Fox, 2018). The County's racial diversity is growing but remains below the national and states levels (Burton, et. al 2018). Further, the County is seeing a steady influx of retirees, but a low number of entry-level workers. (Burton, et al. 2018).

The County is governed by a Board of Supervisors (BoS) elected by qualified voters for four-year terms staggered at two-year intervals. The BoS is composed of members from each of the six magisterial districts- Rivanna, Rio, Scottsville, Jack Juett, Samuel Miller, and Whitehall. A Chair and Vice-Chair are chosen annually among the BoS. Day to day operations and implementation of Board policies is the responsibility of a County Executive who is appointed by the BoS. A seven-member School Board is elected by County voters to serve as oversight for school issues. A Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the School Board to provide leadership and management of all public-school issues. The County also includes the independent Town of Scottsville which is governed by an elected town council.

The County's fiscal year 2019 adopted combined capital and operating budget totals \$432,017,514. The bulk of revenues come from general property taxes and the highest percentage of expenditures are those associated with transfers to the Albemarle County School District.

The County's Mission is to enhance the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through the provision of the highest level of public service consistent with the prudent use of public funds. Core values are integrity, innovation, stewardship and learning. The stated strategic priorities include *Engaged Citizens* as its number one overarching goal.

Albemarle County Boards, Committees, Commissions & Authorities

Although county citizens are encouraged to attend the myriad of BOS and School Board public meetings, the primary mode of engagement and exchange of ideas is through boards, committees, commission, and authorities (BACs). The County lists sixty-three boards on its website, of which approximately fifty require the appointment of volunteer citizens. These BACs fall into various categories: state, regional, county specific, and community-based. A list of these BACs can be found at Appendix 1.

These BACs cover a broad range of interests and issues. State BACs include Zoning Board of Appeals, Economic Development Authority, and the Agricultural and Forestal District Advisory Board, among others. Although these BACs are state-mandated, populating them is the responsibility of the BoS. Regional boards are those BACs whose subject matter is of regional concern such that members from designated municipalities serve on them. Examples of regional boards include the Jefferson-Madison Regional Library Board, the JAUNT Board, and Rivanna River Basin Commission. County-specific BACs include the Community Advisory Committees (“CACs”), Historic Preservation Committee, and the Architectural Review Board. Additionally, Albemarle County has BoS-appointed citizens serving on specific non-profit organization boards such as the Jefferson Area Board for Aging (“JABA”) and the YMCA Board.

The duties and responsibilities of a volunteer BAC members range broadly. On many BACs, the members provide assistance, community feedback, and input to County staff and BoS on matters related to the implementation of the County’s Master Plan. Some of the BACs have policy-making authority and others serve as an advisory arm of the BoS on specific subjects.

Albemarle County is facing the problem of attracting citizens to serve on these municipal BACs. At any given time, there is a twenty percent vacancy rate. Further, those that are serving tend to fill multiple board positions or are reappointed due to lack of applications from new volunteers. The County would also like to see a more representative sample of county residents on the BACs-those from varying neighborhoods, occupations, and income.

Fully populated BACs ensure that a quorum can be met, and the business required of the BAC can be conducted. Under the Virginia Code §2-3701 BAC meetings are public meeting and are subject to specific rules. Failure to meet a quorum has adverse effects. Without a quorum, determinative proceedings of the meeting are invalid. Further, the meeting might then be adjourned, causing inconveniences to volunteer members, staff, and citizen attendees, who are present. Moreover, the business of the BAC is delayed, sometimes to great detriment.

Through interviews of elected officials, county staff, external users of public committees and members, both past and present, a current picture of the County’s volunteer

acquisition process emerges. Additional collaborating sources include the County's website, its FY 19 Adopted Budget and written documentation provided by the County.

The County's process for recruitment and appointment of volunteers is inconsistent. From a communication standpoint, volunteer solicitation consists of a posting of specific BAC vacancies on the County's website and through limited publication in the Legal Notices section of the largest circulation geographic newspaper (The Daily Progress). The primary notification appears to be through word of mouth.

There seem to be two general ways a volunteer will be appointed to a BAC. The first, and most frequent, is that a BoS appoints someone they know or someone who has been recommended to them. Sometimes a formal application is filled out, and sometimes it isn't. The second way is if a citizen wants to pursue a volunteer position, they will visit the County's website where the vacancies are posted.

A one-page application would be filled out for a specific board vacancy and submitted. There is no opportunity for indicating a priority interest in more than one vacancy. ***The application is received by the BoS Clerk who provides it to both the BAC chair and the elected supervisor for the magisterial district if the vacancy is a district appointment. The volunteer applicant may be contacted, may be interviewed, or neither. The application goes before the entire Board of Supervisors in closed session for comments and then is voted upon during the public meeting where the public may comment.***

At some point, the person is voted upon by the full BoS. If approved for an appointment, the Deputy Clerk of the Board then sends a letter to the prospective volunteer informing them of the appointment.

Each BAC has its own set of bylaws or charters with differing rules, procedures and processes for everything from governance, meetings, subject proficiency levels, and so on.

BACs meet at various intervals; some meet bi-weekly; some meet monthly, some meet quarterly, and some convene on an as-needed basis. Times vary as well, from anytime during the day and evening hours. Board of Zoning Appeals, the Board of Equalization, the Jail Authority Board, Local Board of Building Code Appeals, and the Planning Commission are the only BACS that receive an honorarium stipend for meeting attendance.

About a third of the various BACs require that those serving have specific qualifications, sometimes making it more difficult to recruit volunteer members. There are 276 required appointee positions; of which 254 require citizen appointments from the BoS. Eight are appointed by the sitting Circuit Court Judge (five for the Board of Zoning Appeals and three for the Electoral Board). Four people are appointed by the Planning Commission to serve on the 5th and Avon Community Advisory Board (two), CIP Oversight Committee (one), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Technical Committee (one). It should be noted that the BoS appoint the Planning Commission itself. Another point to

make is that these numbers do not include citizen volunteers in the Albemarle County Sheriff's Reserve Division, the six Albemarle County Volunteer Fire & Rescue departments, or the Albemarle County School District.

According to the Center for Non-Profit Excellence ("CNE") in Charlottesville, there are between 600-900 nonprofit organizations in the Charlottesville-Albemarle County area alone, all of which utilize volunteer services. The reason for such a range is that religious organizations (i.e. churches) and many educational entities (i.e. public schools) are automatically considered nonprofit organizations under Internal Revenue Code rules; they are not required to formally establish themselves as such, and all of these entities utilize volunteers to assist with programs and events. CNE does not keep track of those. Additionally, this calculation does not include any of the city, county or surrounding municipal volunteer BACs.

While the focus of this project is to identify ways to increase volunteers, the County's process is problematic and will be addressed in the implementation section of the report.

Smart Practices of Peer Municipalities

Albemarle County considers thirteen municipalities in Virginia as peer counties when contemplating substantive changes in policy and practices. Since all Virginia municipalities have volunteer BACs, a look at some of the practices of these peer communities was in order. To have an easier comparison, the following demographics, from the US Census Bureau, were recorded for each of the thirteen counties:

- Population; Population per square mile
- Population % of White, non-Hispanic; African American; Hispanic; Asian
- Number of Veterans
- Population under 18 years old; Population over 65 years old
- The percentage that is high school graduates; or bachelor's degrees or higher
- Median home ownership value
- Median household income in 2017 dollars
- Persons living at the poverty level, %

Next, the municipalities that were closest to Albemarle County for each demographic classification were identified. Of those, the top five that scored had the highest number of closely aligned categories were chosen for review comparison. The municipalities that most paralleled Albemarle County based on the demographics compared were:

Fauquier County
Hanover County
James City County

Montgomery County
Roanoke County

The clerk with administrative responsibility for volunteers in each of the five identified counties was interviewed and each corresponding website was analyzed for information concerning the BACs. Some smart practices were revealed that Albemarle County might consider.

The five counties vary in their volunteer recruitment process and management of volunteers, however, all reported no, or minimal, vacancy rates on their BACs. While Montgomery County has the most robust volunteer process of the five, all of these counties are more assertive than Albemarle County in the recruitment phase. Some publish vacancies (or upcoming vacancies) in local newspapers with bordered advertisements that stand out, three of the five utilize social media extensively and two of the five have dedicated outreach programs through community organizations. Fauquier County had the most difficulty in retaining volunteers which it attributes to the fact that it has become a bedroom community to the metropolitan D.C. area and most people do not work locally, thereby preventing them from attending daytime meetings. Since Fauquier believes in the value the volunteers bring to the process, it has made accommodations by moving some meetings to evening hours.

What was most relevant is that all five counties maintain a running list of volunteer applicants who have identified 3-5 BACs they are interested in serving on. When a position is vacated, the clerk identifies interested volunteers in the system and contacts the individual to see if they are still interested in serving. The application is updated, if necessary, and then forwarded to the Board of Supervisors. Appointments are usually made before the end of an incumbent's term so that a seamless "hand-off" can be conducted. Further, there appears to be a consistent process that everyone follows.

Hanover County reported conducting no outreach and yet of the 50 boards, commission and authorities, have only one vacancy.

"What is the essence of life?"

To serve others and do good"

-Aristotle

LITERATURE REVIEW

What is a Volunteer?

There is no universal definition of what constitutes a volunteer and the descriptions regarding unpaid work are significantly broad. An often-cited article has synthesized eleven different commonly utilized meanings of volunteers from multiple studies and identified four key measures found in the majority of the eleven descriptions (Cnaan, Hardy & Wadsworth, 1996). These key measures are (1) Free Will, (2) Remuneration, (3) Structure, and (4) Intended beneficiaries. Developing a list of actions (i.e. *“An adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister”*; *“The trainer who does a free workshop for an organization as a marketing device”*) that ran the range from altruistic to self-serving, a survey was conducted. The results found that someone was considered more of a volunteer when he or she met the “purist” of the dimensions where the volunteer incurred a net high cost for the volunteer activity, such as travel time to meetings or missed work (Cnaan, et.al 1996).

Another study defined volunteer work as consisting of “freely chosen and deliberate helping activities that extend over time and are engaged without expectation of reward or other compensation and often through formal organizations, and that are performed on behalf of causes or individuals who desire assistance” (Snyder & Omato, 2008). In a more simplified and workable fashion, the annual survey of American households by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) defines “volunteers” as people who said they did unpaid work through or for an organization. How volunteers are defined plays a significant role in the research as well as the surveys, polls and general literature on the subject.

History of Volunteering

Volunteering-however defined-has likely been a part of the human experience since the beginning of time. Humans are social beings, and where tribal or society groups were formed, a level of volunteer assistance to those in need could ensure survival.

In America, colonists bonded together to support each other building homes, planting crops warding off disease and providing security. In 1736, Benjamin Franklin, considered the “Founding Father of American Volunteerism” founded, among other things, the first volunteer firehouse, a tradition that we still see today. During the Revolutionary War, volunteers supported the war effort in many ways-including boycotts against British goods; the Boston Tea Party was perhaps the most famous of the time. The 1800s saw the start of many iconic volunteer organizations such as the YMCA, The Salvation Army, The American Red Cross, and The United Way. The 1900s brought into existence professional entities such as the Rotary Club and the Kiwanis Club that fostered volunteer projects for their communities. President John F. Kennedy founded The Peace Corps by Executive Order shortly after his January 1961 inaugural speech that indirectly, yet powerfully, advocated for public service by concluding that address with the memorable phrase, “...ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.”

Volunteering has always been a part of the American fabric; the most recent global poll conducted by Gallop, and reported through the Charities Aid Foundation, in the form of the World Giving Index (“WGI”) found that Americans were the second most prolific volunteers in the world, second to Myanmar, based on percent of population. (Charities Aid Foundation, 2016).

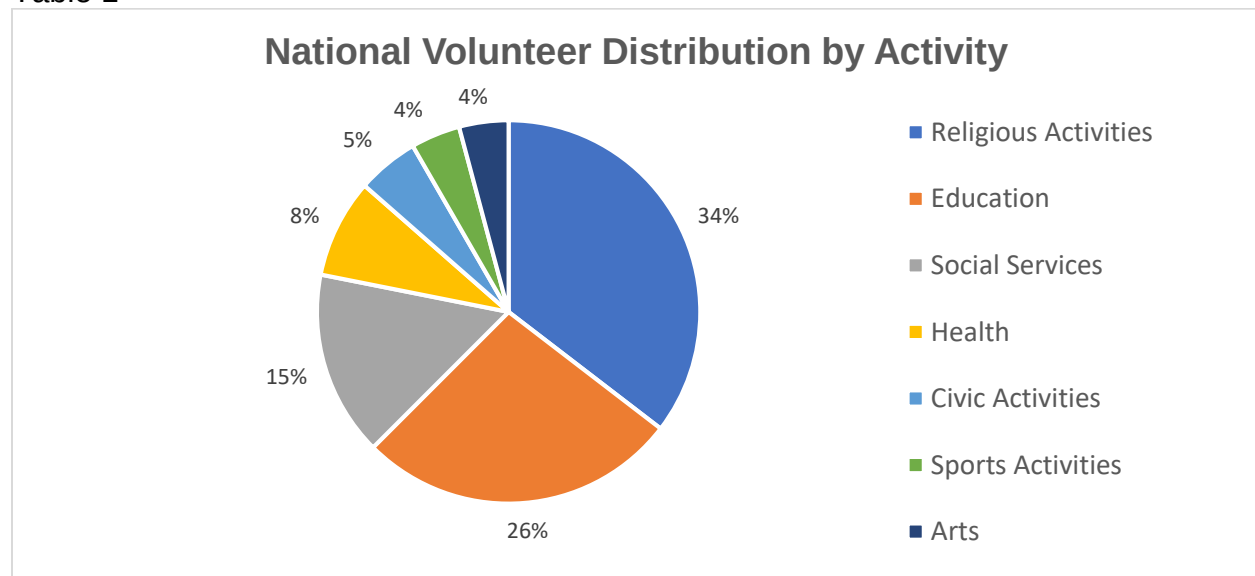
While Americans may volunteer at a higher rate than other countries, the actual level of volunteering in the United States is declining. According to the US Department of Labor, the national volunteer rate among American adults declined significantly between the years 2006 and 2015, with significant drops in each of the past two years (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

Some research has been conducted regarding an overall decline in social capital, a considerable subject onto itself, but the academic literature is woefully scant in studying why volunteer rates are declining. Organizations that consult nonprofits on the issue of volunteers point to indicators drawn from various sources, selected surveys and personal observations such as family obligations, lack of time, no particular interest, and lack of interest. A Stanford researcher identified reasons such as time limitations, inflexible schedules of meetings, uninspired volunteer work, lack of information and, perhaps most revealing, “no one asked me to” (Yotopoulos, Amy, 2013).

Who Volunteers?

According to the Corporation for Community Service, 23.3% (62.8 million) of Americans volunteered in 2016. Volunteering for one’s church or other religious cause tops the list for the highest concentration of volunteers. The following Table 1 displays the types of activities where Americans volunteer.

Table 1



While people in all age groups volunteer, some do so more than others. Nationally, the highest volunteering demographic is the 35-44 age cohort at 28.8% and the lowest bracket is the 20-24-year-old demographic at 18.4%. Many reasons might explain the disparity, including starting career goals and young family dynamics. According to the US Census Bureau, women volunteer at a higher rate than men; 27.8% to 21.8%, respectively.

When the individual U.S. states are reviewed, Utah has the highest volunteer rate at 46% and Louisiana has the lowest at 17.4%. While the explanation for this difference is outside the purview of this paper, it is provided to compare with the rates in Virginia.

According to the Virginia Service Corporation, in 2017, 2.2 million Virginians, or 34% of the population, volunteered a total of 232 million hours, with an economic impact of 5.5 billion dollars. Although ranking 22nd among all states, Virginia sits at second best for the number of veterans that volunteer.

This ranking is a decline from 2015 when Virginia was listed 17th nationally with 30.62% of the Commonwealth's population serving. This decline could be a function of several factors. The overall population increased between 2015 and 2017, although not by a large statistical margin. Further, how data is drawn for determining volunteer statistics is hardly consistent or scientific. It is drawn from a variety of sources, including reporting of organizations, surveys of volunteer entities, and surveys of citizens. The latter has been found to have varying degrees of reporting errors; many people underestimate their time or don't recognize or recall that they have volunteered. On the other hand, you find a positive response bias in those that overstate the time they have volunteered. Another methodological issue is the low survey response rates. Then, of course, is the "what is a volunteer" parameter, as discussed earlier in this review.

Conventional wisdom views citizen participation in the public process as a positive activity and numerous studies would support that conclusion. Over the last few decades, the government has recognized the critical contribution that volunteers make to build a resilient and inclusive society. There has been a continued push by public administration professionals for increased use of citizens in governmental debate and decision-making (Bigham, Nabatchi & O'Leary, 2005).

Benefits of Utilizing Volunteers

The literature is replete with the positive aspects of citizen involvement, both for the organization as well as the volunteer participant. Organizational benefits determined by Cogan & Sharpe (1986), that hold well even today, include the influx of information and ideas, increased public support for planning decisions, avoidance of protracted conflicts and costly delays, and an increase in goodwill and the public trust which may carry over to future decisions.

Professional organizations of both practitioners and scholars have promoted the use of increased citizen participation calling on government managers to take a proactive role in doing so. The International City/County Management Association and Government

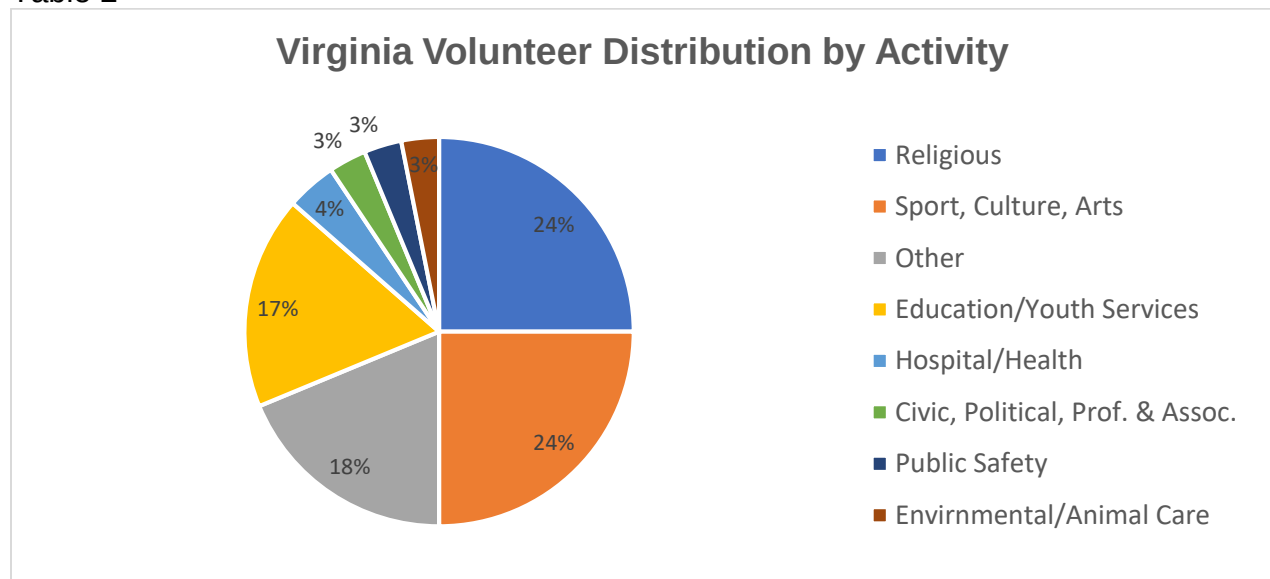
Finance Officers Association, among others, have consistently issued guidelines for citizen involvement along with training opportunities.

Local governments are responding to the demand for more open, accountable and transparent decision-making and see the benefit of citizen engagement toward that end. Most counties and cities in the country have civic boards and commissions that are constituted to deal with a particular aspect of the local policymaking. Some are mandated by state or federal law, while the remaining ones have been established locally. For example, the Commonwealth of Virginia requires that "...every municipality that has a zoning ordinance, shall establish a board of zoning appeals that shall consist of either five or seven residents of the locality..." (Virginia Code §15.2-2308).

While the issue to increase citizen involvement seems well established, the question posed is how government administrators should increase the participation. Even when provided the opportunity, citizens failed to respond to the need. (Buss, Redburn & Guo, 2006). Additionally, those that do participate may not represent the community demographically and policy direction may be somewhat distorted (Buss et al., 2006).

Competing with the various categories of organizations utilizing all American volunteers (see Table 1, above) are municipal boards and commissions; as civic volunteering accounts for only 5% of the total countrywide volunteer population. In Virginia, that percentage of volunteers for municipal/civic volunteering is less than the national average at 3%. It is important to note for comparison purposes, however, that the federal and state sources for measurements are not consistent. See Table 2

Table 2



There are successful and not so successful municipal volunteer board examples. In a comprehensive study (Dougherty & Easton, 2011) of a 10-county area surrounding Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 75% of the municipalities use appointed board members as a significant component of their governance, yet 51% of those municipalities indicated

difficulty in finding people to serve. Vacancies hinder community representation and possibly the ability of the board to function as needed. Successful volunteer programs appear to be dependent on available managerial resources, such as recruitment, coordination, training, and publicity. This poses an issue for smaller municipalities with fewer resources, yet they have a bigger need for volunteers to augment their requirements (Brudney & Kellough, 2000).

In the Pennsylvania study, vacancies were found to be strongly correlated with the actual size of a board. The analysis found that over 90% of the boards with three members had no vacancies during the time of the survey compared to 74.2% of boards with nine or more members that had vacancies. Additionally, the number of vacancies increased as the board size increased. (Dougherty et.al. 2011). Rather than expanding representation on a BAC, it appears that municipalities should consider the minimum number of volunteers needed to conduct the business of the board.

Benefits of Volunteering

While volunteer motivations, a widely studied and reviewed subject onto itself, may prove helpful in establishing an environment both inviting and sustainable for an organization that seeks such participant engagement, there is ample data supporting good organizational structure and processes that can determine a robust pool of civic volunteers for a municipality.

Motivations vary depending on the demographic. Younger volunteers are more induced to volunteer where they can get experience while developing skills that will help in propelling their careers or future job opportunities (Yotopoulos, 2013).



Volunteering offers obvious benefits for the volunteer. It provides one with new contacts, connecting one with others in the community that one would otherwise not meet or know. This leads to new friends with a shared interest and increases community ties. Volunteering can advance one's career by building new capabilities and learning new skills, particularly in an interested field. Volunteering also allows for exploration of new careers without a commitment. For many, volunteering provides an interesting escape from a day-to-day routine and can reinvigorate one's creativity and motivations. Perhaps most important, volunteering is advantageous to one's health. Studies have found that volunteering counters stress and anxiety, it can combat depression, it

increases self-confidence and it provides the volunteer with a sense of purpose.

Since a significant number of Albemarle County volunteers are older adults; it is interesting to note that this cohort is most likely to inure greater benefits from volunteering. Some findings also indicate that volunteers who devote a "considerable" amount of time to volunteer activities (about 100 hours per year) are most likely to exhibit positive health outcomes.

Two studies conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) on two of its Senior Corps volunteer programs support the larger body of research that volunteering lends itself to healthy aging among seniors; that it can actually make one feel better. The CNCS studies found that almost two-thirds of the Senior Corps volunteers reported a decrease in feelings of isolation. Further, 67% reported improved social connections. Seventy percent of these volunteers who had initially reported five or more symptoms of depression reported fewer symptoms at the end of their first year of volunteering. This is not an exhaustive list of benefits, merely a broad brush of the advantages of volunteering.

EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Evaluating the best alternative for Albemarle County to move forward in addressing its volunteer vacancy challenge requires a comparison across each option based on a set of criteria. The smart practices of other peer municipalities, as well as the research regarding effective volunteer rates, serve as the basis for the following criteria: Is the option effective; does it meet the County's goal? Is it politically feasible? Is it administratively practicable? What will it cost? The options will be measured for the probability in obtaining the outcome desired- a decrease in BAC vacancies.

Is the Option Effective; does it meet the County's Goals?

- A. **Primary Goal:** The primary goal is to decrease the vacancy rates of its BACs with engaged citizen volunteers. While a quantitative goal was not articulated, the figure used for this purpose is to reduce the vacancy rate to less than 5% from its current 20%. This criterion will analyze how each option might generate a larger pool of volunteer applicants and increase citizen participation and policymaking in local government. This analysis will look at the research associated with effective volunteer policies as well as the smart practices identified in peer municipalities. Each option will be measured on this criterion from Low to Medium to High.
- B. **Secondary Goal:** Each policy option will also be examined to determine whether it supports the County's secondary goal of diversifying the volunteer applicant base. To define diversification of the BACs, reference is made to neighborhood, income and occupational diversification. This secondary goal is directly related to the success of the primary goal. Each option will be measured on this criterion from Low to Medium to High.

Is the Option Politically Feasible?

Policy options are judged by their ability to garner support from key stakeholders. This criterion will provide an analysis of feasibility for each policy options based on the local political environment, particularly the elected Board of Supervisors, the County Executive and the current volunteer stakeholders.

Any time there is a proposed change in the way activities have “always been done”, there is the possibility of push back from any combination of the current stakeholders, particularly elected officials. Often, the appointments of volunteers are a way to thank people for community and political support. Inserting ‘hurdles’ to a selection of a constituent may not be well-received by the appointing elected officials. Further, the choice should not negatively affect those already serving on a BAC. The option should provide the community with a clearer understanding of volunteer opportunities to serve.

In determining political feasibility, the analysis will consider statements provided to specific questions in the interviews conducted with members of the BoS, the level with which they have participated with the various BACs, and the discussions that have transpired off the record. Each option will be ranked on whether the proposed policy will obtain uncertain, likely, or unlikely support.

Is the Option Administratively Feasible?

Any recommended course of action will require the continuation of or an additional level of county staff involvement. This criterion will evaluate whether Albemarle County has the administrative capacity to achieve each option. This criterion will consider the amount of staffing, skill, administrative coordination between departments, tradeoffs (such as time required for implementation), or additional resources required. Other resources could include personnel needs, updating or acquiring technology, and logistical necessities.

Any changes might require that the County has the administrative and legal authority and ability to implement each option. Institutional commitment and support by staff for a change are paramount. A review of Virginia law regarding FOIA and public meeting rules, the County’s FY 19 Adopted Budget, interviews with key staff members, and additional County documents will serve to evaluate this criterion.

Each option will be ranked on whether the proposed option generates limited, considerable or extensive administrative constraints.

How much will the Option Cost?

The cost to the County will be considered, as realistically possible, for both tangible and intangible actions required of each option. What will each option roughly cost County taxpayers? This criterion will look at staff time based on an extrapolated amount of staff members salary. Further, the gain of volunteers provides the County with unpaid resources. hence volunteer hours will be assigned a value based on research from the Independent Sector, an organization nationally recognized that reports out estimated hourly cost for volunteer hours by state.

The costs provided for each option will be rough estimates based on desired size of the programs. If the County deems any option promising, it is strongly recommended that a true costing be conducted before any decisions are contemplated.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Four policy alternatives were determined for decreasing the volunteer vacancy rates on the County's BACs. These alternatives are based on conversations with various members of the elected Board of Supervisors, the County staff, individuals serving on BACS and best practices from other Virginia counties as well as the literature. The four policy alternatives are as follows:

Option #1	Let Present Trends Continue
Option #2	Develop a Comprehensive Outreach Program
Option #3	Initiate a Volunteer Training Program
Option #4	Hire a Volunteer Coordinator

Option #1: Let Present Trends Continue

The first option is for the County to continue identifying citizen volunteers for BACs as it currently does. While the number does change from time to time, Albemarle County has, on average, a 20% vacancy rate. Of the 80% fill, however there are duplicates (individuals serving on multiple boards) and longtime volunteers that continue to serve due to the non-availability of successor volunteers.

While a more detailed explanation can be found in the background section of this report, above, the current process of identifying and appointment citizens to the volunteer BACs can be summarized as follows:

- Vacancies posted on the County's website and/or local newspaper
- Referrals made to Supervisors
- Application filled out and submitted for a specific vacancy
- Board of Supervisors review and discuss the applicant
- Vote conducted; appointment made
- Welcome letter sent to the newly appointed member
- No formal onboard training
- No formal recognition programs

On January 9, 2019, to bring more uniformity and transparency to the volunteer appointment process, the BoS adopted a four-page document entitled Policies of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors. Section 3 covers "Boards and Commissions" and Section 4 covers "Appointments to Boards and Commissions". While a starting point, implementation has been slow.

The County "went live" on May 1st with a modernized web presence for its Boards, Committees, Authorities and Commissions. It is intended to provide citizens with easier accessibility and information on the BACs as well as the ability to apply for multiple BAC vacancies.

Option #1 Analysis

Goal: Without policy intervention, Albemarle County will continue to experience a lack of volunteers and not meet the goals of reducing vacancies and improving diversity. The problem will worsen if the BOS originates any additional BACs. The County's implementation of a modernized web portal for citizens who may be interested in serving is not likely to achieve a significant increase in citizen volunteers. Even with the advent of the website, there is nothing that drives "new" volunteers to it. This option does not meet the goal of increasing citizen volunteers nor the secondary goal of diversification.

Further, a check of the new site showed inconsistencies between the webpage where vacancies are listed and the information page site. On Google, there are multiple entry points to the County's Boards and Commissions.

For example, the Vacancies for Boards and Commissions page (<https://www.albemarle.org/departments.asp?department=podcast&relpage=3206>) showed twelve vacancies on the Pantops Community Advisory Committee. When one clicks on the specific board it takes the proposed applicant to a page showing Board Details and Member Roster (<http://albemarle.granicus.com/boards/w/74d9847a67cffd67/boards/29581>). This site shows "0 current vacancies" for the Pantops Community Advisory Board (inconsistency #1). If one clicks on the Member Roster, it shows only 14 (of the 15) positions as filled (inconsistency #2).

The information the public sees depends on what portal the prospective applicant enters into the County's system. If they start at <https://www.albemarle.org/boards/>, a robust *Application to Serve* is presented. It requires that the applicant indicate what BAC they are interested in and asks the applicant to go, via a link, to the *Board/Commission/Committee Information Page* to determine if there are specific membership requirements. That link brings the applicant to the old, or former, list of the BACs. This list is inconsistent with the Granicus site of BACs, particularly where BAC member requirements are indicated.

Score: Primary Goal: Low; Secondary Goal: Low

Political Feasibility: Most of the Board of Supervisors interviewed, as well as the Deputy County Executive, recognize that the current process has significant defects and they appear ready and willing to support a more robust volunteer process. Anecdotal stories were provided of related incidents that the supervisors felt were not indicative of the professionalism of the county and its employees and "were embarrassing". Incumbent volunteer members that were interviewed expressed a variety of opinions; a common theme was that they continue to serve because there "is nobody else". It seems fair to surmise that the volunteer stakeholders would welcome a change.

For these reasons, the political feasibility of maintaining the status quo is graded as Low. Administrative Feasibility: This option, by nature, requires no additional programming or strategizing. Since maintaining current trends mean no change in the staff requirements

or resources than administrative feasibility would rate a grade of High. Interestingly, of staff members interviewed that are designated liaisons to specific BACs, they reported that the time they are spending on volunteer BAC matters has increased while hampering productivity of their other job requirements.

Costs: There are hidden costs to maintaining the status quo. Although there are 50 BACs that require volunteer appointments, for the purposes of identifying costs, the conservative assumption is that 30 of the 50 BACs have designated staff liaisons assigned.

The duties of the staff liaisons include, at a minimum:

- Meeting scheduling and notifications
- Agenda and materials preparation
- Attendance at meetings
- Corresponding with volunteers
- Taking and preparation of minutes
- Implementation of any policies/recommendations

This does not include anything out of the usual and ordinary liaison requirements. Based on interviews with staff, the average total work time staff spends on volunteer board matters ranges from 15% on the low side to 75% (depending on time of year) on the high side.

A Grade 17, Senior Planner serves as a good representative sample of the many assigned liaisons (Interview with Douglas Walker). With 5 to 7 years of relevant experience he or she would be making a base salary of \$62,000 according to the 2019 Salary Scale of the Virginia Retirement System.

If the minimum reported 15 percent of time that is spent on volunteer BAC issues, is deducted from that \$62,000 in salary, the cost to the County for each staff liaison is approximately \$9,300.

\$9,300 multiplied by the 30 people working on volunteer matters means that approximately **\$279,000** in productivity from other assignments is affected.

Secondarily, the Deputy Clerk reports spending, conservatively speaking, 35% of his time on volunteer administrative matters. Those duties include, at a minimum:

- Processing applications
- Communication to volunteers
- Maintaining volunteer records
- Managing BAC term limits and vacancies
- Coordinating with liaison staff

The Deputy Clerk is managing the entire appointment process (letters of appointment to volunteers, termination letters, answering questions) and communication with Supervisors regarding volunteer matters, plus any and all else, as needed. This is in addition to his other assigned duties.

The Deputy Clerk's base salary is \$45,740. Conservatively utilizing a 20 Percent (rather than 35 percent) number, his time spent on volunteer administrative matters can be valued at approximately \$9,148 worth of productivity.

Therefore, the cost of letting present trends continue is \$288,148.00.

Other costs such as printing, postage, meeting space and the like would be constant throughout each option.

Option #2: Develop a Comprehensive Outreach Plan

A comprehensive outreach plan is Option #2. This policy option works to address the current information gap among the public regarding the County volunteer boards, committees and authorities

Anecdotally to date, it appears that only those individuals that are involved with the County in some professional or social way have knowledge that there are volunteer boards and committees. Other than word of mouth, the only formal outreach conducted for volunteer engagement is publishing the list of vacancies on the county's website and, on occasion, an advertisement in the public notices section of the local newspaper.

Unscientific "random" interviews were conducted throughout the County at numerous locations. These interviews were conducted at:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ➤ ACAC, Albemarle Square | ➤ PetsMart, Hollymead |
| ➤ Food Lion, Branchlands | ➤ Realtor Open Houses (2) |
| ➤ Kroger, Rio Hill (Produce Section) | ➤ Goodwill Shop, Pantops |
| ➤ Big Lots, Seminole Square | ➤ Starbucks, Pantops |
| ➤ Harris Teeter, Crozet | ➤ Wegmans, 5 th Street Station |
| ➤ Ivy Nursery | ➤ Pippin Hill Farm & Vineyards |
| | ➤ UVA Faculty and Staff |

Almost 75 people were asked the following four questions:

- Do you live in Albemarle County? (If they were not a County resident, or they did not know if they lived in Albemarle County or Charlottesville, the interview ended)
- Do you volunteer in the community?
- Do you volunteer on an Albemarle county board?
- Are you aware that the County has volunteer boards?

Only one of those interviewed serves on a County Board (Equalization). Five members of the UVA community knew of the County boards but never contemplated serving. None of the others had any knowledge about volunteer boards in Albemarle County.

While the CNE estimate of 600-900 non-profits in the Albemarle-Charlottesville certainly increases competition for volunteers, if a prospective member is unaware of the County opportunities to serve, then the hurdle for the County is exacerbated.

A comprehensive outreach plan will should identify the most advantageous way to educate and incentivize Albemarle County citizens to serve on a BAC.

Option #2 Analysis

Goals: While hard to predict, targeting the right audiences, utilizing existing volunteer assets, messaging and educating the community should increase applications for volunteer vacancies. Montgomery County, Virginia capitalizes on a variety of platforms to expand the word that County BACs exist, and that Montgomery County citizens can make a difference serving on a Board. Since time is required to develop and operationalize any comprehensive outreach plan, implementing some short-term strategies may improve volunteer rates in the short run. Peer communities with relatively low vacancy rates do exercise assertive outreach. This Option 2 is rated as Medium in reaching both the primary and secondary goals.

Political Feasibility: All members of the elected Board of Supervisors that were interviewed appear ready and willing to support a more robust process if it solves the vacancy and diversity issues. Although appearing counter-intuitive, a task force established for the purpose of devising a plan as outlined in this option may provide the perfect opportunity for community engagement in “fixing” a problem. Option 2 is rated as High for political feasibility.

Administrative Feasibility: The county staff has the human capacity to develop an outreach program; it requires some limited expertise in marketing, time commitment and community knowledge. During the recession, staff numbers were reduced considerably, particularly in the Community Development Department where the majority of BAC designated staff liaisons work. The County is almost back to pre-recession staffing, but the County has grown, and the requirements have increased. Commitment to change among staff members interviewed is positive, but there are some hurdles in this option. Rating is Medium.

Costs: There are many ways that this option can be started at minimal costs. For example, the County has a Facebook page already established but only about 4% of County population has engaged with it. A review of the Facebook postings includes events, job openings, safety, traffic, and weather notifications, as well as a host of other informative and important notices. What is absent is any information about the County’s BACs, or the opportunity to serve or vacancies.

The costs associated with this option depend on how robust an outreach is indicated and desired. Utilizing social media, engagement with select local organizations that can serve as a pipeline for volunteers, and other cost-effective methods, would render this a relatively low-cost option other than some dedicated staff resources. Cost would increase, however, if targeted outreach was implemented, whether through social media, direct mail, or other methods. A survey of current BAC volunteers is indicated in order to gather valuable information concerning motivations as well as suggestions and could be conducted at minimal expense. The quality and availability of free survey software is satisfactory for this purpose (i.e. Survey Monkey, KwikSurveys). Expertise is available

both within the staff and current volunteers. This option is rated as Low; however, cost would increase as programmatic expanded.

Option #3: Initiate a Volunteer Training Program

Currently volunteers that receive an appointment to a county board or commission do not receive on-board orientations training in any organized manner, if at all nor is subject matter training provided. With some committees, on ***an ad-hoc basis, training may be conducted by the BAC Chair or the designated staff liaison, several whom were found to be very conscientious in doing so.*** Some BACs (economic development, planning commission) will receive in person training on the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Conflict of Interest (COI); others receive this “training” in form of mailed information for the volunteer to read.

There is little, if any, opportunity once appointed to a committee to increase skill sets even though, in some instances, the term may be more than three years. A couple of committees have, in the past, authorized attendance at specific conferences for one or two members but there is nothing formalized, and this occurrence appears to be few and far between.

Some BACs are quite technical while others are not. Several the BACs have specific qualifications to serve. For example, the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACEA) lists as qualification to serve knowledge in the field of conservation, conservation biology, real estate and/or rural land appraisal, farming and forestry. According to the website the State Code requires no less than 5 appointed volunteer members and no more than 17, with staggered three years terms. There is no quantifiable manner to determine if the skill set of the applicant meets the level of aptitude required. Volunteers may not have the necessary information or aptitude necessary to be a productive member of the team. This option would likely require a development of content, but that could be contracted out.

Studies have shown that lack of formal training may contribute to a shortfall of volunteers because the prospective volunteer believes that they won’t add value to the board or committee or will be intimidated by the rest of the members. If it is known that the volunteer will receive training, it may restore confidence and, more importantly, show the prospective volunteers that the County is committed to its volunteers and

Providing a new board member with the knowledge and tools needed to be a productive member of the team in the form of on-board training has become standard practice for successful non-profit boards. An on-board training program helps volunteers get to know the people and the program efficiently. Training volunteers establishes a minimum competency that everyone around the committee table should have in order to engage fully in the subject matter. This, in turn, reflects well on the County government when citizens can see that volunteers are subject matter and process competent; and in fact, may indirectly garner new volunteers. When volunteers are surveyed about motivations,

the ability to develop new skills and learn something new is always in the mix. Such a benefit is embodied in a training program.

Option #3 Analysis

Goals: It is believed that this option will increase application to the County BACs, however such increase is likely constrained by a time lag before the benefits of the program are experienced. Such a program needs to be developed, announced and implemented. Since learning new skills is one of the motivations for volunteering, this option is beneficial particularly from the standpoint of diversifying the BACS. Additionally, having a combined orientation workshop for all new BAC members allows for a cross-sectional mixing of volunteers.

Political Feasibility: Based on inputs, this option would be amenable to Supervisors but perhaps not a first choice since it involves requiring all new volunteers to take time to attend, at a minimum, a formal orientation. Certainly, waivers could be made available, in the form of “grandfathering”, for those that have been long time volunteers (or prior County employees or office holders). That said, the more educated County citizens are about how the County operates, including its constraints, limitations, and nuances, the more trust in its processes are generated.

Administrative Feasibility: While administrative resourcefulness is high, finding the time to marshal a new initiative would be challenging. It would make sense for the current County Learning & Development Coordinator to play a primary role. Initial on-board orientation could be similar for all new appointees. Administrative capacity could easily conduct such a training session on a regular basis (once a month or once a quarter) for all newly appointed volunteers. Administrative feasibility with the second component holds extensive administrative constraints as the staff is not trained to “teach”. The complexity involves different skill sets (many different BACs) and an assessment of the knowledge an incoming volunteer already possesses. Perhaps a type of subject matter workbook could be developed by the volunteers already serving each BAC so that a new appointee can quickly come up to speed on both subject and status. Assistance from the School Division may be indicated. This Option #3, if done well, is rated as having considerable constraints on administrative capacity.

Costs: The costs associated with this option depend on how robust the County wants to approach it. For a quarterly on-board orientation workshop, costs would include staff time, materials and refreshments at a minimum, assuming that the class could be conducted at the County Office Building on McIntire. Annual budget for the orientation program, assuming it is held four times a year is roughly estimated at about \$1,100. This is calculated at 20 hours of staff time @ \$30 an hour is \$600, materials (supplies, printing, postage, paper, etc.) @ \$20 per session is \$80 plus refreshments @ \$100 per session is \$400. This is low cost for a good return on investment.

Electing to bolster subject matter knowledge involves more thought and planning. It could be approached in an ad-hoc basis. For instance, if the County felt that there were certain conferences or meetings to expand knowledge (or even reward) a volunteer, then costs might include fees, travel and lodging if out of town. On the other hand, a more academic

approach might include a presentation or a site visit for experiential learning. Alternatively, web-based subject matter courses could be identified at nominal cost. For example, on www.EDX.org a 6-week introductory course titled 'Waste Management and Critical Raw Materials' is offered at no cost. A 4-week course titled 'Public Library Marketing & Public Relations' is offered for free on the same site. Taught by a Professor at University of Michigan, the self-paced course teaches marketing and PR strategies to help share a library's programs, services and value with the community. The option is rated medium to low on cost.

Option #4: Hire a Dedicated Coordinator of Volunteer Services

This policy option establishes a formal full or part time position for a volunteer coordinator. This coordinator would assume all volunteer administrative functions associated with a County BACs and provide continuous support to the BAC volunteers.

Over the medium-term this coordinator would incorporate the three options, mentioned above, under his/her umbrella, effectively ensuring a coordinated recruiting and retention plan, clear communications and guidance for volunteers. Among the coordinators duties and responsibilities could be:

- Recruiting, selecting and retaining the best volunteers ensuring community diversity; including community outreach presentations
- Matching volunteers' expectations, skills, and experience to available vacancies.
- In collaboration with BoS Clerk, managing the appointment process
- Providing relevant background checks of applicants for appointing authorities
- Providing orientation to newly appointed volunteers, organizing relevant training and opportunities for BAC subject matter education
- Designs cost effective ways of recognizing and rewarding the efforts of volunteers.
- Managing all volunteer communications, including social media outreach.
- Working with staff liaisons to develop procedures, standards, bylaws, charters and policies, where needed.
- Maintains a volunteer database and BAC records to include Minutes; responds to County Attorney for FOIA information and data involving volunteers or BACs.
- Any other requirements as determined

Having a dedicated coordinator of volunteer services would consolidate the process with one person and serve as a formalized hub of resources and information for the BAC volunteers, staff, BOS and community as a whole. In addition, if full-time, this person would also oversee any interns that the County is utilizing.

Option #4 Analysis

Goals: Having the right, energetic person as a volunteer coordinator would likely meet both the primary goal of an overall increased applicant pool as well as the secondary option of neighborhood, occupational, and income diversity. Having a dedicated person that can serve as the focal point for all the issues of the County's 250-plus appointed volunteers highlights the importance of this cohort to the County and its prospective volunteer citizens. This option is rated high for reaching the County's goals with a caveat. Due to implementation lead time the benefit may not be expressed in the short term.

Political Feasibility: It is believed that all stakeholders will recognize the value of consolidating the volunteer process and management. That said, anytime an addition to staff is requested, approval is based on numerous factors, especially cost. Staff is always supportive of additional resources that allow them to focus on other tasks. Volunteers would welcome a coordinator to alleviate the disjointed process and management. This option is rated Uncertain due to the political concerns of increasing staff and possible pushback from the community in the short-term.

Administrative Feasibility: Having standardized BACs and a transparent, neat process for appointing qualified and diversified volunteers will allow the County staff liaisons to focus their attention on the actual content and performance of the BACs. Further, the administrative components of managing the members of the staff's designated BACs will transition to the coordinator. Time spent on volunteer matters should be reduced significantly. A rating of limited administrative capacity is assigned this option.

Costs: Market salary rate for a full-time volunteer coordinator with the skills necessary to fulfill the responsibilities and manage a successful program is between \$40,000 to \$55,000 base pay according to Payscale, a nation salary software and research firm. This does not include the standard benefits that accrue to a FTE. A qualified, part-time coordinator would cost no less than \$16 an hour. Annualized for a 20-hour work week is \$16,640, assuming no benefits or sign on bonus. This amount could be offset by the productivity costs among staff managing identified in Option #1. Due to the cost associated with an additional full or part time employee, Option #4 is rated high for cost.

OUTCOME MATRIX

Criteria	Explanation of Criteria	Option #1: Let Present Trends Continue	Option #2: Outreach Program	Option # 3: Dedicated Training Program for Volunteers	Option #4: Hire a Dedicated Volunteer Coordinator
Albemarle County Goals	Primary Goal: Reduce vacancies to <5%	Low	Medium	Low	High
	Secondary Goal: Diversify by neighborhood, occupation	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Politically Feasible	Will the Board of Supervisors, Senior County Staff and currently appointed volunteers support the option?	Unlikely Support	Likely Support	Unlikely Support	Uncertain
Administratively Feasible	Does the staff have the capacity and resources to advance the option?	Limited: no change or modified change to staff	Considerable	Considerable	Limited
Cost	What is the low and high estimated cost associated with the option?	High \$288,148 in lost productivity costs	Medium/Low Utilization of existing platforms \$0-\$15,000	Medium Significant staff time required for development of full program	High/Medium \$16,640-\$55,000 for new hire

RECOMMENDATION

Albemarle County could best recruit new volunteers to their boards and commissions by implementing a comprehensive outreach program (Option #2). To reach this conclusion, I evaluated each option's ability to meet the primary goal of reducing the volunteer vacancies, the political feasibility, the administrative feasibility and the potential costs. Each option offers a different approach to effect change and each has valuable features. Option #2 was chosen as the realistic first step toward meeting the goals of the County. Although it does not rate as high as Option #4 in reducing vacancies, it can have a more immediate impact especially if the expanded use of already existing County mediums is utilized (Facebook, the County's television studio, email).

Perhaps one of the most important findings in assessing the reasons why there might be a high vacancy rate comes down to communication. There is an information void on the part of County residents, a lack of knowledge if you will, about the County BACs and citizen opportunities to serve. Further, this data void means that raising awareness and appealing to the broader Albemarle community is a must. Option #2 can address this awareness campaign at minimal cost.

The four options presented are not mutually exclusive, nor exhaustive. Based on the authors extensive experience in managing volunteer cohorts and serving on numerous non-profit and community boards in the past forty years, it is believed that the County's volunteer rates would be significantly enhanced with implementation of select components of all the options presented.

The author's inclination was to recommend Option #4, the hiring of a volunteer coordinator. Upon further analysis it was deemed to be a premature move if a well-managed information and outreach campaign can satisfy the County's goals at minimal additional cost to County residents. In the event the County elects to maintain the status quo, it is recommended that it consider purchasing a complete volunteer management software program to assist the Deputy Clerk in managing the volunteers.

IMPLEMENTATION

The essential components of a comprehensive plan start with an understanding of the County's current situation as it relates to the boards and volunteers. Conduct a strengths, weakness, opportunities and threat (SWOT) analysis of the overall program. Looking at the BACs determine if there are any boards and commissions that have outlasted their usefulness or legal mandate and can or should be terminated. Are there any that can be consolidated? Why does the County appoint volunteers on some community boards but not others? A thorough review and honest evaluation must be conducted. It is the opinion of the author that Albemarle County has too many boards and/or mandated appointees to non-County boards.

Look at the existing volunteers. A survey of currently serving county volunteers should be administered that gathers information on what motivates this cohort. Why do they serve? Do they feel like they add value? What suggestions might they have? A need to understand your audience is important to target any outreach plan. ***Existing volunteers would welcome an opportunity to weigh in on their volunteer experience with the County.***

Identify the goals and the targets. What neighborhoods or income demographics are not represented? What occupations are needed on various BACs? What is the best way to reach those citizens? How might it be made easier for people to engage? What makes serving the county unique? Considering the capability of technology, is there a legal process that allows for meetings to be held in a manner consistent with current lifestyles and time constraints? Perhaps information sessions could be conducted at various sites around the County to educate the community in its quest to generate volunteer interest. The long-term sustainability of a pool of volunteers depends on a mix of creativity, communication and value.

Establish a budget for the plan. In the immediate short term, expand on assets and resources that the County already has. The County's Facebook page has not mentioned the volunteer vacancies or marketed the BACs for the entire past year. Conduct some pricing models for a social media engagement, direct mail, twitter ads and the like. Registering on a volunteer matching website and engage in local organizations that can serve as incubators for volunteers. Perhaps devise an incentive program for quality volunteer referrals

Finally, while the charge for this report was narrowly focused on how to increase citizen participation in the County's Boards and Commissions, the one glaring, underlying factor is the sub optimal volunteer method. Interviews with current and prospective volunteers, as well as staff, consistently bemoaned the lack of an established, coordinated and transparent process. It is imperative that internal processes and procedures are revised and implemented. While the County has written some skeletal policies and procedures for boards and committees, these documents are (1) not comprehensive enough and (2)

have not been implemented or followed. Recommend a broad review of the county's needs and processes and revise the standard operating procedures for the application, selection, training and retention of community volunteers. These revised procedures should then be operationalized such that the "template" for all county boards and commissions populated by volunteers is adhered to without having such varying standards.

APPENDIX 1: Volunteer Appointed Boards and Committees

1. 5th & Avon Community Advisory Board
2. Acquisition of Conservation Easements (ACE) Appraisal Review Committee
3. Acquisition of Conservation Easements Committee (ACE)
4. Agricultural & Forestal District Advisory Committee
5. Albemarle Broadband Authority
6. Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority (ACEA), F/k/a/ PRFA
7. Albemarle County Service Authority
8. Architectural Review Board
9. Blue Ridge Committee for Shenandoah Park Relations
10. Board of Social Services
11. Board of Zoning Appeals
12. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Oversight Committee
13. Charlottesville/Albemarle Airport Authority
14. Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) (F/K/A/ CHART)
15. Crozet Community Advisory Committee
16. Economic Development Authority (EDA)
17. Electoral Board
18. Equalization Board
19. Fire Prevention Board of Appeals/Local Board of Building Code Appeals
20. Historic Preservation Committee
21. Jail Authority Board
22. JAUNT Board
23. Jefferson Area Board for Aging Advisory Council
24. Jefferson Area Board for Aging (JABA)
25. Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board
26. Jefferson-Madison Regional Library Board
27. Joint Airport Commission
28. Local Board of Building Code Appeals/Fire Prevention Code Appeals Board
29. Metropolitan Planning Organization, Technical Committee
30. Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA)
31. Natural Heritage Committee
32. Pantops Community Advisory Committee
33. Piedmont Family YMCA Board of Directors
34. Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) Board
35. Places 29 (Hydraulic) Community Advisory Committee
36. Places 29(North) Community Advisory Committee
37. Places 29 (RIO) Community Advisory Committee
38. Planning Commission
39. Police Department Citizens Advisory Board
40. Public Defenders Office Citizen Advisory Committee
41. Region Ten Community Services Board
42. Rivanna River Basin Commission

**43. Rivanna Water & Sewer
Authority**
44. Route 250 West Task Force
**45. Social Services Advisory
Board**
**46. Solid Waste Alternatives
Advisory Committee (SWAAC)**
**47. Thomas Jefferson Emergency
Medical Services Council**

**48. Thomas Jefferson Water
Resource Protection
Foundation Board**
**49. Village of Rivanna Community
Advisory Committee**
50. Workforce Investment Board

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