Arlington County Civic Federation

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8, 2026

Meeting: General Membership Meeting & Annual Candidates' Forum

Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Location: Hazel Auditorium, Virginia Hospital Center (hybrid: in person; broadcast via Zoom and Facebook)

Submitted by: David Smith

Agenda Summary

- Reception with Arlington County Fire Department leadership and personnel
- Call to order and approval of June minutes
- Presentation of Resolution to Arlington County Fire Department
- County Board candidate forum
- School Board candidate forum
- County Treasurer candidate forum
- U.S. House (VA-8) candidate forum
- Other business and adjournment
- Agenda and Minutes Sections

Reception with Arlington County Fire Department leadership and personnel

A pre-meeting reception hosted Arlington County Fire Department leadership and personnel, providing an opportunity for members and attendees to engage informally with department representatives. Attendees discussed recent department initiatives, community safety programs, and opportunities for collaboration with neighborhood groups. Department personnel outlined staffing levels, mutual-aid protocols, and public education efforts on fire prevention and emergency response preparedness.

Call to order and approval of June minutes

President Nicholas Giacobbe called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees both in person and online. The June meeting minutes were presented for consideration and approved by acclamation. The meeting proceeded with housekeeping announcements about microphone use, timekeeping for forum participants, and how virtual attendees could submit questions.

Presentation of Resolution to Arlington County Fire Department

A formal resolution recognizing the Arlington County Fire Department was presented on behalf of the organization. The resolution acknowledged recent service milestones and

contributions to community safety. Fire Department leadership responded with brief remarks thanking the Federation, highlighting ongoing initiatives, and noting areas where continued community partnership is valuable. A framed copy of the resolution were provided to department representatives. *Recognizing the Bravery, Dedication, and Service of Firefighters and Paramedics and Honoring the Life and Legacy of Lloyd G. Edwards, Jr.*

County Board Candidate Forum

Candidates:

- Audrey Clement — Civic Activist
- Matt de Ferranti — Current Arlington County Board Chair
- David Sisson — Transit and Housing Advocate

The County Board forum centered on local governance challenges including housing affordability, transportation, and public safety. Candidates discussed strategies to increase housing supply, with emphasis on converting vacant office space for residential use and incentivizing affordable units. Transit improvements and multimodal connectivity were debated, including approaches to enhance bus service and address safety for cyclists and pedestrians. Panelists explored public safety concerns such as police staffing and trail safety, and potential regulations for e-bikes and scooters to reduce accidents. The conversation also touched on fiscal trade-offs for implementing new programs and the role of county government in managing growth while protecting neighborhood character.

School Board Candidate Forum

Candidates:

- James “Vell” Rives — Education Advocate / Consultant
- Bethany Zecher Sutton — Current School Board Member and former Chair

The School Board forum focused on student outcomes, equity, and school safety. Candidates described priorities for academic achievement and supports for students’ mental health, including proposed investments in counseling and intervention services. Staffing challenges and facility needs were discussed, with candidates addressing recruitment and retention strategies for educators. The forum covered school safety policy, including the presence and role of School Resource Officers (SROs), disciplinary practices, and measures to prevent harassment and bias. Participants addressed the importance of inclusive policies that meet diverse students’ needs, including considerations around locker room access and accommodations for transgender students.

County Treasurer Candidate Forum

Candidates:

- Aasim Rawoot — Finance Professional
- Kim Rucker — Current Treasurer and former Chief Deputy Treasurer

Candidates for County Treasurer discussed approaches to fiscal stewardship, transparency, and taxpayer services. Topics included investment strategies and the consideration of ethical or ESG criteria in county fund management. The candidates described plans for modernizing payment systems and enhancing convenience for taxpayers, including recurring payment options for vehicle taxes. Transparency measures such as improved reporting and accessible online tools for taxpayers were highlighted as priorities. Candidates also addressed audit practices, fee structures, and responsiveness to constituents' inquiries about tax bills and collection procedures.

U.S. Representative — Virginia's 8th Congressional District Candidate Forum

Candidates:

- Shelly Arnoldi — Business / Community Leader
- Don Beyer — U.S. Representative (VA-8)
- Tony Sabio — Veteran/Civil Servant/Business Operator
- Timothy Sherman — Public Policy Professional

The VA-8 forum addressed federal policy issues relevant to Arlington residents. Candidates spoke on immigration policy and the federal government's role in immigration enforcement and border management. The panel discussed the need for regulation of artificial intelligence and oversight to protect privacy and national security while fostering innovation. Use and oversight of surveillance technologies, including federal funding and standards for municipal deployments, drew attention for civil liberties implications. Candidates addressed climate resilience, federal infrastructure investment, and accountability for federal spending and agency performance. Discussion included how federal priorities intersect with local concerns such as transportation funding and support for first responders.

Other Business and Adjourn

The chair invited any other business from members. Announcements included upcoming CivFed events, committee meetings, and information on where to find meeting recordings and materials. The meeting concluded with thanks to volunteers and organizers and was formally adjourned just after 9:00 p.m.

Video of the 8 Sept 2026 meeting is available here [1h 57m 35s].

Photos of the 8 Sept 2026 meeting are available here. Courtesy Alex Sakes Photography.