



Arlington County Civic Federation

The Civic Voice

The Newsletter of the Arlington County Civic Federation
September 2026 | Volume 111 | Number 01

President's Message

I hope everyone had a restful summer and is ready for an active year with the Arlington County Civic Federation. September always brings fresh momentum to our work, and we begin with an evening that reflects the service and spirit of our community.

Honoring Arlington's Firefighters and Paramedics

At our September 8 meeting, CivFed will present the resolution [*Recognizing the Bravery, Dedication, and Service of Firefighters and Paramedics and Honoring the Life and Legacy of Lloyd G. Edwards, Jr.*](#) We will begin the evening with light refreshments at 6:30 p.m. in advance of our 7:00 p.m. presentation. We encourage members to come early, meet Fire Department leadership and personnel, and help us express our appreciation for their service.

This month marks 25 years since the September 11 attacks. Arlington will again commemorate the anniversary at Fire Station 5, honoring those who responded and the lives forever changed. As we recognize our firefighters and paramedics at our meeting, we do so with a profound awareness of this history and the resilience of our community.

Candidates' Forum

Our main program on September 8 will be CivFed's traditional Candidates' Forum. The forum will be hybrid, in-person participation is encouraged, with Zoom and Facebook options available. We will have panels of candidates for County Board, School Board, County Treasurer, and Member of Congress for the 8th Congressional District. See the article in this newsletter for the full list of candidates, and come prepared with your questions.

Committee Work Begins

CivFed committees are beginning their work for the year, and we welcome new members. Committees are where research happens, resolutions take shape, and members collaborate on issues central to Arlington's civic life. If you have been considering joining, or even leading, a committee, now is an excellent time.

Join Us for the CivFed Picnic on Saturday, September 26 at Fort Scott Park

As we kick off a new civic year, I also want to invite all members to join us at the CivFed Picnic. It's a relaxed opportunity to meet fellow delegates, connect with committee chairs, and enjoy time together outside the meeting room and away from Zoom. Details are in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued engagement and commitment to Arlington. I look forward to seeing you on September 8 and to another year of thoughtful discussion and shared purpose.

Sincerely,

Nick Giacobbe
President, Arlington County Civic Federation

September General Membership Meeting Meeting Agenda

- 6:30 - 7:00 Reception with Fire Department leadership and personnel
- 7:00 - 7:05 Open and [June minutes](#) approval
- 7:05 - 7:10 Presentation of Resolution to Arlington County Fire Department
- 7:15 - 7:40 County Board Debate
- 7:40 - 8:00 School Board Debate
- 8:00 - 8:20 County Treasurer Debate
- 8:20 - 8:45 U.S. Representative for Virginia's 8th Congressional District Debate
- 8:40 - 9:00 Other business and adjourn

Date: Tuesday, September 8th 2026 @ 7:00 PM

Invitation: Delegates, Alternate Delegates, others associated with member organizations, and the public are invited to attend this meeting.

Delegates: All requests for delegate swaps with alternates must be submitted to the secretary@civfed.org by **Sunday September 6th** at 12 noon. No exceptions.

Options for attending the meeting:

1. **In-Person (Delegates, Other Guests):** No registration is needed to attend in-person. See parking instructions below in this newsletter.
2. **Facebook Live (Other Guests):** No registration is needed to watch the live stream which can be found on the [ArlCivFed Facebook page](#).
3. **Zoom (Delegates):** Registration is required ([link](#)) by Monday, September 7th at 12 noon. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The Zoom passcode is 123456, but if you use the links provided after you register you will not have to enter it.

Annual Candidates' Forum Tuesday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m. *Submitted by Nick Giacobbe*

CivFed will host its traditional Candidates' Forum on **Tuesday, September 8 from 7-9 p.m. in the Hazel Auditorium at VHC**. The format will be hybrid, in person participation is encouraged, and we will also be broadcasting via Zoom and Facebook. See the meeting registration link in the newsletter if you are interested in participating via Zoom.

I will be moderating the County Board panel, Todd Truitt the School Board panel, and Lois Koontz the Treasurer and Congressional panels. Each candidate will be given time for an opening statement, questions from the audience, and a closing statement.

Here are the races and candidates we will be hosting at the September 8 debate:

County Board

- Audrey Clement
- Matt deFerranti
- David Sisson

School Board

- James "Vell" Rives
- Bethany Zecher Sutton

Treasurer

- Aasim Rawoot
- Kim Rucker

Member of Congress, 8th Congressional District

- Shelly Arnoldi
- Don Beyer
- Tony Sabio
- Timothy Sharman

If you have any questions about the forum or particular topics or issues you would like to have raised, please contact me at President@civfed.org.

Recognition for Arlington's Firefighters and Paramedics at September Meeting

*Submitted by Michael McMenamin,
Public Services Committee, Public Safety Subcommittee Chair
public.safety.sc.chair@civfed.org*

The Arlington County Civic Federation's September 8 meeting will include a reception and special presentation of the resolution [Recognizing the Bravery, Dedication, and Service of Firefighters and Paramedics and Honoring the Life and Legacy of Lloyd G. Edwards, Jr.](#)

Proposed by CivFed's Public Services Committee and approved unanimously by the membership in June, the resolution expresses the Federation's profound respect and gratitude for the firefighters and paramedics who serve Arlington and protect our community every day. It also honors the life and legacy of the late Arlington County Firefighter Lloyd G. Edwards, Jr., whose 22 years of service exemplified the dedication and commitment recognized in the resolution.

A reception with light refreshments and snacks will begin at 6:30 p.m., before the 7:00 p.m. CivFed meeting and resolution presentation.

We hope CivFed members will come early, join us for the reception, meet ACFD leadership, firefighters and paramedics in attendance, and help CivFed express our appreciation for all they do for our Arlington community.

Tuesday, September 8, 2026

Reception: 6:30 p.m.

Meeting and Resolution Presentation: 7:00 p.m.

**Arlington County Public Safety and Community
9/11 25th Anniversary Ceremony**

Date: Friday, September 11, 2026 11:00-12:00

Location: Fire Station 5, 1750 S. Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202



Voter Safety Community Town Hall on September 22

Submitted by Nick Giacobbe

The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, in partnership with the Arlington County Office of Voter Registration and Elections, will host a free nonpartisan Voter Safety Community Town Hall on Tuesday, September 22, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Boulevard. Check-in and Vendor fair is from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. More information is available and registration is encouraged at <https://bit.ly/votersafety>.

The town hall will bring together election officials, community leaders, and civic organizations to provide residents with information about voter rights, election safety, and voter responsibilities ahead of upcoming elections. Community members can learn about the voting process, ask questions, verify their voter registration status, receive assistance with

CivFed Fall Picnic on Saturday, September 26

Submitted by Nick Giacobbe

CivFed members and families are invited to join for a Fall Potluck BBQ Picnic.

Date: Saturday, September 26, 12 - 4 pm

Location: Fort Scott Park Picnic Shelter, 2800 Fort Scott Drive

Purpose: Socialize and get to know each other

The Picnic Committee will once again bring plates, cups, silverware, condiments, and soft drinks. We'll light the charcoal grill in advance.

So we know how many people to expect, please sign up at this [link](#).

For any questions, drop a line to President@civfed.org. See you on the 26th!

Environmental Affairs Committee

*Submitted by Mary Glass, Chair for Environmental Affairs Committee,
environmental.affairs.chair@civfed.org*

Thursday, September 10th at 7 p.m.

Strategy and action planning meeting of the Environmental Affairs Committee to discuss CivFed's position on the Arlington County Climate Action Plan (CAP) that is currently under development.

Register for the Zoom meeting so we can accommodate all interested parties.

https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/9Im771A3TUyP_nsvQM_aHQ

A Climate Action Plan Advisory Group (CAPAG) has been established to advise County staff on the CAP. ACCF will be represented in the CAPAG by Mary Glass, Chair, Environmental Affairs Committee. She welcomes your comments at environmental.affairs.chair@civfed.org on the following questions:

1. Should ACCF develop a statement on the goals and actions to be included in the CAP?
2. What are the issues that should be discussed and included in any ACCF comments on the CAP?
3. What role(s) should ACCF play as the CAP moves forward?
4. What are you as an individual most concerned about regarding climate change impacts in Arlington? (Flood, heat, natural resources, air quality, etc.?)

Any ACCF members and members of ACCF organizations wishing to become more involved with the CAP discussions are welcomed and can contact Mary Glass at environmental.affairs.chair@civfed.org. If you would like to take a deeper dive into the initial documents that Advisory Committee Members received as background, please go to [this page](#) on the ACCF website.

Additional opportunities to participate: There will be many engagements over the next year. For an overview of the planning documents and timeline, and updates on events go to the Arlington County website at

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/CMO/Climate-Action-Plan>. At the bottom of that page, you can sign up to receive email updates on the planning as it moves

forward. If you would like to take a deeper dive into the initial documents that Advisory Committee Members received as background, please go to [this page](#) on the ACCF website.

Public Safety Committee Meeting

Mike McMenamin Chair, public.safety.sc.chair@civfed.org

The Public Safety Committee will meet on Thursday, September 17, 2026, at 7:30 p.m. During this meeting, we will further discuss and plan the Civic Federation Public Safety Panel, scheduled for the October 13, 2026, general meeting. The invited panel includes the Arlington County Police, and specific neighborhoods. The committee meeting will be via Zoom.

Please register at https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Q2VKER_JRcCS275_ro90Cg.

Arlington Civic Federation Planning and Zoning Committee

Submitted by Brian Harner, Chair, plan.zone.chair@civfed.org

The Planning and Zoning Committee plans to meet monthly this fall as a full committee, with potential additional dates for subcommittees, beginning on September 22, and continuing on October 21 and November 18. We plan on a general catch-up in our September meeting on the following topics:

Arlington County Low Residential Study

Current status of study, review of options developed by Arlington County CPHD and DES staff.

Arlington County Comprehensive Plan Update

Updates on Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles status and Arlington County Board responses to Civic Federation outreach.

Virginia Code § 15.2-2286.2

This new state law requires any locality with a population of 50,000 or more to adopt and maintain at least one zoning district classification that allows a single-family home on a lot as small as 3,000 square feet. The law has implications for Arlington and how it is implemented that will be discussed.

Site Plan Applications

Updates on upcoming and on-going site plan applications and potential modifications to site plan requirements.

Please join us at 6:30 to 8:00 pm on September 22 to begin our work for this fall. Please register at: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/7FR5rnRTc6_HQxNexbN_Q

Legislation Committee Update

Co-chairs Francine Friedman and Dave Schutz, legislation.chair@civfed.org

The Legislation Committee will meet Weds 23 September at 7 pm by ACCF Zoom. Please register at <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/JP0VMM3wQ-OBSradRRZ9Dg>.

The agenda is to consider the annual CivFed 'wish lists' for the Arlington Delegation, and for the County Board's positions on legislative issues. The proposed recommendations will use input from the committee chairs, who are ex-officio members of the Legislation Committee as well as past legislative positions by ACCF. We will also be providing input to the County Board on our position on legislative issues. We are trying to impact the work of the next

Virginia General Assembly session, which begins Jan. 13 (major foci: regional issues and upcoming budget). CivFed delegates with views on legislative issues are invited to communicate them either to the appropriate committee chairs or to the Legislation Committee.

Committee chairs and delegates are requested to provide their input to the Legislation Committee in advance of its September 23 meeting.

Please submit your requests in bulleted form (using the format of Whereas..., we request legislation to,,) that will be the easiest format for us to deal with.

Parks and Recreation Committee Update

Submitted by Dixie Duncan and Jean Henceroth, Co-chairs Parks.rec.chair@civfed.org

The CivFed Parks and Recreation Committee, Co-chaired by Dixie Duncan and Jean Henceroth, will hold its first meeting Thursday, September 24, at 7 PM via Zoom. Please register at <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/zaJNe3lwTMyx8IcTGgQp4g>.

The Committee, after consulting with Jane Rudolph, Head of the Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation, will prioritize reviewing and updating its "[Arlington County Civic Federation Parks and Recreation Committee Resolution Approved 63-1-1 by Member Organizations Delegates or Alternates on February 2, 2016.](#)"

This Resolution recommended "That the County Board assure the public that the County will preserve all existing publicly owned park land such that there is a net annual increase of at least 3 new publicly owned and available acres added to the County's public park land portfolio with no net offset or loss of existing acreage." In the ten years since this Resolution was passed, Arlington has acquired twenty-six acres of park land, leave four remaining.

Revenue and Expenditures Committee

John Vistadt Chair, rev.expend.chair@civfed.org

The next meeting of the R&E Committee will be Wednesday, September 30 at 7:30 by Zoom. Please register for the Zoom meeting at https://us06web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tFQEqg_fTI2Gp1zMz3vplQ. The committee will consider the priorities and schedule for the year.

2026 Bond Referenda – the Cost of Borrowing

*Submitted by Suzanne Smith Sundburg (for John Vihstadt, Chair)
Principal Analyst, Revenues & Expenditures Committee*

With early voting for November's election set to begin on Sept. 18, it's wise to review the bond referenda that also will be on the ballot (bonds are essentially loans that local governments use to fund public infrastructure and other capital spending): <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Budget-Finance/Bonds/2026-Bond-Referenda>

- **Metro & Transportation**

Amount: \$69,745,000

- **Local Parks & Recreation**

Amount: \$34,945,000

- **Community Infrastructure**

Amount: \$58,825,000

- **Arlington Public Schools**

Amount: \$80,000,000

- **Utilities**

Amount: \$20,745,000

Total General Obligation Borrowing on the 2026 Ballot

Amount: \$264,260,000 or roughly \$1,082 per resident in Arlington in new borrowing

Although the link above provides explanations and sample projects for each classification of bonds in the upcoming referenda, the County Board has the ability to *reallocate* bond funds to other projects within the same classification, “as amended from time to time, to the extent necessary or desirable.”

How Much Do We Owe?

Whereas general obligation (GO) bonds are the only type of bonds/borrowing that appear on the ballot, they are just one part of Arlington County’s total indebtedness, which includes revenue bonds (for things like the Ballston Quarter parking garage) as well as Industrial Development Authority (IDA) bonds to fund capital projects like those at Virginia Hospital Center (VHC).

According to the most recent data reviewed by the Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts (VAPA), Arlington County was carrying net debt of **\$2.6 billion dollars in fiscal year (FY) 2025**, which includes \$1.4 billion in bonds and bond issues in anticipation of loans as of June 30, 2025.

Arlington’s total indebtedness equaled **\$10,803 per person** (per capita) at the end of FY2025: (Exhibit G) <https://www.apa.virginia.gov/local-government/reports?type=comparative-reports>. Compare this figure to the one at the end of 2013, when Arlington’s debt equaled \$4,082 per person, a 62% increase in dollar terms over a 12-year period: https://www.insidenova.com/news/arlington/community-guide-too-much-government-debt-in-arlington-it-depends/article_47e4350e-3f43-11e4-8a64-5f17d12c9fed.html.

Why How Much We Borrow Matters

First and foremost, bonds and other forms of borrowing must be repaid. The cost of repayment is known as debt service. **In FY2025 (according to VAPA), Arlington County spent \$100 million on debt service:** <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/budget/documents/fy-2025/fy-2025-adopted/28-fy25a-debt-service.pdf>. This is money in our budget that cannot be used for other priorities, no matter how pressing the need.

It’s important to note that the bond rating agencies (Moody’s, Standard & Poor’s, and Fitch) evaluate only Arlington’s ability to repay its debt and doesn’t critique the uses of borrowed funds. Moreover, the bond rating agencies take into account *only* Arlington’s general obligation debt, not its total debt, when awarding a credit rating.

The more we borrow, the more we spend on debt service (repayment), and a rise in interest rates can inflate this cost. On Tuesday, August 18, 2026, “treasury yields rose to their highest point since 2007”: <https://archive.is/20260824145454/https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2026/08/19/bond-market-quake-is-bad-news-governments-businesses-consumers/>. When Treasury yields rise, the U.S. government must pay more to borrow money — and thus so do local governments, businesses and consumers.

In short, for as long U.S. Treasury yields remain high, we can expect to pay more for every dollar we borrow (and every bond we float).

Transportation Committee Update

Submitted by Nick Giacobbe

president@civfed.org

The Transportation Committee was hard at work over the summer reviewing the County's draft [Multimodal Transportation Plan](#), which once approved by the County Board will replace the 2007 [Master Transportation Plan](#). The committee carefully deliberated the comprehensive new plan and prepared the Civic Federation's comments that are available on the website at this [link](#). The draft plan emphasizes safety, accessibility, reliability, sustainability, transparency, and accountability in a single multimodal framework. We will continue to monitor the draft as it moves forward in the approval process.

I would also like to thank Nicole Toulouse for her outstanding leadership of the Transportation Committee over the past year. The committee produced an outstanding resolution, [A Safe, Equitable, and Accountable Transportation Plan in Arlington County](#), that will serve us well as a policy document into the future. The resolution was instrumental in helping guide the committee's review of the draft Multimodal Transportation Plan. Due to other commitments, Nicole will not be returning to the role of committee chair for this program year, I want to wish Nicole and her family well.

If you are interested in taking on the Transportation Committee or can recommend a good chair (or co-chairs), please let me know.

Schools Committee Update

Submitted by Todd Truitt, Schools Committee Chair
schools.chair@civfed.org

The Schools Committee is working on questions for the School Board candidate forum this fall. The Schools Committee's next meeting will be in January to prepare for the Superintendent's and School Board's visit to CivFed in April 2027.

Virginia Hospital Center Hazel Auditorium Parking and Access Instructions for General Membership Meetings

Reminder: Parking passes will be provided. Meetings are held in the 'Conference Center' depicted on the map below.

The VHC Director of Security has advised CivFed that we should begin to park in Parking Garage C (map below). You can then walk across to the Oncology entrance and gain admittance until 8 p.m. **After the meeting, you MUST EXIT via the Women's and Infant lobby.**

ENTER (until 8 p.m.): Zone C Ground floor Oncology entrance (only open until 8 pm, Monday-Friday)

- Sign into the visitor kiosks (**need driver's license each time**)
- Get visitor sticker and wear at all times when inside the hospital
- Take a right at the double doors by the visitor kiosks
- Take a right at the single door
- Go to elevators and take to lobby floor
- Exit elevators and go left to hall directly behind welcome desk in lobby
- Take a left at the single door and continue down the hall toward a set of double doors
- Go through double doors and go right
- Conference center auditorium is directly ahead

ENTER or EXIT (24/7): Zone C first floor Women's and Infant lobby entrance (please use this entrance to exit after 8 pm, open 24/7):

- Sign into the visitor kiosks (**need driver's license each time**)
- Get visitor sticker and wear at all times when inside the hospital
- Walk to hall directly behind the welcome desk in the lobby

- Take a left at the single door and continue down the hall toward a set of double doors
- Go through double doors and go right
- Conference center auditorium is directly ahead



2026-2027 Board of Directors

Officers

President, [Nick Giacobbe](#)

Vice President, [Jean Henceroth](#)

Secretary, [Dixie Duncan](#)

Treasurer, [Michael Bruce](#)

Board of Directors

Board Chair, [David Smith](#)

Director at Large, [Alison Babb](#)

Director at Large, [Francine Friedman](#)

Director at Large, [John Ford](#)

Director at Large, [Allan Gajadhar](#)

Director at Large, [Michael McMenamin](#)

Director at Large, [Natalie Roy](#)

Director at Large, [Dave Schutz](#)

Director at Large, [Jackie Snelling](#)

ACCF PUBLIC INTEREST COMMITTEES

- Arts and Culture - if interested contact bod.orgdev@civfed.org
- Diversity – Chair TBD - if interested contact bod.orgdev@civfed.org
- Environmental Affairs – Chair Mary Glass
- Housing – Co-Chairs Anne Bodine and Matt Hall
- Legislation – Co-Chairs, Francine Friedman and Dave Schutz
- Membership – Chair Jackie Snelling membership@civfed.org
- Parks and Recreation – Co-Chairs Jean Henceroth and Dixie Duncan
- Planning and Zoning – Chair Brian Harner
- Public Services – Chair John Ford
- Revenues and Expenditures – Chair John Vihstadt, Principal Analyst Suzanne Sundburg

-Schools – Chair Todd Truitt
-Transportation – Chair Nicole Merlene Toulouse

Any delegate, alternate delegate, or member of a member organization may participate on any public interest or support committee. Please contact the applicable committee chair, point-of-contact, or President Nick Giacobbe if you are interested in participating on ACCF committees.

[Link to Committee Website](#)

Interested in being an Arlington County Civic Federation Delegate?

The Arlington County Civic Federation was founded in 1916. Today, it has 80+ member organizations dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. The Federation membership reflects the broad array of interests and talents found in the County and is open and welcoming to all groups within Arlington, firmly believing that a broader range of groups creates better problem-solving outcomes for Arlington and its residents. Our purpose continues to be promoting the general welfare of Arlington County and its vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner.

Arlington County Civic Federation delegates enjoy the full benefits of participation, voting, and serving in Civic Federation leadership positions. If your organization is a member of the Civic Federation, ask if it has open slots for delegates. If it is not a member organization of the Civic Federation, encourage it to join. Here is a link to our website for more details.

joinus@Civfed.org

[The Civic Federation's Website](#)

CivFed Calendar FY2027

Looking Ahead:

- 09/08/26 - General Meeting
 - 09/10/26 - Environmental Affairs Committee Meeting
 - 09/11/26 - 9/11 25th Anniversary Commemoration
 - 09/17/26 - Public Safety Committee Meeting
 - 09/22/26 - Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting
 - 09/22/26 - Voter Safety Community Town Hall
 - 09/23/26 - Legislation Committee Meeting
 - 09/24/06 - Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
 - 09/26/26 - CivFed Picnic
 - 09/30/26 - Revenues and Expenditures Committee Meeting
-

Subscribe to our emails!

follow us on 



Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email

Arlington County Civic Federation | PO Box 42091 | Arlington, VA 22204 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!