Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Council for Economic Opportunity (CEO)
J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center (Rooms 9/10)
February 11, 2025

Meeting Summary

Board Members present: CEO Chair Supervisor Daniel G. Storck, CEO Vice Chair and Board of Supervisors (BOS) Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez, Supervisor James N. Bierman, Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw, Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Supervisor, Rodney L. Lusk, Supervisor Pat Herrity, Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Supervisor Kathy L. Smith

CEO Members present: Mr. Ashwan Bharath, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman, Revature; Mr. Anthony Chang, Co-Founder and Executive Principal, Silverline Equities; Mr. Andrew Hallman, V.P. National Security Strategy and Innovation, Peraton for Mr. Christopher Valentino, Chief Innovation Officer; Mr. Peter Kant, CEO, Enabled Intelligence; Mr. Ron Keesing, Chief AI Officer, Leidos; Ms. Sheryll Manoj, President & CEO, AttainX; Mr. Robert Moser, Jr, CEO, Clark Construction; Ms. Jennifer Schretter, General Partner, Proof

CEO Members not present: Dr. Stephen Jones, President & CEO, Inova Health System, Mr. John Serafini, CEO, HawkEye360, Mr. Christopher Valentino, Chief Innovation Officer, Peraton

Advisory Members present: Mr. Mark Carrier, Chairman of the Board of Directors, NVC; Fairfax County Executive, Mr. Bryan Hill; Mr. Victor Hoskins, President & CEO, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; Dr. Anne Kress, President, Northern Virginia Community College; Dr. Andre Marshall, V.P., Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact, George Mason University for Dr. Gregory Washington, President; Dr. Michelle Reid, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools

Advisory Members not present: Ms. Jennifer Taylor, President & CEO, Northern Virginia Technology Council; Dr. Gregory Washington, President, George Mason University

CEO Chair Storck welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He said that the CEO is different from all other Board committees in that it allows for relationship building with leading business executives and addresses issues to make Fairfax County a vibrant community. He stated that today's meeting topic to prepare our workforce to utilize AI was critically important and timely. He stated that the goals of the meeting were to: 1) receive insight into AI's impact on job development and how our local education and business partners are preparing for it; and 2) position Fairfax County as an AI capital through partnerships to make our workforce prepared.

CEO Vice Chair and BOS Chairman McKay stated that Fairfax County desires to stay on the cutting edge by recognizing AI as a tool to reshape our lives and our economy. Proactive collaboration between the private sector and public policy is important in continuing to position Fairfax County as a leader.

Supervisor Storck followed with introductions and welcomed Ms. Sheryll Manoj, Robert Moser, Jr., and Ms. Jennifer Schretter as new CEO At-Large Members; Mr. Andrew Hallman, representing CEO At-Large Member Mr. Christopher Valentino; and Dr. Andre Marshall representing Dr. Gregory Washington as an Advisory Member. All the other members introduced themselves.

AI Impact on Workforce and Job Opportunities

DEI Director Moudry introduced Mr. Ashwin Bharath, Co-Founder and CEO of Revature. Bharath has been in the AI space since 2001. He commented that it has become the most powerful technology and has blurred the difference between real and unreal. While the average cognition rate for humans is about 60 bits per second, generative AI is around 1 trillion bits per second, which could have an impact on human memory. He described the 5 zones (from high school diploma to graduate degree) of the human workforce and how AI will impact each zone. There will be a lower impact on those with high school degrees while those with Ph.D. or Master's degrees will be impacted more. The highest percentage of Fairfax County's workforce falls in Zones 2-4. AI has begun to transform these employees as the work previously done in Zone 4 is now being done in Zone 2. The most impacted roles are those who are software developers in the IT sector in Zone 4. Through upskilling, those in Zone 2 will move into Zones 3 and 4 as computer programmers and entry-level software engineers.

Bharath then explained the 4 archetypes for Gen-AI integration: Commoditized, Automated, Human-Centric and Augmented. Some occupations like construction and education will have lower ease of Gen AI adoption while others, like computer and mathematical occupations will adopt more easily. He broke down skills by subroutines to point out those with higher percentages of AI augmentation. He identified occupations in Fairfax County and measured them with exposure scores and friction scores. Management occupations had a high exposure score (3.9 out of 5) and relatively low friction score (1.2 out of 5). As a result of Gen AI there will be an average productivity boost of about 14%, with about 34% of those being novice or low-skilled workers. He concluded by saying that Fairfax County could become an AI capital, but everyone needs to work together to make it a reality.

Supervisor Palchik asked about the skills needed to focus on to make workers successful in the transformation process. Bharath stated that an emphasis should be put on soft skills working in teams and thinking critically.

Local Preparations for the AI Transformation

Moudry introduced FCPS Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid as the first speaker to discuss how our local educational institutions are preparing for the AI Transformation. She commented that Fairfax County is a unique location for innovation, including AI. She added that Virginia has an opportunity to grow exponentially like Fairfax County by having all students take algebra by 8th grade. She pointed out that the state does not require Algebra III or trigonometry before graduating high school. Mathematics is an important underpinning for AI. Kindergarteners should be able to add and subtract the same items (e.g., beans, ducks). There should be singular thread content in math from preschool to college.

Dr. Reid highlighted FCPS successes such as its 94.6% on time high school graduation rate. In addition, over 70% of FCPS students take the SATs compared to 50% for the state of Virginia. FCPS students also exceeded state and global average scores on the SATs.

Dr. Reid discussed the Google Pilot Framework and how FCPS tends to pilot many programs but there is not enough effort to prove or scale them. However, FCPS has been partnering with the joint organization International Society for Technology and Education and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to pilot emerging practices and technologies with 17 cohort schools. All levels of schools are involved with the intent that there are no disparate outcomes in any part of Fairfax County. With the shortage of both science and math teachers, they are looking at AI as a vehicle for teaching.

Moudry introduced Northern Virgina Community College (NVCC) President Dr. Anne Kress who spoke about AI at the college. She began by mentioned the upcoming ASU+GSV Summit taking place in San Diego this April and the focus on education and technology. Approximately 90% of the 600 exhibitors will focus on K-12 education at the summit. However, Dr. Kress stressed the importance of upskilling and training those workers in Zone 1 of Ashwin Bharath's presentation.

She affirmed the role of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region as an AI leader as well as Fairfax County as the leader in Virginia. In a recent survey over 44% of businesses responded that they use AI in their daily operations and that 60% will increase their usage of AI in the future.

NVCC offers a stand-alone certificate on AI Essentials. It includes a class on ethical issues on AI that is integrated into the general education coursework. There is a need for creative and critical thinking, managing change and working in teams for those looking to upskill. She pointed out that students at NVCC are 2-4 times more likely to come from lower income families. She also mentioned that there are $20-25K grants to help develop their own professionals (including some students) in new and emerging technologies like AI.

Dr. Andre Marshall highlighted the fact that George Mason University is the first in Virginia to have a Chief AI Officer, Dr. Amanda Shehu. The university is working on expanding its coursework, degrees and research on AI. Their CIO incorporated some AI technologies that led to greater efficiencies in the administration. He also mentioned the Tech Talent Investment Program to produce more graduates in the computer science and computer engineering fields. Both NVCC and George Mason are working on programs in technology to help incarcerated individuals succeed. Finally, he mentioned that law school professor Jameel Jaffer serves on the Governor's Board on AI. The State Council of Higher Education held a summit at Geoge Mason last March and included AI's role and the societal impact.

County Executive Hill thanked Board Members for providing the NACO tool kits on AI to see how Fairfax County can use AI responsibly. He also thanked FCPS, NVCC and George Mason for their leadership on this issue.

CEO Member Peter Kant provided some background on AI and how it has been used. He stressed how important it is to verify the accuracy of the data through the backend. For example, the problem with ChatGPT is the source and timeliness of the data. It is important to have skills in pattern recognition and puzzling to recognize and evaluate information.

Discussion

- Andrew Hallman asked Dr. Kress about which skills are most needed as the talent pipeline is important to Peraton. She stressed the importance of soft skills and mathematics.
- CEO Member Sheryll Manoj clarified that AI is not an industry but a technology. She called for an AI Coalition that would establish centers of excellence by industry. Furthermore, she recommended an annual summit in Fairfax County that could be national in scope. Manoj added that Fairfax County look into grants for establishing centers and align its efforts with the state and federal government.
- CEO Member Ron Keesing agreed that there needs to be a call to action. Fairfax County's focus should be on AI assurance and human AI interaction. Fairfax County is unique with its well-educated FCPS graduates as well as the confluence of government and industry in the region. Partnerships should be sought with national educational institutions. There should also be an effort to tap retirees as angel investors in AI technologies. Spaces for innovation with incentives should be established to keep the tech startup community in Fairfax County.
- CEO Member Anthony Chang stated that other sectors should be included in the AI transformation work. There should be focus on small language models. Kant responded by saying that 90% of AI growth is in small language models. Fairfax County should become a leader as the AI user, not necessarily the producer, since there so many users in this region than anywhere else.
- Dr. Kress remarked that there should be less emphasis on degree programs and more on certifications for specific skills. Dr. Marshall commented about the National Science Foundation's Joint AI Initiative that brings together Virginia Tech, University of Virginia and George Mason University to partner on AI research and development.
- Bharath proposed a monthly session on AI because there is a general lack of awareness of the rapid changes in AI. Supervisor Herrity commented that there should be a collection of success stories that can be shared with others.
- Supervisor Alcorn agreed that Fairfax County should strive toward being the place to know how to use AI, and to focus on small language models.
- Supervisor Palchik proposed that the standards of learning be changed to shift some of the focus to AI and other emerging technologies. Supervisor Lusk added that these technologies should lift up students in Title I schools and make them more productive.

CEO Chair Storck concluded the meeting by highlighting the Department of Economic Indicative's fifth anniversary. It has initiated many worthwhile programs such as FairfaxCORE and TalentUp. He stated that the department will play a role in Fairfax County's response to the AI transformation. Chairman McKay thanked everyone for the ideas that will be discussed with Board Members.
The next CEO meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 3. The meeting was adjourned.