Fairfax County Board of Supervisors
Council for Economic Opportunity (CEO)
J. Hamilton Lambert Conference Center
Conference Room 11
June 3, 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 James N. Bierman, Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn, Supervisor, Rodney L. Lusk, Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez, Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik, Supervisor Pat Herrity, Supervisor Kathy L. Smith

Board Members not present: Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw

CEO Members present: Mr. Ashwan Bharath, Co-Founder and Executive Chairman, Revature; Mr. Anthony Chang, Co-Founder and Executive Principal, Silverline Equities; Mr. Peter Kant, CEO, Enabled Intelligence; Mr. Ron Keesing, Chief AI Officer, Leidos; Mr. Matt Kull, CIO and Digital Strategy Officer for Dr. Stephen Jones, President & CEO, Inova Health System, Ms. Sheryll Manoj, President & CEO, AttainX; Ms. Jennifer Schretter, General Partner, Proof; Mr. John Serafini, CEO, HawkEye360

CEO Members not present: Mr. Robert Moser, Jr, CEO, Clark Construction

Advisory Members present: Fairfax County Executive, Mr. Bryan Hill; Mr. Victor Hoskins, President & CEO, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority; Mr. Chad Knights, V.P., IET and College Computing for Dr. Anne Kress, President, Northern Virginia Community College; Dr. Andre Marshall, V.P., Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact for Dr. Gregory Washington, President, George Mason University; Ms. Jennifer Taylor, President & CEO, Northern Virginia Technology Council

Advisory Members not present: Mr. Mark Carrier, Chairman of the Board of Directors, NVC; Dr. Michelle Reid, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools

CEO Chair Storck called the meeting to order and announced that BOS Chairman McKay would be arriving late from a Northern Virginia Chamber meeting. He asked all CEO members to introduce themselves. Deputy County Executive Jennifer Miller and Department of Family Services Director Michael Becketts were included as special guests.

<u>AI Adoption for Economic Transformation – Establishing an AI Coalition</u>
CEO Chair Storck gave a brief synopsis of the June 3 CEO meeting which focused on the impact of AI in the workforce, how educational institutions are responding, and positioning Fairfax County as an AI capital. He emphasized the desire of Fairfax County to lead the utilization of AI and include the entire community in its use. The purpose of this meeting was to explore the establishment of an AI coalition to help guide Fairfax County in that goal with input from the CEO members. Board Members were primarily asked to listen to the feedback from the business

leaders. He then turned over the discussion to DEI Director Rebecca Moudry to review the previous meeting's findings and to outline today's meeting focus.

After providing additional background from the February 11 CEO meeting discussion, Moudry identified a central theme of using our existing assets to move forward as an AI leader. She pointed out that other regions aspire to be positioned like Fairfax County with its skilled talent pool and business sector ecosystem. The major themes generated from the previous meeting include: 1) supporting AI development in core business areas (e.g., security, defense, intelligence, health care); 2) focusing on niche areas such as small language models for government with AI assurance and interaction; and 3) becoming the leader in proof of concept through development and testing.

Actions generated from the meeting were an annual AI summit, monthly public workshops and AI tech accelerators to upskill employees, business owners, educators and the public. She added that employers are challenged in providing adequate training for the nearly 640,000 employees in Fairfax County. Although 90% of employers in a recent survey said they have an AI strategy for their workforce, only 57% of their employees said that their companies have one. Another survey revealed that 50% of employees said they must train themselves in AI. A Pew Research survey pointed out that 81% identified themselves as non-AI users in the workplace, and that they are more worried than hopeful about using AI at work. She stated that although employers are encouraging AI there is much employee fear and lack of business leadership and support to move AI forward in the office. A coalition comprised of government, business and education could help facilitate and lead an AI strategy to support users as there is no coordinated effort in Fairfax County or the region. She concluded with a proposed challenge statement for CEO members to consider. She then introduced CEO members Dr. Andre Marshall, Sherryl Manoj, Peter Kant and Jennifer Taylor to begin the discussion.

<u>Considering and AI Coalition</u>

Manoj kicked off the conversation by saying that her company, AttainX is in a very good position to bring Fairfax County to the next level on AI through its relationship. Also, AttainX recently partnered with FEMA and Texas A&M on post-disaster assessment using AI that saved months on insurance assessments and claims following some tornadoes. She stated that coordination between governments, businesses and academia is needed in the region to advance AI. She advocated for an AI coalition as it would be a unifying entity that would increase collaboration and reduce duplication of efforts. It would foster the sharing of resources and using the same testbeds to implement AI. She added that no one institution can effectively implement AI alone. She provided an example of her company not successfully using a first response AI tool until it brought the first responders and the public together on how to use it when there is an emergency. With coordination across sectors AI could be implemented in one sector and carry over into other sectors with the coordination. She introduced three pillars for the establishment of an AI coalition: 1) AI assurance and responsible testbeds with Fairfax County serving as the sandbox; 2) workforce transformation and inclusion to properly equip high school students, college students and workers with credentials and ethics trainings; and 3) mission alliance and product development to address issues and overcome fear. The result would be that AI is trustworthy, inclusive and local and assures proper governance, fairness and

transparency. Fairfax County could build the trust necessary through coordination and policy development that connects everyone.

Taylor followed by agreeing that local and state government can be testbeds for AI implementation that the federal government can highlight for others around the country. She provided some background on the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC), which was established in 1991 as the Northern Virginia technology ecosystem, and now has over 500 member companies. It just held its Impact AI Summitt two weeks ago. For the United States to be a leader in AI it must have the right data, talent, digital infrastructure, and standards and regulations. She mentioned Palantir and other companies that are moving to this area to bring AI technologies to the region. The race is not about the largest language models, but it is about governments, businesses and academia using AI effectively. It is important for those businesses not using it to start small and educate their employees. AI will have a significant impact on entry level positions in businesses, especially with software engineers. Taylor concluded by saying that Fairfax County should implement AI with its workforce and encourage businesses to use it and to start small and include all employees.

Kant gave some background about Enabled Intelligence, a company that works primarily with defense, intelligence and health care clients' data and converts them into AI tools. He remarked that there are already coalitions formed to bring about the implementation of AI, but there could be a particular focus on leading in the application of AI tools. Fairfax County could be the leader in becoming the workforce on how to apply AI. The current workforce coming into Fairfax County does not know how to use the tools. It is a powerful tool that can analyze complex issues across sectors to bring about solutions in a more cost-effective way. He mentioned a couple of examples of not using AI properly that had negative impacts on consumers and employees, He would like to send his own employees to either NVCC or George Mason for classes on the effective uses of AI by employees. Such courses do not exist currently.

Dr. Marshall stated that Fairfax County is in a good position to bring together all sectors in an AI coalition. He said that George Mason University has been leading the way on AI through its website www.gmu.edu/AI and the appointment Professor Amarda Shehu last year as the first Chief AI Officer at a Virginia public research university. George Mason has developed three main pillars: 1) AI2 Nexus; 2) Patriot AI; and 3) academic programs. The AI2 Nexus is George Mason's strategic vision on AI that brings together education, research, workforce development and community engagement. Its four principles are Integrate AI, Inspire AI, Innovate AI and Impact AI. Patriot AI is the secure infrastructure that allows access to over 18,000 AIO models. With respect to academic programs, George Mason now offers a Minor in AI Ethics, a Graduate Certificate in Responsible AI, a Masters in AI beginning in fall 2025, and an undergraduate course on AI For All to prepare all students in AI. George Mason hosted the first AI and Education Summit last month with the State Council on Higher Education which brought together leaders in K-12 education, higher education and industry to discuss AI in learning and work.

Dr. Marshall recommended three areas where an AI coalition would be beneficial: 1) accelerating business adoption; 2) upskilling the workforce in Fairfax County; and 3) ensuring ethical deployment of AI. George Mason received a $1 million congressional grant through Senator

Kaine to establish the first Center for Small Business AI Innovation to accelerate business adoption. In terms of upskilling the workforce, George Mason recently held an event with DoD on smart solutions for K-12 students. Finaaly, George Mason hired two professors using TTPI funds who are experts on policy, computer science and AI and are researching the effects of AI in the penal system as well as bias. He stated that AI needs to be inclusive to provide access to AI tools for everyone. He added that virtual maker spaces could be destinations for AI learning. He concluded by mentioning a meeting with the National Science Foundation about a potential health care testbed for AI where he will also discuss the effort in Fairfax County to form an AI coalition.

Moudry thanked the speakers and presented the proposed challenge statement for CEO members to consider also with a series of discussion questions moderated by CEO Chair Storck. He mentioned that Fairfax County's AI policy was adopted just a year ago and it is now being implemented. Supervisor Jimenez followed by asking that environmental concerns be added to the problem statement. CEO Member Ron Keesing agreed that sustainability should be incorporated in the statement. However, he emphasized that Fairfax County should be a leader in AI innovation as the technology continues to evolve. An AI innovation ecosystem could bring back many of the younger workers who left the area for more attractive jobs elsewhere. He pointed out that the small business ecosystem in Fairfax County supported by federal subsidies may be going away and expressed the importance of Fairfax County to find ways to preserve it and, in turn, fuel innovation.

Inova Health System CIO and Digital Strategy Officer Matt Kull stressed that Fairfax County must focus on new business creation to mitigate the impact of AI on existing businesses' workforce. Fairfax County should become the best place to start an AI business. The infrastructure must be in place to attract the entrepreneurs and young workforce. There should be attractive areas with higher occupancy zones and a young workforce educated in AI. He recommended that AI should be taught in 9th grade and that AI should be considered a vocational trade. He shared that Inova Health has been hiring young talent based on skills, not on level of education. He proposed that a startup environment be created through incentives to grow and become thriving companies in Fairfax County. He mentioned that 40% of all health care positions (except physicians) can be done through AI if fully implemented. Companies like Palantir are not hiring workers here currently because other places are more attractive. He responded to CEO Chair Storck by saying that a coalition would help in addressing cost of living, zoning, education, and higher investment.

CEO Member Ashwin Bharath agreed that it is important to have a native AI workforce that is educated early. He pointed out that the unemployment rate of recent graduates is higher than the general unemployment rate for the first time in 32 years. The change has been in the use of AI in workforce planning by companies. Many positions being sought by the graduates do not or will not exist. He said the focus should be on educating the native workforce and having a repository for all resources pertaining to those tech jobs being sought by companies. Supervisor Palchik agreed that AI needs to be taught early in high school. She challenged everyone to think about more high school academies to generate more problem solvers in technology, health and construction.

CEO Member Jennifer Schretter agreed that a coalition is necessary. An innovation ecosystem will attract talent and foster small business incubation and growth. She proposed educated students even earlier than 9th grade. She also agreed on the focus of AI application for existing businesses through online classes and other educational opportunities. Jennifer Taylor responded by saying that there are businesses, such as Trustable AI, who support other businesses to create AI platforms. The platforms identify where AI is already being used, develop a plan if there is an implementation error, and assist with any standards and regulations that should be followed.

CEO Member John Serefini stated that businesses need people, access to capital and access to customers. He said that people and access to capital are more favorable on the West Coast than in Fairfax County as the conditions are better there. He stays here because of the access to customers. He added that access to companies like Leidos has helped in providing investment to support Hawkeye360. Intermediaries like the Defense Innovation Unit and Incutel help open access to customers for startups. CEO Member Victor Hoskins concurred with Serafini in that Fairfax County must focus on its local advantages in an environment different from the West Coast.

A discussion ensued as to whether Fairfax County should try to compete with Silicon Valley on talent. Kant remarked that the more important focus should be on application of AI. It is encouraging that businesses are being incubated because of plans funded by DIU and other federal entities. Keesing argued that attracting experts from Silicon is important and that Fairfax County should do it along with applying AI and building its local advantages with the federal government.

CEO Member Anthony Chang agreed that Fairfax County has an emphasis on government technologies in this area. However, there are many mid-career and late-career workers who are now looking for new jobs because of the downsizing of the federal government. He proposed that Fairfax County be a convener that includes these workers, investors and customers to explore ideas and how to implement them. Supervisor Herrity remarked that the challenge statement has an emphasis on retention and should focus on the application of AI. He stated that a coalition should be convened with the private sector convening it, and mentioned working with NVTC and the Northern Virginia Chamber. He said that Fairfax County does not do enough to celebrate itself as a leader.

Chairman McKay stated that the challenge statement was not aggressive enough and should include language that Fairfax County is already part of the AI transformation to attract future tech growth. He agreed that some recognition should be done on how Fairfax County has already developed a thriving business ecosystem. AI should be taught to students younger than 9th grade. With respect to retaining young talent, Chaiman McKay appealed to the business community to support Fairfax County in developing areas that are welcoming to them. He added that Fairfax County must overcome reluctance to move forward to developing new high-density areas in the coming decades. Supervisor Bierman asked CEO members to advise Fairfax County on what its needs are for an AI coalition to effectively address the issues raised and if there is a budget requirement for them.

Chad Knights, V.P., IET and College Computing at NVCC commented that AI impacts everyone not just the business and educational communities. The fear comes from the fact that AI is pervasive in many aspects of life. He envisions an AI coalition like a business and industry leadership team that generates robust discussions on implementing AI on a regular basis. Some sectors such as accounting have developed AI tools to do the work of entry-level accountants without regard to future succession planning and potential senior promotions. NVCC would like to identify the credentials needed by industry so they can be available in the rapidly changing environment. It is important for students to stay on the cutting edge of AI to be able to prepare for changing business needs.

Manoj followed by summarizing the main points of the discussion. The first is that a coalition should pursue AI innovation as well as its practicality, safety, governance and education. A coalition will be made up of industry leaders, government and education officials, as well as others with expertise. It would foster the sharing of resources and strive to include all communities. Finally, it would set goals for 5 years and beyond.

Supervisor Smith commented that she is working with a task force on land use in Centerville that should listen to new ways of developing that include more density based on today's discussion. Supervisor Alcorn agreed that a coalition should be led by the private sector with Fairfax County in specific support roles. He added that a communications strategy is needed that would reach out to the workforce and would enhance Fairfax County's branding as a leader in the application of AI. He proposed that Fairfax County's workforce housing message includes entrepreneurs starting a business. Supervisor Lusk agreed that Fairfax County must differentiate itself from all other jurisdictions on growing AI as it will bring in the investment needed. The focus on AI as a trade will help support those in low paying jobs find a pathway. He concluded by saying that Fairfax County can become a leader in AI with the support of a coalition.

CEO Chair Storck adjourned the meeting.