



Attendance

Members Present

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair
Commissioner Ron Byington
Commissioner John Griffith
Commissioner Richmond Izard
Sopheya Farrell
Harold Oemig
Paul Pedersen

Members Excused

Barbara Bechtel
Commissioner Janice Wilberg
Sally Lindner
Gary Mikolajczyk
Gary Sprong
Sherrie Tussler
Cindy Van Vreede

Milwaukee County Staff

Michelle Allison, MCADS
Andy Bethke, MCADS
Alena DeGrado, MCADS
Daniel Idzikowski, MCADS
Pam Matthews, MCDOA
Vonda Nyang, MCADS
Carrie Koss Vallejo, MCADS

Guests

Commissioner Gloria Miller
Christie Carter, LGBT Ctr of MKE
Beth Hengst
Hannah Catherine Kramer, Rep. Vining's office
Kent Mayfield, ADRC Governing Bd.
Commissioner Gloria Miller
Cathy Wood, SOA

I. Call to Order

Chair Elliott Moeser called the Advocacy Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Chair Moeser welcomes newest member Paul Pedersen. Mr. Pedersen introduces himself as a member of many community boards including the MATC Board.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Approve May 2, 2022 Advocacy Committee Minutes.

ACTION: Approved unanimously (Griffith moves, Pedersen seconds).

III. Racial Equity & Advocacy (Reflection)

Commissioner Richmond Izard congratulates the County in addressing racial equity. He notes that some people may feel this is not an important issue, but it is in fact the issue that is at the forefront of so many other issues. He describes a personal example of how his own father has not received the respect that he deserves, even in matters relating to financial institutions. Izard notes the importance of the work of the Advocacy Committee and encourages the Committee to continue to set public policy priorities, share them widely, and take action to monitor them. The Commission has the responsibility to set these policy priorities for older adults in Milwaukee County and they may not always be the same priorities as the County DHHS.

Commissioner Izard notes that this is last meeting and he has been honored to serve. Chair Moeser congratulates Izard on his service on the Commission and notes that he has been a strong voice for older adults in the community.

IV. Update on Action Items

a. Senior Leadership Day / Advocacy Day debrief

Idzikowski notes that is the responsibility of the Commission to assist older adults to take and active interest in and advocate on public policy matters affecting older adults. To that end, during Older Americans month in May the Commission again sponsored Senior Leadership Day (formerly the Senior Statesman program), an advocacy training program to increase awareness of programming through Milwaukee County affecting older adults, discussions with County leaders including the County Executive and County Executive, public policy issues, and issues important to participants.

Approximately 22 older adults participated in the Senior Leadership program this year. We are trying to recruit these participants to continue their service through one of the committees or councils of the Commission on Aging. A follow-up survey produced very positive feedback on Senior Leadership Day. Perhaps too much was packed into the day with too few breaks, particularly in Zoom mode. Hopefully next year we will again be in-person and we can extend the training over a few days. A video of Senior Leadership Day, along with links to all presentation is available on our Aging website.

Senior Leadership Day was followed by a morning of advocacy skills training and WAAN's Aging Advocacy Day. On the third day, all participants, along with current Commissioners and members of the Advocacy Committee, were invited to participate in Zoom conversations with state legislators from all seven of the Wisconsin Senate districts in the County. Many good conversations occurred with legislators.

b. FFY 2023 Budget letter prepared, but not yet sent on to Chairs for signature.

c. State Redistricting Maps & SC ruling in *Teigen v. WEC*

Idzikowski notes that the new legislative maps have been prepared and have been attached to the agenda. He also notes that the County GIS system can produced more detailed maps for the Commission if desired.

V. Legislative & Policy Updates

• Federal Aging Policy Briefing

Idzikowski shares USAging's federal Policy Priorities for 2022. Document is attached to the agenda. Notes that in 2022, despite strong advocacy and the effect of COVID-19 on older adults, Congress passed little to no increases to federal aging

programs, particularly under the Older Americans Act. Encourages members to read the US Aging priorities. Summary – Double funding for the Older Americans Act in Federal Fiscal Year 2023, support Medicaid Home and Community Based long term care programs, veteran directed care, caregiver crisis, particularly family caregivers, address social isolation, specialized transportation for older adults, evidence-based disease prevention programs such as Falls Prevention (WI has worst outcome in country) elder justice, Medicare reform and Medicare Counseling, employment support, access to technology and disaster assistance.

Izard notes so many seniors trying to get home before dark. What can we do to increase safety? Chair Moeser asks that this issue be included in the Commission's policy priorities for 2023-24. Izard notes that the Commission's Policy Priorities have to be well thought out and should guide the Commission's work. Griffith suggests that we explore areas where Milwaukee County needs additional resources, for example for our Aging and Disability Resource Center. Moeser notes he is involved in an effort to gain financial support for an aging resource center.

- **Medicare Expansion**

Idzikowski notes that no real progress has been made in Congress on any of the proposed reforms.

- **Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act**

Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI) has introduced a federal bill that would provide for workforce training, education and awareness, and enhanced research on palliative care and hospice. These areas of healthcare practice are very important to older adults, particularly as people live longer.

MOTION: Milwaukee County Commission on Aging supports the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Griffith, Pedersen seconds).

- **Federal Regs & EO's**

- **State Aging Plan**

2022-25 draft Wisconsin State Aging Plan. Chair Griffith sits on the State Aging Advisory Council. State Plan will be submitted to the federal government (Administration for Community Living) Griffith notes that it was important to gain input from communities across the state, including tribes and minority populations. Wisconsin's population is rapidly aging – increase of about 20% and our needs will be more acute. Notes that many of the financial eligibility standards for participation in benefits programs were set in the 1960s and haven't been updated since. 70%+ of the deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic were of older adults, many in care facilities. Also important to pay attention to health equity. Transportation is also a critical factor.

- **State Legislative Issues**

Chair Moeser asks if there are any state legislators present and Hannah Cramer from Rep. Robyn Vining’s office indicated her presence. WAAN state legislative tracking sheet attached. Session is finished. The three Aging Network priority issues this past session were: ADRC funding, Caregiver Support, and Voting Rights. In Milwaukee County we added the need to raise additional county revenue to fund discretionary programs in the future. Moeser indicates that the County pension program underfunding continues to be an issue of concern that must be addressed by the state legislature and affects older adults and County retirees.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Milwaukee County budget being developed - opportunity for public comment.

VI. WAAN Retreat

The Wisconsin Aging Action Network is convening a retreat to set the course for the future of advocacy in the Aging Network in Wisconsin. WAAN is staffed by GWAAR, but consists of several core groups broadly representing aging interests, most funded through the Older Americans Act and the Wisconsin Elders Act, such as the Wisconsin AAA’s, Nutrition Directors, Senior Centers, ADRC professionals, Benefit Specialists, etc. Much change in leadership has occurred recently including the retirement of the GWAAR Executive Director and the Dane County AAA director. Need It would be good to have representation of the chair of the Advocacy Committee to participate in this WAAN retreat in August. Moeser and Meunier commit to participate.

VII. Membership on Advocacy Committee

Moeser notes that he and Chair Griffith have advanced the candidacy of an additional new member for the Advocacy Committee with the Executive Committee. Idzikowski notes that a goal of the Aging Plan is to have representation in every state legislative district to represent the full diversity of the County.

VIII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

Commission on Aging will not meet in July. Moeser asks if the Advocacy Committee will meet in July. Will move to July 11th. Moeser thanks Commissioner Izard and commends him for his service on the Commission on Aging & Advocacy Committee.

IX. Future agenda items & meeting dates (Discussion)

Next meeting will be **Monday, July 11, 2022** at 1:30 p.m. by videoconference.

X. Adjourn

MOTION: To Adjourn (Izard moves, Oemig seconds).

ACTION: Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.