



## **SENIOR CENTER COMMITTEE MEETING FEBRUARY 7, 2025**

Senior Center Committee members convened in-person on February 7, 2025, at Washington Park Senior Center 4420 W. Vliet St. Milwaukee, WI 53208. With members attending via ZOOM.

### **Members Present:**

Commissioner Eugene Guskowski, Chair  
Commissioner Mark Behar  
Ramona Dicks Williams  
Howard Snyder  
Ted Rehl  
Alice Steuck Konkel

### **Staff Present:**

Celia Benton, *DHHS*  
Christel Colorado, *DHHS*  
Daniel Idzikowski *DHHS*  
Jill Knight, *DHHS*  
James Mathy, *DHHS*  
Rami Peltz, *DHHS*  
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*

### **Members Excused:**

Commissioner Terrence R. Moore Sr.  
Amber Miller  
Kent Mayfield  
Crocker Stephenson

### **Attendees from the Public**

Commissioner Jan Wilberg, *COA*  
Shannon Downie, *SOA*  
Harold Oemig  
Cheri Swenson, Sojourner Family Peace  
Center  
Cathy Wood, *SOA*

## **MINUTES**

### **I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Gene Guskowski called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Christel Colorado, DHHS Executive Assistant took roll; a quorum was present.

### **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 6, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To accept the December 6, 2025, Advisory Council meeting minutes.  
ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moved, Second)

The December 6, 2024, meeting minutes were not completed.

### **III. SOA UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE METRICS**

Chair Eugene Guskowski, introduced a special guest, Commissioner Janice Wilberg. Commissioner Jan Wilberg provided a quick overview and introduction of the concept of using logic models to guide the group's discussions and decision-

making processes. She suggested that the group could have a special session to develop a logic model, which would help them create a vision and focus on the same set of goals. Chair Wilberg also mentioned that the process would involve two sessions, one for goal development and another for reviewing the work done in the first session. The group discussed the importance of having a larger, overarching goal to guide their work, and the need to formalize requests for specific data to measure outcomes.

Jill Knight discussed the performance metrics from 2024, which she reported on the objectives and goals achieved by the Senior Centers. Shannon Downie, Director of the Senior Centers discussed the metrics for the senior centers, including the total number of participants, new participants, total check-ins, and total nutrition items distributed. She explained that the numbers were unduplicated and that the total check-ins included instances where individuals checked in multiple times. Downie also clarified that the new participants figure included both new and renewing participants. Member Alice raised concerns about the tracking system being down and the potential for missed data. Commissioner Behar suggested that the capacity of the centers should be considered, while Chair Guskowski suggested the creation of a subcommittee to regularly review and report on the numbers. Member Ramona questioned the discrepancy between the number of participants and the number of referrals, which Downie explained was due to the underreporting of referrals as they needed to be entered into the database system. The committee ended the conversation with a discussion on participant satisfaction surveys and the need to maintain or exceed certain goals.

#### **IV. UPDATE ON SENIOR CENTERS INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVMENTS**

Daniel Idzikowski Director of Area Agency on Aging provided a quick updated on all five Milwaukee County owned senior centers. Clinton Rose Senior Center is undergoing significant remodeling, including upgrades to the kitchen, dining room, and other areas, along with an improved entryway for better access, a new community health center, and broadband expansion. A team of architects and developers has been hired, and input has been gathered from center participants. The development is within a budget of approximately \$4.5 million from the Flexible Facilities Fund. At Wilson, a community employee health center has been built out, converting an underused storage space into an exam room and waiting area, which will initially serve employees before being extended to senior participants. The heating and cooling system at Wilson had a major issue, with 21 of 29 HVAC valves failing, requiring \$350,000 in repairs, which will be completed by summer. Additionally, two new glass kilns will be added after these repairs. At Washington Park Senior Center, a kitchen remodeling and camera installation for a demonstration kitchen were completed. Montgomery's developments were also mentioned, and in McGovern, plans are underway to build a new senior center in McGovern Park, alongside housing, with Jewish Family Services contracted for

development and community engagement. Overall, significant progress is being made to enhance senior centers and their services.

## **V. SOUTH MILWAUKEE SENIOR CENTER OPPORTUNITY**

Daniel Idzikowski Director of Area Agency on Aging informed the committee that the City of Milwaukee has closed its senior center as of December 20, 2024. He then provided an update on potential development opportunities in South Milwaukee, particularly regarding the redevelopment of the Cyrus Erie Museum. James Mathy, the administrator of housing services, discussed the investment of Community Development Block Grant funds into the project, with an amount roughly totaling \$3 million dollars invested, which includes 134 affordable housing units and various amenities. Mathy mentioned most of the units are affordable that will range anywhere from 30% - 60% AMI. He also mentioned the potential use of the commercial space as a new senior center.

Rami Peltz provided an update on the discussions with Scott Crawford and Que El-Amin regarding a potential partnership, currently at the letter of intent stage. The goal is to secure approval to continue talks, finalize space planning, and obtain a construction bid to assess financial viability. A key advantage of the partnership is that Que El-Amin is willing to offer a base rent that could potentially be free if the necessary funds cannot be raised. The proposed rent is \$18 per square foot, which equates to about \$382,000 annually for a 22,000-square-foot space. Que El-Amin views this space as an additional amenity for the building, aimed at benefiting both residents and their families. This partnership is seen as an opportunity for a long-term lease of up to 25 years, with the possibility of a sustainable rent structure over time. Continuum Architects is the architect of record for the project, having already conducted preliminary space planning. Importantly, Milwaukee County will not bear any costs related to the pre-development phase; those expenses are on the developer. Rami emphasized that this partnership presents a low-risk opportunity to explore, with the potential for significant benefits in the future.

Chair Guskowski discussed the space plan, noting that the building has a unique layout with two wings and a bonus space on the other side that could possibly be used as a senior center. Chair Guskowski agreed that the space plan is a good start but not a final solution, and they need to ensure that the entry to the senior center remains separate from the housing units. Director Idzikowski informed that the Senior Center Committee is tasked with discussing a proposal and then presenting a resolution to the full Commission on Aging. If the Commission supports the proposal, they would endorse it, which would give the county the confidence to sign a letter of intent. This letter would then enable further discussions and progress on the development project.

Committee Member Howard expressed concerns about the potential displacement of people at the Kelly Senior Center due to the proposed new

facility. Idzikowski clarified that no one would be displaced, and that the new facility would serve the southeastern quadrant of the county for the next 25 years. The committee discussed the importance of community participation and input from the Kelly Senior Center participants in the development process. Committee member suggested pursuing the opportunity, despite potential opposition, as it could provide a more accessible and upgraded facility. Mathy highlighted the potential financial benefits of using community development block grant funds for operations at the new facility. The committee agreed to move forward with the proposal, with the understanding that community participation and input would be prioritized.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

**Motion to Adjourn** (Rehl Moved /Behar Second)

The next Senior Center Committee meeting will be March 7, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Christel Colorado

Executive Assistant