



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2021**

Commissioners

Bettie Rodgers, J.D., *Chair*
Amber Miller, *Vice Chair*
John Griffith, *Secretary*
Elliot Moeser, Ph.D., *Legislative Officer*
Jason Haas, *Milwaukee County Supervisor*
Ronald Byington
Richmond Izard
Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, Ph.D.
Shirley Sharp
Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

Commissioners Not present

Gloria Miller

Milwaukee County Staff

Shakita LaGrant, *DHHS*
Jon Janowski, *DHHS*
Schinika Fitch, *County Executive's Office*

Milwaukee County Staff Continued...

Sumaiyah Clark, *DHHS*
Dan Idzikowski, *DHHS*
Jill Knight, *DHHS*
Marietta Luster, *DHHS*
Pam Mathews, *DAS Office of PSB*
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*
Carrie Vallejo, *DHHS*
Nina Yang, *DHHS*
Rachel Kaehny-Frank, *DHHS*
Rick Flowers, *DHHS*

Guests

Laura Langer, *State of WI, DHS*
Pat Bruce, *ADRC Governing Board*
Barbara Wyatt Sibley
Cliff Mixon, *Interpreter*
Eve Eiseman, *Interpreter*

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

A quorum of Commission on Aging (COA) members convened virtually on Friday, March 26, 2021. Chairwoman Rodgers welcomed everyone, and at 9:07 a.m., called the meeting to order. Secretary Griffith took roll call.

II. REFLECTION

Chairwoman Rodgers's reflection was about gratitude. Her mantra and prayer are always one of gratitude as it means thanks and appreciation, and it is one of the many positive emotions that focuses on what is good in our lives and for us to be thankful for the things we have. Commissioner Rodgers mentioned she was born in humble beginnings in the sharecropper system (financial exploitation). She shared her childhood memories of what it was like growing up in a sharecropper system and how grateful she is for her parents to have escaped the exploitation system, which allowed her to be who she is today.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 26, 2021 COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the February 26, 2021, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Pitchford-Nicholas Moved, Wilberg Second.)

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

The Executive Committee meeting minutes for February 8, 2021; Advocacy Committee meeting minutes for February 1, 2021; and the Advisory Council meeting minutes for February 10, 2021.

MOTION: To accept the above consent agenda meeting minutes upon correction noted above.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, Pitchford-Nicholas Second)

V. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE REPORT: SCHINIKA FITCH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Director Fitch reported that the County Board approved Commissioners John Griffith and County Supervisor Jason Haas's reappointments to the Commission on Aging (COA). She reminded both Commissioners that they need to retake their oaths to be official Commissioners. The County Executive appointed a new Commissioner; however, the approval process is on hold due to the Health and Human Needs Committee's calendar. The County Board won't be able to review the candidate until the Health and Human Needs Committee's next meeting cycle in April. Director Fitch informed the Commission that they had identified a few possible candidates their office would like to review. She encouraged the Commission to forward candidate contact information to her.

VI. INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

- a) **Informational Item:** Update on DHHS Future State Activities Process, Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): Director LaGrant-McClain gave an update on the Strategic Plan Workgroups progress. There are two strategic areas of focus: The "No Wrong Door" (integrated services) and population health and system change (to focus on joint health, solutions, and resources), and to address the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

DHHS is hosting "Community Conversations" listening Sessions in April to collect community input on basic needs, the strategic planning process, and the 2022 Budget Priorities. The Community Basic Needs discussion is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, 2021, from 5 pm to 6:30 pm.; On Thursday, April 15, 2021, from 5 pm to 6:30 pm the main topic is the strategic plan; and on April 22, 2021, from 5 pm. to 6:30 pm, the main topic is discussing 2022 Budget Priorities (See flyer attached to agenda on County Legislative Information Center (CLIC).

Director LaGrant-McClain informed the Commission that the Aging Administrator position for the Division on Aging is not posted and is on hold due to the integration changes with DHS. A discussion ensued about the proposed organizational chart. A Commissioner stated that the Department on Aging reflects as a Unit and not a Division on the organizational chart, which is alarming. The Department on Aging is now on a unit level on the chart, minimizing Aging's importance. The Commission asked that the

organizational chart be revised as it was hard to comprehend and understand its acronyms. The Commission asked to have a reporting structure (who reports to whom) included in the organizational chart.

Informational Item: Overview of Area Plan Planning Process, Dan Idzikowski Program and Policy Coordinator, DHHS Division on Aging. Mr. Idzikowski reviewed the Area on Aging Plan timeline with the Commission and informed them of the processes that must take place to develop the Area Plan. Mr. Idzikowski discussed the next steps in collecting data for the plan (listening sessions, online survey, and or paper copy), and Commissioners and Committee members' need to join in the planning process. The Division on Aging will send information out on the listening sessions as soon as dates and times are finalized.

Mr. Idzikowski informed the Commission on the roles the Advisory Council has in the current Area Planning process. He also had announced that the Senior Center Select Committee had set their meeting scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of each month from 1 pm – 2:30 pm.

CHAIRWOMAN RODGERS ASKED THE COMMISSION TO TAKE A FIVE-MINUTE BREAK

- b) **Informational Item:** Overview of Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Integration Application Project, Rachel Kaehny-Frank, Manager, Aging Resource Center. Ms. Kaehny-Frank informed the Commission that they submitted a draft ADRC organizational chart to DHS Administration and the ARDC Governing Board, which they reviewed at their last ADRC Governing Board meeting. The chart is still in draft form, but she expects to have it finalized by the end of July 2021.

The due date for the application's submission to the state is in September. Currently, they are drafting the administrative applications and will submit them to the ADRC Governing Board. The integration application project team continues to meet every two weeks to align and find efficiencies with their processes to serve constituents in the best way.

- c) **Informational Item:** Overview of Veterans Services and Programs: Rick Flowers, County Veterans Service Officer. Mr. Flowers provided a PowerPoint presentation on veterans' services and programs (Burial Benefits, Child support services, Discharge Upgrades, Disability Compensation Claims, Pension, Educational Benefits, Food Share and Medical Assistance, Job Services, legal services, and property tax credit, Health Care. Needy Veteran Funding) The Office of Veteran Services is located in Greenfield. Mr. Flowers reported that Milwaukee County's senior veteran population is about 46,833 people.
- d) **Action Item:** Review and Approval of Non-Commission member appointments to COA standing Committees and Councils, COA-Chair Bettie Rodgers. Commissioner

MOTION: To approve all members whose biographies received to be a member of the Wellness Committee

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, A. Miller Second)

VII. AGING DIVISION DIRECTOR'S REPORT: JON JANOWSKI, INTERIM DIRECTOR

Interim Director Janowski provided service updates to the Commission about the Vaccine Outreach Project. The Division on Aging's contracted vendors, their volunteers, and a few DHHS staff made over 5,000 calls to sign-up seniors to be vaccinated at the County's Kosciuszko Community Center. The Division on Aging is mailing out flyers to seniors who did not respond to their phone calls. Also, the Division assisted with coordinating rides to and from vaccination sites and has contacted Residential Housing Coordinators to connect seniors to vaccination sites.

Commissioner Byington asked for assistance with promoting vaccine outreach to the deaf community as there are quite a few people that are lost and don't know where they can go to be vaccinated. Director Janowski stated that he would coordinate with Commissioner Byington to assist the deaf community. Director Janowski also reported that they are working on a project to connect Meals on Wheels clients to receive home vaccinations using additional funding they expect to receive from the state DHS for vaccine outreach.

Director Janowski discussed reopening plans for the Coggs worksite and senior centers. Also, he reiterated the importance of Commissioners and Committee and Council member participation in the Area Plan surveys and listening sessions. Director Janowski gave staffing updates on the new Elder Benefit Specialist, Nina Yang, and the Transportation Coordinator recruitment and hiring process. He also mentioned that Gaylyn Reske, Senior Dining Program Coordinator, started new dining models with four local restaurants.

He announced that the Joint Finance Committee meetings would be held in April, including a virtual session on April 28, 2021 (State priorities – impacts seniors). The 2022 County Budget process will also be starting soon and there is an April 6, 2021 election coming up. Director Janowski discussed the Cares Act funding, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 American Recovery Act, and Families First Act. Milwaukee County received \$77 million in CARES Act funding, and the DHHS Division on Aging received some of that funding to expand meal delivery programs and services. Through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the DHHS Division on Aging expects to receive around \$600,000 to support additional enhancements for nutrition program services. The County is still waiting to hear from the state DHS regarding its American Recovery Act funding allocation.

VIII. STATE REPORT: LAURA LANGER, STATE OFFICE ON AGING

Laura Langer from the DHS State Office on Aging reported that in January 2021, the State received \$168 million for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, money allocated for the home-delivered meal programs for the entire County. The American Recovery Act (ARPA) provided **\$750 million** in funding for all states. The State will inform counties sometime in April or May 2021 how they can use the funds. The allocation of funding is expected sometime in June 2021. The Cares Act Funding provided \$480 Million for all states. Vaccine Update: The Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources and the Department of Health Services advocates for older adults and those with disabilities, including tribal

members, African Americans, Hmong, and Latinx populations to receive their vaccinations. The State asked everyone to become advocates.

IX. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: County Supervisor Jason Supervisor Haas provided the following report:

- Milwaukee County expects to receive \$180 Million in Federal funding from the ARPA legislation (the County Board will discuss how the funds should be utilized and provide oversight over the funding).
- He will investigate the Elder Benefit Specialist and Transportation Coordinator positions and report back to the Commission.
- He reported that there had been positive and collaborative communications with the County Board and the new County Executive this year.

X. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Commissioner Bettie Rodgers – No Report

XI. COMMISSION ON AGING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Milwaukee County Park trails are now open to everyone to enjoy.
- The River Revitalization project bird-watching event titled "The Big Sit" is coming soon. Please look for more information to come.
- The Commission was encouraged to attend the virtual Joint Finance Committee meeting scheduled for April 28, 2021.
- The virtual listening session for the AAA Area Plan date has changed due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Idzikowski will resend the information out to the Commission.
- The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP), Bureau of Consumer Protection, Francesca Johnson, discussed imposter scams briefly (Calls that they have received are robot calls and are imposter calls), and the best line of defense against them. She stated that the state would not ask for personal information or payments. Ms. Johnson is available to provide formal presentations on identity theft, landlord and tenant presentations. The COA Chair requested that she come back to give a full presentation to the Commission.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at **11:07 a.m.**

The next Commission on Aging meeting is at 9 a.m. on Friday, April 23, 2021, as a Zoom virtual meeting.

Respectfully,

Vonda Nyang
Executive Assistant