

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

A quorum of **Commission on Aging** (COA) members convened in person at Marcia Coggs Human Services Center, 1220 W. Vliet St., conference Rm 104, with a hybrid option on Friday, February 28, 2025.

Commissioners Present:

Janice Wilberg, Ph.D., *Chair*
Terrence R. Moore, Sr., *Vice-Chair*
Amber Miller, *At Large Member*
Gloria Miller, *Secretary*
George Banda
Denise Callaway
Mark P. Behar, PA-C
Eugene Guskowski
Paula Pennebaker
Brian Peters, *Legislative Officer*
Jacqueline Smith
Crocker Stephenson
Cindy Van Vreede

Commissioners Absent

Marni King
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor

Milwaukee County Staff:

County Executive David Crowley
Shawnie Emem, *DHHS*
Anita Groves, *DHHS*

Milwaukee County Staff Continued...

Taunya Thomas, *DHHS*
Ricky Person, *DHHS*
Andrew Bethke, *DHHS*
Christel Colorado, *DHHS*
Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*
Kaisa Kerrigan, *DHHS*
Jill Knight, *DHHS*
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, *DHHS*
Jonathan Matte, *DHHS*
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*
Gaylyn Reske, *DHHS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*
Bekki Schmitt, *DHHS*
Kayla Steinke, *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public

Jill Kenehan-Krey, *ASL Interpreter*
Laura Langer, *DHS*
Cathy Wood, *SOA*
Stephanie Zito, *ASL Interpreter*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Janice Wilberg called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Secretary Gloria Miller took the roll call; A quorum of the Commissioners was present.

II. AGING IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY, COUNTY EXECUTIVE DAVID CROWLEY

Chair Janice Wilberg introduced County Executive David Crowley, highlighting his pragmatic optimism in leading the county through challenging times. Crowley

expressed gratitude for the work of the Commission on Aging and emphasized the importance of their voices within the community. He encouraged commission members to continue sharing their perspectives, especially on issues affecting older adults.

Crowley discussed Milwaukee County's progress toward financial sustainability, noting the remaining challenges. He highlighted the county's efforts to address legacy and fiscal issues. He stressed the importance of collaboration in tackling community problems, reinforcing the county's commitment to becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin. This vision includes a focus on addressing mental health crises and substance use disorders. He also spoke about the county's investment in affordable housing and the need for a strengthened partnership with the State of Wisconsin regarding economic development. He concluded by expressing gratitude for the Commission's collaboration and commitment, urging everyone to continue advocating for the needs of older adults.

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 24, 2025, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

The January 24, 2025, Commission on Aging meeting minutes, were not completed in time for this meeting. They will be available at the next COA meeting.

COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS

- **Advocacy Committee:** Commissioner Brian Peters, Chair of the Advocacy Committee, reported that action items from the Committee are listed on today's agenda, and he will provide his report at that time.
- **Service Delivery Committee:** Commissioner Amber Miller and George Banda, Co-Chairs of the Service Delivery Committee, reported on the successful vendor presentations. Vendors expressed concerns about the lack of volunteers, stating they could serve more people with additional volunteers. She hopes the Commission can develop strategies to support these vendors. An upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) for the refugee service contract will be released sometime in March. If any Commissioner is interested in participating on the panel for the RFP process, they should let her know.
- **Advisory Council:** Commissioner Denise Callaway, Chair of the Advisory Council, reported that the Advisory Council currently has four commissioners. The existing Council will transition to a Council without commission membership this year and is developing a plan to recruit new members to ensure that the Advisory Council continues to function effectively prior to the transition. She asked the Commissioners to forward to her the names and resumes of potential candidates they know who would be great additions to the Advisory Council.

- **Nutrition Council:** Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede, Chair of the Nutrition Council, reported that the Council did not meet in January as it is currently working on new policies and procedures and is looking for new members. The Nutrition program has lost two dine-out sites and is seeking replacement vendors. The next Nutrition Council meeting is **on April 22, 2025**.
- **Senior Center Committee:** Commissioner Eugene Guskowski, Chair of the Senior Center Committee, reported that his committee focuses on development opportunities. He will provide a report on an agenda item later in the meeting.
- **Wellness Committee:** Commissioner Jacqueline Smith, the new Chair of the Wellness Committee, stated that the Committee has not met since the last Commission meeting, so there is nothing to report. The Committee will meet next month, during which she will provide an update.
- **Community Engagement Ad Hoc Committee:** Chair Wilberg reported that the Commission established an ad hoc committee on community engagement at the last COA meeting. They had an informal meeting last week and have a formal meeting scheduled for March 20, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

IV. **CONSENT AGENDA**

The Consent Agenda consists of the following meeting minutes:

- a) Executive Committee meeting minutes (January 10, 2025)
- b) Advocacy Committee meeting minutes (January 10, 2025)

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda minutes listed above.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Van Vreede Moved, Stephenson Second).

V. **UPDATE REGARDING ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND EELDER ABUSE**

Taunya Thomas and Anita Groves, Supervisors of Adult Protective Services (APS), reviewed their accomplishments for 2024 and outlined their goals for 2025. Last year, they received 4,530 referrals, 40% of which were substantiated and 17% unsubstantiated. They shared success stories, including a same-day referral that helped prevent homelessness and the recovery of stolen funds.

Shawnie Emem, the Legal Services Area Supervisor, discussed their focus on guardianships and protective placements to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable individuals. She reported that the team completed over 1,000 annual reviews in 2024 and successfully onboarded two new guardianship agencies. Shawnie

also emphasized their role as a community resource, providing presentations and information sessions on guardianships and protective placements.

Calley Flater, APS Prevention Coordinator, and Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team (EMDT) Coordinator spoke about the team's mission and vision to support elders and adults at risk through a collaborative approach. She highlighted their partnerships with various organizations, including VHS and Behavioral Health Services, noting the positive feedback received from partners. Calley mentioned the team's three workgroups: crisis services, financial exploitation, and elder fatality review. She also said they had secured several grants, including a \$1 million Elder Justice Grant to reduce homelessness among seniors. Ricky Person, another Prevention Coordinator, added that his team is currently conducting targeted harm reduction efforts in areas of Milwaukee County that have high overdose rates.

VI. ACTION/INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) **Action Item, Advocacy Items, Commissioner Brian Peters, Chair of Advocacy Committee:** Commissioner Brian Peters led a discussion on advocacy items presented by the Advocacy Committee, emphasizing proposed changes to the Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program. The committee sought approval for these changes, which the Commission on Aging granted. The conversation then shifted to the Commission on Aging's policy priorities for 2025, which were also approved. Finally, the committee needed to identify advocacy strategies for four policy proposals listed in agenda items A through D.

MOTION: Support changes to the Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Guszkowski Moved, Behar Second).

MOTION: Approve the 2025 Commission on Aging Policy Priorities

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Stevenson Moved, Behar Second).

MOTION: Motion to approve the following identified funding priorities in the FFY 2025 federal and Wisconsin 2026-27 biennial budget, in alignment with the 2025-2027 Aging Area Plan Advocacy goals:

- a. Increase funding for Older Americans Act programs and services and other local government services that support older adults.
- b. Increase funding to support Home and Community Based paid caregivers, as well as family caregivers, to address the caregiver workforce shortage.

- c. Support increased funding for transit and paratransit to ensure access to services supports, employment, and recreation for older adults.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Van Vreede Moved, Behar Second).

- b) **Action Item, Revision of the Commission on Aging Bylaws relating to the Aging Advisory Council and its relationship to the Commission on Aging Commission on Aging Chair, Janice Wilberg:** The Commission on Aging discussed revising its bylaws related to the Aging Advisory Council and its relationship with the Commission. The proposed changes align the Aging Advisory Council with new federal regulations that disallow members of the Commission or Governing Board of the Area Agency on Aging to concurrently serve on the Aging Advisory Council. The proposed language was reviewed and approved by the Aging Advisory Council. These changes aim to establish a more independent Advisory Council while maintaining an ex officio connection with the Commission on Aging.

MOTION: Motion to approve the bylaw revisions regarding the Aging Advisory Council as indicated in the attached document.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Callaway Moved, Pennebaker Second).

- c) **Discussion Item, Milwaukee County Senior Center Developments, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski reported on the significant progress made in developing and improving senior centers in Milwaukee County. He highlighted the substantial changes at the Clinton Rose, Wilson Park, and Washington Park senior centers, including infrastructure redevelopment, kitchen and dining area remodeling, and upgrades to audio-visual systems. Idzikowski emphasized the importance of community engagement and vendor collaboration in enhancing senior center programming. The Commission was commended for its leadership and commitment to the development of these centers.

- d) **Discussion Item: Accomplishments of the Commission on Aging (COA) and the Area Agency on Aging (AAA 2024, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** The Commission voted to approve the 2024 Year in Review report, which will be presented to the County Board.

MOTION: Motion to approve the 2024 Commission on Aging Accomplishments

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Banda Moved, Moore Second).

AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski emphasized his team's achievements and appreciated their hard work.

VII. AGING SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT, DANIEL IDZIKOWSKI, AAA DIRECTOR

In his February Director's report, Director expressed his appreciation for the commission's hard work and dedication, particularly highlighting their advocacy efforts regarding Medicaid cuts and the McGovern Park initiative. He also acknowledged the commission's role in developing the Milwaukee County aging plan, continuing a 50-year tradition, since the first grant to the Office on Aging in 1973.

VIII. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

See above Item II.

IX. STATE OFFICE ON AGING REPORT

Laura Langer from the State Office on Aging stated that there were no significant updates at the national level, but she assured that any necessary updates would be provided.

Ms. Langer expressed her appreciation for the Commission on Aging and thanked AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski for their hard work, with a special mention to Commissioner Callaway for submitting the Milwaukee County Aging Plan. She reiterated that the State Office on Aging plan will be approved soon and thanked the AAA Director for the update on the Senior Center and Milwaukee County's investment in these centers.

X. COUNTY SUPERVISORS REPORT

No report.

XI. COMMISSION ON AGING CHAIR REPORT

Chair Wilberg discussed a recent meeting with AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski, Brian Peters, and Emily Petersen, where they met with a representative from Senator Ron Johnson's office. Senator Johnson held a telephone town hall yesterday afternoon and addressed several questions.

The Chair plans to arrange a similar meeting with Congresswoman Moore next month. She hopes to discuss the issues at hand, similar to the meeting she had with Senator Baldwin, where Senator Baldwin shared a personal story about Medicaid. Given the impending threats to Medicaid and Social Security, now is a critical time for advocacy.

XII. COMMISSION ON AGING ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS

No Announcements

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn meeting.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (G. Miller Moved, Van Vreede Second).

Meeting Adjourned 11 A.M. The next Commission on Aging Meeting will be Friday, March 28, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang, Executive Assistant