



**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 26, 2024**

A quorum of **Commission on Aging** (COA) members convened in person at Clinton Rose Senior Center, with a virtual MS Teams videoconference option on Friday, April 26, 2024.

Commissioners Present:

Janice Wilberg, Ph.D., *Chair*
Terrance Moore, Sr., *Vice-Chair*
Brian Peters, *Legislative Officer*
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
George Banda
Mark P. Behar, PA-C, MPAS
Denise Callaway
Eugene Guszowski
Amber Miller, *At Large Member*
Paula Penebaker
Jacqueline Smith
Cindy Van Vreede

Commissioners Excused:

Gloria Miller, *Secretary*
Crocker Stephenson

Milwaukee County Staff:

Andrew Bethke, *DHHS*
Christel Colorado, *DHHS*
Matt Fortman, *DHHS*
Debra Horton, *DHHS*

Milwaukee County Staff Continued...

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*
Kaisa Kerrigan, *DHHS*
Domonique Klett, *DHHS*
Jill Knight, *DHHS*
Bailey Knutson, *DHHS*
Amy Lorenz, *DHHS*
Marietta Luster, *DHHS*
Jonathan Matte, *DHHS*
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*
Claire O'Brien, *DHHS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*
Kayla Steinke, *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public

Yurii Fought, *CTI*
Jill Kenehan-Krey, *ACL Interpreter*
Mary Kitsman
Pamela Krag
Laura Langer, *WI-DHS*
Mary Till, *Life Navigators*
Liz Wick, *ACL Interpreter*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Janice Wilberg called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Commissioner Amber Miller took the roll call; A quorum of the Commissioners was present.

II. GUEST REMARKS, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS, AMY LORENZ, DEPUTY DIRECTOR DHHS/BHS

Ms. Amy Lorenz provided information on Behavioral Health Services (BHS), which are provided to individuals across their lifespan. She highlighted some of the data on how older adults are incorporated into their strategic operational plan for this year and information on their training.

Mental Health issues with older adults have escalated during the pandemic. They are learning more about loneliness and social isolation being contributing factors to mental health issues for older adults. She discussed the mental health issues among older adults and the barriers and challenges they experience in seeking treatment. She reviewed the data collected from 2023 on the 1,100 clients that Behavior Health Services (BHS) serves. The Long-term service for adults is called Community Access to Recovery Services (CARS). For more information, please see document titled "PPT Commission on Aging April 2024".

III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 22, 2024, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the March 22, 2024, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

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

IV. COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE REPORT, TIM SCHABO, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

Deputy Chief of Staff Tim Schabo was absent. The County Executive Office report will be given at the next COA meeting.

V. COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS BY CHAIRS

Commissioner Denise Callaway, Chair of the Advisory Council, updated the Council's work with the 2025-2027 Area Agency on Aging Plan. The Council finished all four public listening sessions and is now focusing on its surveys and creating focus groups. The online survey was launched in English and Spanish and is available on the County's website. The Council is now creating focus groups made up of partner and community organizations to identify community needs and service gaps. The Council will review the data collected from the hearings and focus groups to identify community needs and service gaps, which will help them develop the 2025-2027 Area Agency Plan. Commissioner Callaway expects they will have some results by mid-June.

Commissioner Brian Peters, Chair of the Advocacy Committee, happily reported that they experienced increased meeting participants at their April meeting. The Advocacy Committee discussed two items at this meeting. One was to change the Committee's meeting date and time to the first Friday of every month to accommodate the Executive

Committee's request. And second, to discuss what actions the Committee might need to advocate for on the upcoming 2025 budget. Chair Peters asked all Committee and Council Chairs to email their feedback to Emily Petersen on what they think the Advocacy Committee should advocate for with the 2025 County Budget. Commissioner Guskowski mentioned that the Senior Center and Advocacy Committee meet on the same day and time. They will work out their meeting schedules, so they do not conflict with one another.

Commissioner Eugene Guskowski, Chair of the Senior Center Committee, reported that COA Chair Janice Wilberg organized a meeting with County Executive David Crowley, Mary Jo Myers, Chief of Staff; Tim Schabo, Deputy Chief of Staff, and DHHS Department head Shakita LaGrant, DHHS Executive Director, and Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director Parks Department to discuss the Senior Center Committee's plans for Milwaukee County's Senior Centers. They received good responses and feedback from the County leaders. The Committee is looking into how to move forward to make their ideas happen. Their current focus is looking at other institutions and entities in Milwaukee County with similar challenges and what they have done to reinvent their buildings, spaces, and programming to learn from them. The next Senior Center Committee meeting is June 5, 2024, at 9 a.m. Vice-Chair Moore reassured the audience by highlighting the leaders' strong commitment to the well-being of older adults. He mentioned that the leaders have expressed their dedication, and their staff will be following up with them in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede, Chair of the Nutrition Council, reported. The Nutrition Council met on Tuesday of this week, and unfortunately, they didn't reach a quorum. There were two action items on their agenda (To vote for a Nutrition Council Vice-Chair and Goodwill's request to increase the Meals on Wheels donations from participants from \$3 to \$4), so the Council couldn't vote on their action items. The Hart Park Senior Center is closed for remodeling and will not reopen until October 2024, so their dining participants have been attending Washington Park Senior Center. A new business is joining the "Dine Out" program, Ruby J's on 47th and Lisbon. They are only having a soft opening on April 30, 2024, by invitation. However, Ruby's will be open for the Dine Out program on May 7, 2024, and will offer lunch on Tuesdays from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. Anyone interested in attending, please get in touch with Commissioner Van Vreede or Gaylyn Reske, ADS Senior Dining Program Coordinator, as you need to RSVP to attend.

Chair Wilberg reported that the Executive Committee met two weeks ago. The Committee discussed bus shelter locations in areas with significant numbers of older adults and their availability around the five County-owned senior centers. The development of decision protocols by the Administration for the Commission on Aging will assist the Commission in knowing what items need to come to the Commission and what decisions can be made by the Administration. Lastly, the future of office allocations at the new Coggs building is as follows: Deputy Director David Muhammad

has agreed to meet with the Executive Committee at their next meeting to help the Commission understand the decision process for the new building.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consists of the following meeting minutes:

- a) Executive Committee meeting minutes (March 8, 2024)
- b) Advocacy Committee meeting minutes (February 20, 2024)
- c) Advisory Council meeting minutes (February 14, 2024)

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda items listed above.

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

VII. ACTION/INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) **2024 Older Adults Transportation Service Contract with TransDev, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski reminded Commissioners that TransDev had taken over the specialized transportation contract that First Transit had used to hold. Transdev experienced significant difficulties last year with service provisions, and they are still experiencing some problems but are improving. Emily Petersen, the coordinator overseeing this contract, has worked with them daily to ensure that their services are improving. There is a pending request before the Service Delivery Committee to increase TransDev's contract funding by \$89,644 for 2024 to enhance services. Commissioners Callaway and Moore both stated that there should be real-time accountability with this vendor. The AAA should be able to share real-time results from TransDev's clients so they can understand what continues to happen with services and resolve them. Director Idzikowski states they will bring that information before the Service Delivery Committee for review.

Chair Wilberg expressed the need for written protocols for the Commission and that both the Administration and the Commission agree on what decisions are for the Commission to act on or the Administration. The Chair has requested that the Service Delivery Committee establish a bi-weekly meeting schedule so they can monitor contracts that they have concerns about and address the issues immediately.

- b) **2024 Contract Extension and Budget Revision for Programming in the Milwaukee County Senior Centers with Serving Older Adults of Southeast WI, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** AAA Director Idzikowski is requesting a contract extension for programming with Serving Older Adults of Southeast Wisconsin (SOA) at Milwaukee County's five-owned Senior Centers to extend

the contract date to December 31, 2024. This request doesn't impact the budget as there is no request for more funding and does not require County Board or Commission approval.

Director Idzikowski is also bringing two items to the Commission to request a budget revision for the contract with SOA to increase the Meal Site Supervision by \$10,000 and Senior Center programming by \$17,865, for a total of \$27,865.

In addition, the AAA is utilizing \$41,682 in Older American Act ARPA carryover funding designated in 2023 and \$60,000 from a Medicaid Home and Community Based Services ARPA grant to extend SOA's TechConnect program to additional senior housing sites beyond the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority's sites.

MOTION: For the Commission to approve an increase to Service Older Adults of Southeast Wisconsin for \$10,000 in Meal Site supervision at the County's five-owned Senior Centers and \$ 17,865 in Senior Center Programming funding at the County's five-owned Senior Centers.

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

- c) **Advocacy Items, Commissioner Brian Peters, Chair of the Advocacy Committee:** Brian Peters, Chair of the Advocacy Committee, didn't have any action items to discuss at today's meeting, so the Commission skipped the Advocacy Committee's agenda item.
- d) **2025-2027 Area Aging Plan Progress Report update, Denise Callaway, Chair of the Advisory Council:** Chair Callaway of the Advisory Council provided her with a report on the 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan Progress Report in her Council report earlier in the agenda.
- e) **USAgging Aging and Disabilities Vaccination Collaborative Grant Extension, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** Director Idzikowski informed the Commission that the AAA had received a grant extension for the vaccination collaboration grant from April 15, 2024, to May 18, 2024. The AAA will receive a no-cost extension to continue this service until May 2025. Also, Mr. Idzikowski provided information on what the AAA has worked on with this grant (hosting vaccination clinics, conducting promotional campaigns, and sending letters to all assisted living and nursing homes to invite participation in the initiative).
- f) **WI-DHS Livable Communities and Social Isolation and Loneliness Grant Applications, AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski:** Director Idzikowski informed the Commission that the issue of Social Isolation and loneliness among older adults is both a national and state issue. The AAA and Advisory Council has taken several actions to address the issue of social isolation and loneliness. The AAA provides many evidence-based programs to address these issues and has applied for a \$100,000 one-time grant that would partner with the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin and the Medical College of Wisconsin's School of

Pharmacy, which has two pharmacist liaisons placed at the 16th St. Community Health Center and the Hyatt Pharmacy. The pharmacists would administer an evidence-based loneliness screening and be trained by AAA staff on whom to refer them to an agency that could help them. Director Idzikowski expects to hear back in about two weeks if they have received the grant. The grant would extend until the Spring of 2025.

- g) Older Adult Suicide Prevention Taskforce, Kaisa Kerrigan, DHHS/ADS Vaccination Collaborative Project Manager:** Ms. Kerrigan informed the Commission that she had joined the Suicide Prevention Task Force for 55 Plus and has been attending monthly meetings on behalf of the AAA as they explore suicide risk and protective factors and effective suicide prevention strategies. Milwaukee County Behavior Health Division hired a Full-time Suicide prevention Coordinator due to the increasing suicide rates. She provided a report on their findings. Here are a few of the highlights of her report. In Wisconsin, men aged 55 and older suicide rates increase with age. Individuals 85 plus have the highest rate of suicide in the 55-plus age group. Among Women 55 and older, the rate of suicide decreases with increasing age. Older adults over 55 accounted for 18% of all suicide deaths in 2021. She provided some demographic data. The group most at risk for suicide was white males. White individuals made up 90% of suicides in the 55-plus age group, which is four times higher for men than women.

VIII. AGING UNIT DIRECTOR REPORT, DHHS AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES, AGING UNIT DIRECTOR DANIEL IDZIKOWSKI

Director Idzikowski provided a few highlights from his April report. He encouraged the Commission to get the word out to those they may think would be a good fit to attend the Leadership program. The AAA is working on an initiative through SAGE with the LGBT Center to provide a Sensitivity training program to nursing homes in the city of Milwaukee. The AAA continues its tours of various cultural sites and has expanded to other cultural sites beyond the Milwaukee County-owned sites. He reminded the Commission about the capital projects that are taking place at Clinton Rose Senior Center and McGovern Park Senior Center's Kitchens. For more information, see the document titled "Director's Report April 2024".

IX. WISCONSIN STATE OFFICE ON AGING REPORT, LAURA LANGER

Ms. Langer reported that May is Older Americans Month, and this year's theme is "Powered by Connection." The State Office on Aging received a proclamation from the Governor's office mailed to the Aging Network. If you would like a copy of the declaration, please get in touch with Laura Langer at laura.langer@dhs.wisconsin.gov. She provided a few Aging Plan Updates. Milwaukee County has finished its first round of Community engagement. Milwaukee is a leader throughout the State, and the State Office uses its plan as an example. She thanked the AAA for applying for the Social

Isolation and Loneliness and Livable Communities Grants. She had attended the State Aging, Disability and Independent Living Network conference this week in LaCrosse and mentioned it was great to see so many partners, including AAA Director Idzikowski and a few of his staff.

X. COUNTY SUPERVISOR REPORT, SEQUANNA TAYLOR, COUNTY SUPERVISOR

Supervisor Taylor reported that a new group of County Supervisors took their oath for the 2024 – 2026 years. There are four who joined recently. The Supervisors will not start meeting until May. Ms. Taylor will send a special invitation to the four new supervisors to attend a COA meeting and become more familiar with its Committees and Councils. She informed the Commission that August is a downtime for Supervisors. There are no committee meetings because, in September, they start with the County Budget. She encouraged the Commission to compile the items they want to advocate for with the budget.

XI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chair Janice Wilberg reported that Marni King is moving through the appointment process, and she hopes the County Board will confirm her at the end of May. Advocacy Day is coming up **on May 14, 2024**, and she wants the Commission to represent them by showing up with their name tags and options to ensure the legislature knows they are alive and well in Milwaukee. The Chair thanked staff for the turnaround on the timeliness of agendas and minutes, especially Vonda Nyang - it's great to have a more streamlined system. Lastly, she thanked the Commission for attending the public hearings to provide visibility for the Commission. It does wonders for letting the Community know that we are here and listening to their needs and desires.

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

There were flyers on upcoming events at the sign-in tables for participants to take if they were interested in attending. You can also find those flyers on the County Legislative Information Center (CLIC).

Pamela Krag from Bayview, Wisconsin, had a public comment about the County's meal program. She informed the Commission that she and her mother had embarked on a grand adventure of eating at every senior meal site this past year. She saw several vital benefits: it was a way to explore her native cities, diverse people, neighborhoods, facilities, and food, and in the process, help break down stereotypes. It was a way to keep her mother engaged and have exciting experiences together.

She provided positive feedback on their experiences, which included excellent cuisine and diversity across locations over a month and a year. Well-balanced, nutritious, and good portions and the ability to take home uneaten portions of their meals in their

containers. It's a fun way to bring old and new friends to lunch in a program they can now visit independently. She stated that the volunteers are the heart of the program and make the most significant difference. She provided areas of improvement: managers need further training, hospitality, and record keeping. Managers must have unannounced site visits at other locations to see the food quality and protection process. The website for the downloadable menus is not as easy as stated. Also, why can't a person make a reservation two weeks in advance to plan a special event with guests? One site manager berated her for not calling 24 hours before and denied her food because all the meals were gone. She mentioned convoluted, confusing rules and how serving varies by location and site manager. It would be nice to have that information on the downloadable menus. Healthier choices of condiments would help. Not everyone is tech-savvy or has the funds to print off the menus. Food has run out even though you made a reservation and arrived on time. Menu changes and diner cards are overwhelming. Overall, they loved the program.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn

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

Meeting Adjourned at 11:14 A.M. The next Commission on Aging meeting will be Friday, May 24, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
Executive Assistant