



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES

**AGING & DISABILITIES
SERVICES**

**COMMISSION ON AGING
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 25, 2025**

A quorum of **Commission on Aging** (COA) members convened virtually on Friday, April 25, 2025.

Commissioners Present:

Janice Wilberg, Ph.D., *Chair*
Amber Miller, *At Large Member*
Gloria Miller, *Secretary*
George Banda
Mark P. Behar, PA-C
Denise Callaway
Eugene Guskowski
Marni King
Paula Pennebaker
Jacqueline Smith
Crocker Stephenson
Cindy Van Vreede

Commissioners Absent

Terrence R. Moore, Sr., *Vice-Chair*
Brian Peters, *Legislative Officer*
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor

Milwaukee County Staff:

Michelle Allison, *DHHS*
Tina Anderson, *DHHS*
Claire Enders, *DHHS*

Milwaukee County Staff Continued...

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*
Kaisa Kerrigan, *DHHS*
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, *DHHS*
Alexa Law, *DHHS*
Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell, *DHHS*
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*
Clare O'Brien, *DHHS*
Migdalia Pacheco, *DHHS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*
Gaylyn Reske, *DHHS*
Deidra Williams, *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public

Jill Kenahan-Krey, *ASL Interpreter*
Laura Langer, *WI-DHS*
Veraunica Ruffin
Nancy Simuel
Brook Stanley
Cathy Wood, *SOA*
Steph 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. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 28, 2025, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the March 28, 2025, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

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

III. COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS

****Advocacy Committee Report**** Vice Chair of the Advocacy Committee, Commissioner George Banda: Commissioner Banda reported that Congress has approved a six-month continuing resolution to fund the government until September. This resolution includes level funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and continued support for MIPPA outreach efforts for low-income Medicare beneficiaries. The 2026 budget remains undecided, as discussions about reorganizing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services could lead to program cuts and staff reductions. Also discussed were Advocacy Committee Recruitment and Senior program participation initiatives.

State Legislative Issues: The state Senate passed a bill to extend Medicaid coverage for new mothers from 60 to 364 days postpartum. This bill is pending in the assembly before being sent to the governor. Between 2020 and 2022, the state witnessed 63 pregnancy-related deaths, and Wisconsin remains one of two states without full Medicaid coverage for low-income mothers.

****Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**** Chair, Commissioner Amber Miller: Commissioner Miller did not share any significant updates during the meeting. However, she informed the Commission that she received a resume from a community member interested in joining the committee. The application is currently under review.

****Nutrition Council Report**** Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede, Chair of the Nutrition Council, announced Michelle Deshotels appointment as vice Chair. Commissioner Mark Behar shared a presentation on enhancing senior meals with new condiments at congregate dining sites, forming an ad hoc committee to explore new spice offerings.

The Council discussed funding challenges as they returned to previous funding sources following the end of COVID-related support. The Council introduced A no-show policy for diners who register but do not attend, aiming to save around \$40,000. Dining will be limited to seniors aged 60 and above at a few sites that allowed people who were under the age of 60 and above to attend. Concerns about possible site closures and food security were raised and discussed. Additionally, the Council discussed the costs of opening a new Dine Out site, with Chair Wilberg suggesting they further investigate this option in future meetings.

****Advisory Council Report**** Commissioner Denise Callaway, Chair of the Advisory Council, discussed replacing commissioners on the Council. She highlighted recruitment efforts to ensure that candidates meet the outlined regulations and requirements and are committed to being active members. The goal is to have a complete slate of new commissioners by June or August. Additionally, the AAA staff provided a progress report on the 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan.

****Senior Center Committee Report**** Commissioner Eugene Guskowski, Chair, Senior Center Committee: Commissioner Guskowski updated the committee on senior center developments, highlighting the Clinton Rose Center and a proposed center in the old Cyrus Erie building in South Milwaukee. The committee addressed challenges in

integrating housing with senior centers at the McGovern and Kelly locations. Key points included the need to respond to community concerns, particularly regarding equity issues older African Americans face. Three listening sessions held in April aimed to foster ongoing dialogue with senior center users and the wider community. The committee also discussed the urgency for action to avoid losing \$2 million in federal funding that must be linked to housing initiatives.

****Community Engagement Ad Hoc Committee Report**** Chairperson Janice Wilberg updated the Ad Hoc Committee on Community Engagement, which convened on April 17, 2025. The Committee has decided to develop a report titled "State of Milwaukee County's Older Adults," utilizing information gathered from the Area Agency on Aging plan. Commissioner Crocker Stephenson has agreed to draft this report.

The Commission intends to present the findings at various events, highlighting aging issues and encouraging older adults to address emerging challenges. The next meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2025, during which the Committee will review the report draft.

****Wellness Committee Update**** Commissioner Jacqueline Smith, chair of the Wellness Committee, reported no update.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consists of the following meeting minutes:

- a) Advocacy Committee meeting minutes (March 7, 2025)
- b) Advisory Council meeting minutes (March 12, 2025)
- c) Senior Center Committee meeting minutes (February 7, 2025, and March 7, 2025)

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda minutes listed above.

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

V. ACTION/INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Action Item, Advocacy Items, Send a letter regarding the Impacts of the U.S. DHHS/ACL Reorganization to Federal Congressional Delegation:** Commissioner Banda informed the Commission that today's COA packet (email) included a letter drafted by the Advocacy Committee for review. The letter outlines the potential impacts of reorganizing the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Administration for Community Living (DHS ACL) on their Federal Congressional delegation. The Advocacy Committee has expressed concerns regarding these changes.

MOTION: To approve sending a letter, subject to edits, to the federal congressional delegation expressing concern about the recent reorganization of the US DHS ACL and the negative impacts on older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Banda moved, Behar seconded).

- B. Action Item, Appointments to the Aging Advisory Council, Commissioner Denise Callaway, Chair, Advisory Council:** Commissioner Denise Callaway announced that there are currently no new appointments. The Advisory Council plans to present appointments to the Commission at their meeting in May. She encouraged everyone to recommend individuals who are interested in joining the Council. Chair Wilberg suggested that Commissioner Callaway invite the participants of the Senior Leadership program to join the Advisory Council.
- C. Discussion Item, Proposed 2026 Aging Services Budget, Lottie Maxwell Mitchell, DHHS Senior Analyst Budget and Management:** Lottie Maxwell-Mitchell presented the 2026 preliminary budget outlook for DHHS, noting a \$2.2 million reduction in tax levy and highlighting the funding sources for aging services, including the Older Americans Act (OAA) and tax levy funds. The operating budget is due to the County Executive's office by July 15, 2025, with the capital budget expected to be adopted in November. Input on priorities for the 2026 budget is requested in alignment with the 2025 to 2027 Area Aging Plan.
- Questions arose about including parks in capital improvements; Ms. Maxwell-Mitchell clarified that parks and senior centers are managed separately and confirmed that project reprioritization is possible. Regarding the timeline for OAA funding, Lottie noted uncertainty.
- D. Discussion Item, Milwaukee County Senior Center Developments:** No additional items were added to the meeting agenda, as Commissioner Guskowski had already addressed them in his report. AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski discussed development at the Milwaukee County Senior Center and provided updates on various projects and improvements, including the completion of ARPA-funded projects such as new kitchens and the provision of indoor pickleball courts. He also highlighted ongoing security concerns at the centers and outlined the steps taken to address these issues.
- E. Discussion Item: Federal Changes to Aging Policies and Programs:** Emily Peterson, Advocacy and Policy Manager, discussed the proposed reorganization of the Health and Human Services department, particularly the dissolution of the Administration for Community Living (ACL). She raised concerns about how this change could impact aging programs, potentially leading to a more medicalized approach if services are shifted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

Peterson also highlighted proposed funding cuts, including eliminating the Evidence-Based Wellness Program and the State Health Insurance Program. She noted that these are preliminary proposals, and the path to final budgets will be lengthy, emphasizing the importance of advocacy in shaping the outcomes.

F. Discussion/Informational Item, Livable Communities, Paula Panabaker:

Commissioner Pennebaker did not prepare a report; however, the Livable Communities Steering Committee held its first meeting and is scheduled to meet for the next ten months. The committee's main objective is to have members explore the communities to identify their needs. Each meeting will take place at a different location. The inaugural meeting was held in Villard Square library.

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

AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski had no additional comments beyond his submitted report. He shared that his team completed the preparations to move to the new Marcia Coggs human services building. The team is now awaiting their move into the new building scheduled for May, where the first Commission on Aging meeting will occur. He also acknowledged the leadership of Administrator Tina Anderson, Executive Director LaGrant-McClain, and Deputy Director Mohammed in securing funding for the new facility. There was a sense of excitement regarding the new building and its accessibility. When asked about parking, the Director mentioned they are still working on a solution.

VII. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Chair Janice Wilberg presented the County Executive's report, which Tim Shabo provided in his absence, as he could not attend today's meeting. The report highlighted the need for increased funding and addressed the developments at of senior centers. For more details, please refer to the attached report.

VIII. STATE OFFICE ON AGING REPORT

Laura Langer from the State Office on Aging reported that the state submitted its Aging Plan to the Administration on Community Living (ACL) on March 31, 2025. The ACL is reorganizing within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Wisconsin Aging Plan is under review. Bader will soon release its plan for public comment, and Langer will send the links to Vonda Nyang, the AAA Executive Assistant, for distribution to the Commission on Aging and other organizations.

Additionally, Langer received an email from DHHS about an upcoming news release addressing the potential impact of Medicaid cuts on programs, which she will also share with Nyang for distribution as well.

In federal updates, changes are happening within the AmeriCorps Senior Programs, with reports of some liaisons being laid off or placed on administrative leave. However, there have been no changes to the state programs, and updates are monitored closely.

IX. COUNTY SUPERVISORS REPORT

No report.

X. COMMISSION ON AGING CHAIR REPORT

Chair Wilberg reported that she and several other commissioners testified before the Joint Finance Committee regarding funding for home-delivered meals and transportation services. The Commission is partnering with AARP for an upcoming Social Security event on April 30, 2025. The event aims to gather public input on proposed changes to Social Security, allowing participants to share their opinions and insights on the matter.

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

- **Upcoming Event:** 2025 Aging Advocacy Day: May 13, 2025, everyone is welcome to attend.
- AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski announced that May is Older Americans Month, with the theme "Flip the Script on Aging. " This initiative aims to address stereotypes and dispel misconceptions about how society views aging. The director is working on obtaining a proclamation from the County Executive to recognize Older Americans Month and is exploring potential advocacy opportunities related to this initiative.
- Additionally, May is recognized as Aging and Disability Resource Center Month. Administrator Anderson hosted a successful celebration last year at a senior center, and this year's event will take place at the Clinton Rose Senior Center. A flyer regarding this event may be available at today's gathering.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn meeting.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent

Meeting Adjourned at 10:39 A.M. The next Commission on Aging Meeting will be Friday, May 23, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang,
Executive Assistant