



Attendance

Members Present

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair
Commissioner Ron Byington
Commissioner John Griffith
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
Commissioner Janice Wilberg
Sopheya Farrell
Sharon Jackson
Trina Koch
Harold Oemig
Cindy Van Vreede

Members Excused

Maureen Fitzgerald
Michael Glabere
Sally Lindner

Gary Mikolajczyk
A. Paul Pedersen
Sherrie Tussler

Milwaukee County Staff

Andy Bethke, MCADS
Alena DeGrado, MCADS
Daniel Idzikowski, MCADS
Vonda Nyang, MCADS
Gaylyn Reske, MCADS
Carrie Koss Vallejo, MCADS

Guests

Commissioner Gloria Miller
Christie Carter, LGBT Ctr of MKE
Jordan, Interpreter

I. Call to Order

Chair Elliott Moeser called the Advocacy Committee meeting to order at 1:44 p.m. Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Chair Moeser welcomes Sharon Jackson who introduces herself as a retired educator with a master's in counseling who believes we have responsibility to serve as older adults to set an example for younger generations and address isolation & loneliness.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Approve the November 7, 2022 Advocacy Committee meeting minutes.

ACTION: Approved unanimously (Griffith, Oemig seconds).

III. Racial Equity & Advocacy (Reflection)

Chair Moeser provided a brief reflection reminding the Committee of the need to advocate for the aging community in Milwaukee County, particularly in light of the County's commitment to racial equity – including the need to provide assistance to people in particular need above and beyond what is needed by other community members.

IV. Update on Action Items

- a. **Transit Funding:** Based upon the motions passed at the last Advocacy Committee meeting, the Commission sent two letters, one to our state legislative delegation regarding the importance of maintaining transit funding for

our older adult residents and a second requesting the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to maintain funding for the paratransit taxi service in 2023.

b. Update on Senior Center capital projects

The Milwaukee County Budget was finalized and it included funding for several capital projects valued at \$4 million at the 5 Milwaukee County owned senior centers.

c. CMS proposed rules on Medicaid Application & Enrollment

Idzikowski submitted comments supporting CMS's proposed rules to make it easier to apply and retain Medicaid benefits, and for auto enrollment into Medicare Savings Programs and referrals for prescription drug assistance.

d. Update on Advocacy and Policy Manager

The interview process has concluded. Chair Moeser participated in the review panel. We are conducting background checks on the final candidate now.

e. Privatization of FamilyCare (Long Term Care)

Idzikowski summarized Wisconsin's Family Care Long term care program and refreshed the committee's recollection that two for profit insurance companies had proposed acquiring the nonprofit Managed Care Organizations – MyChoice and Inclusa. There are concerns about quality of care, the managing of risk rather than care, and the disposition of public assets. Wisconsin has promised a number of public hearings on the matter to hear the public's concerns. DHS has to make a decision as to whether to certify the insurance companies to operate as long term care MCO's. If DHS certifies the companies, it will pass this decision off to the Office of Commissioner of Insurance to review the transactions to acquire these MCO's.

f. Wisconsin DHS Milwaukee Enrollment Services at Marcia Coggs center

The state has decided to continue to station a few staff persons on the first floor of the Marcia Coggs center to redirect residents to the new Income Maintenance and BadgerCare enrollment center at 6055 North 64th Street.

V. 2023-24 Commission on Aging Public Policy Priorities

The Committee reviewed the draft of 2023-24 public policy priorities. Federal and most state policies have been updated, but local priorities have not been addressed yet. A final decision on the priorities will be taken in January.

The overall priority is to ensure that older adults and Milwaukee County can live healthy lives, fully gauge, engage in their community and achieve health equity.

Federal priorities:

- Increase funding for programs affecting older adults such as the OAA

- Increase funding for federal housing programs for older adults (Koch asks about funding for individuals who live independently in non-subsidized apartments for home repair and modification.)
- Improve community life for older adults through age friendly infrastructure, transportation, and long-term services and supports
- Expand Medicare to include hearing, vision, and dental benefits and expand Medicare's authority to negotiation prescription drug pricing.
- Ensure sufficient funding for the Social Security Administration to address applications and resolve complaints on a timely basis for Social Security, Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income.

Griffith asks that access to broadband internet service be included in the list of infrastructure needs under number 3.

Moser emphasizes the importance of Social Security for older adults and believes that the committee needs to take a strong stand to ensure solvency.

Wisconsin state priorities:

- Adopt Medicaid expansion under the ACA to provide health coverage for all Wisconsin residents at or below 138% of the federal poverty level.
- Advance the Fair Deal Initiative and increase state revenue sharing, including allowing a vote to increase the sales tax in Milwaukee County
- Increase funding by \$50 million for Aging and Disability Resource Centers and affiliated programs to address current capacity and rebalanced formula allocation to correct historical inequities for Milwaukee County.
- Support initiatives that increase transportation access for older adults, including specialized transportation, public transit, and regional transit coordination. (Idzikowski discusses transit funding deficit in Milwaukee).
- Provide resources to fully fund and support Adult Protective Services.
- increased funding support, home and community-based caregivers, as well as family caregivers to address the caregiver workforce shortage.
- Allow passage of the Care Act, which would ensure that healthcare facilities allow caregivers to accompany and receive full instruction on how to care for their loved ones after discharge.
- Include passage of the caregiver tax credit, which would give a tax credit of up to depending on the proposal, \$500 to \$1000 for caregiver costs.
- Provide additional funding through WHEDA to support the construction of new affordable housing for older adults.
- Advance racial and health equity by funding preventative health programs, particularly programs that address chronic health and behavioral health conditions disproportionately affecting older adults of color.
- Oppose the acquisition of Medicaid funded home and community based nonprofit Managed Care Organizations by for profit insurance companies.

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Griffith asks that we include among our state wellness priorities making our state parks and trails more accessible for our seniors.

VI. Legislative & Policy Updates

- **Federal Aging Policy Briefing**

Idzikowski notes that the Congress is still working on a continuing resolution to give it time to work out a resolution for the 2023 federal budget.

- **Wisconsin State Budget & Wisconsin Task Forces**

No updates.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Supervisor Sequanna Taylor noted that updates were already provided and that she was pleased to advocate for older adults on the Milwaukee County Board and had some success with senior center capital funding resolutions. Please continue to keep Sup. Taylor updated and she will continue to advocate for the Commission. She recently received a Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award.

VII. Commission on Aging Policy Gathering

Moeser indicates that COA Chair Griffith proposed a gathering for the Commission on Aging with local policymakers sometime in May and is asking for commitment by Committee members to help plan and join the in-person event. Meunier suggested opening it up to older adults and people with disabilities.

VIII. Senior Leadership Program & WAAN Aging Advocacy Day (May 9, 2023)

Idzikowski asks whether to join the Senior Leadership program with WAAN Advocacy Day or have a longer program earlier in the year. Item will be postponed for further discussion.

IX. Schedule & Timing of Advocacy Committee Meetings

Moeser notes that he would like to conduct a poll of the members to determine the best time of the meetings to accommodate working members.

IX. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

Commission on Aging is holding a special meeting on Friday at 9:00 am to elect officers. Chair Griffith thanks all members and public for attending.

X. Future agenda items & meeting dates

Next meeting will be **Monday, January 9, 2022** at 1:30 p.m. by videoconference.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: To Adjourn (Koch, Jackson seconds).

ACTION: Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by: Daniel Idzikowski, Aging Services Director