



**ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 7, 2025**

The Milwaukee County Aging Advocacy Committee convened in person at Independence First, 540 S. 1st St., Milwaukee, WI on Friday, November 7, 2025. Members and attendees also joined the meeting virtually and by conference call.

Members Present

Commissioner Brian Peters, *Chair*
Maureen Conrad
Trina Koch
Paulette Maclin
Gary Mikolajczyk
Harold Oemig
Tom Suchecki
Commissioner Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

Members Excused Continued...

Kathy Scott

Milwaukee County Staff

Claire Enders, *DHHS*
Jill Knight *DHHS*
Migdalia Pacheco, *DHHS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*

Members Excused

Commissioner George Banda, *Vice Chair*
Sopheya Farrell
Kimberly King
William Meunier

Attendees from the Public

Jill Kenehan-Krey, *ASL Interpreter*
Rene Smith
Andrew T. Steward
Steph Zito, *ASL Interpreter*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Brian Peters called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. The AAA Advocacy and Policy Manager, Emily Petersen conducted the roll call. A quorum was present shortly after taking on the official role.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 3, 2025, ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To accept October 3, 2025, Advocacy Committee meeting minutes.
ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Suchecki Moved, Koch Second)

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Chair Peters highlighted an upcoming event (For more information, see attached flyer):

A. Lunch and Learn: Advocating for Caregivers and Individuals Living with Dementia

IV. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATES

A. Federal Aging Policy

I. Federal Budget and Issues

- a. 2026 FY 2026 Budget Update.

II. Federal Regulations and Executive Orders

B. State Legislative Issues

I. State Budget & Legislation

- a. **Guest Speaker:** State Representative Sequanna Taylor appeared before the Committee to provide an update on legislation related to older adults, including the Assembly Task Force on Elder Services.
- b. **Review State Legislation Tracker:** The committee discussed AB-598/SB-578 regarding patient representatives. Members expressed concern that the bill might lead to premature discharges, citing a case where a patient was sent home against medical advice. Members emphasized that older adults, particularly those living alone and on Medicare, would be disproportionately affected. A motion was made and approved to formally oppose the bill and send a letter to representatives prior to the next hearing.

MOTION: To oppose AB-598/SB-578 and to send a letter stating the Committee's position.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Koch Moved, Maclin Second)

Ms. Petersen provided an update on election-related bills. Two bills (AB 535 and AB 536) aim to improve polling place accessibility through training and compliance checklists, which align with the committee's policy platform and require no further action. Another bill proposes eliminating the "indefinitely confined" status for absentee voting, replacing it with stricter requirements such as proof of ID and frequent reapplication.

II. Administrative Rules & Governor's Taskforces

- a) **Assembly Task Force on Elder Issues:** The committee reviewed updates from the Assembly Task Force on Elder Services. Because there will be no hearing in Milwaukee, and no public testimony

permitted at the final hearing, the Committee approved a motion to send a letter to the Task Force members outlining their policy priorities for older adults.

MOTION: To send a letter to the Assembly Task Force on Elder Issues outlining Aging and Disabilities Services policy priorities.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Suchecki Moved, Mikolajczyk Second)

C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues

I. Milwaukee County Budget and Legislation

a. Milwaukee County 2026 Budget Update (Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors of Budget Adoption on Thursday, November 6, 2025): Members discussed the recently adopted county budget, including partial restoration of bus routes, continued funding for the Market Match program supporting SNAP benefits at farmers markets, and additional funds for prevention and the Birth-to-Three program. No new allocations were made for aging services beyond what was requested, and senior center funding remained unchanged. The committee noted that while 2026 funding was stabilized, 2027 may present significant financial challenges.

II. Aging Items of Interest: The committee discussed outreach regarding McGovern Senior Center, noting an upcoming listening session at Clinton Rose Senior Center on November 11.

V. 2026 POLICY PRIORITY LISTENING SESSIONS

Plans were introduced to hold three community listening sessions early next year to gather input on policy priorities. These sessions will include two hybrid meetings and one virtual-only option to ensure accessibility. The goal is to incorporate broader community feedback while promoting awareness of the Commission's role.

VI. 2025-2027 AGING AREA PLAN ADVOCACY GOALS REVIEW

A. Review 2025 Quarter 3 Progress Report: Emily reported on progress toward advocacy goals in the 2025–2027 Area Aging Plan. Achievements include hosting advocacy events in partnership with ADRC and a state senator, engaging graduates of the Senior Leadership Program in committee work, and initiating improvements to website accessibility and functionality.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Mikolajczyk Moved, Koch Second)

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Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.. The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, January 9, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
Executive Assistant

DRAFT