



**COMMISSION ON AGING  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 24, 2024**

A quorum of **Commission on Aging** (COA) members convened in person at Marcia Cogg's Human Services Center, 1220 W. Vliet St., with a virtual MS Teams and video conference option on Friday, May 24, 2024.

**Commissioners Present:**

Janice Wilberg, Ph.D., *Chair*  
Brian Peters, *Legislative Officer*  
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor  
Gloria Miller, *Secretary*  
George Banda  
Mark P. Behar, PA-C, MPAS  
Denise Callaway  
Eugene Guskowski  
Amber Miller, *At Large Member*  
Jacqueline Smith

**Commissioners Excused:**

Terrance Moore, Sr., *Vice-Chair*  
Paula Pennebaker  
Crocker Stephenson  
Cindy Van Vreede

**Milwaukee County Staff:**

Tina Anderson, *DHHS*  
Alyssa Blom, *DHHS*  
Michael Bonk, *DHHS*  
Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*  
Domonique Klett, *DHHS*  
Jill Knight, *DHHS*  
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*  
Shakita LaGrant-McClain, *DHHS*  
Marietta Luster, *DHHS*  
Jonathan Matte, *DHHS*  
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*  
Lorie O'Connor, *DHHS*

**Milwaukee County Staff Continued...**

Migdalia Pacheco, *DHHS*  
Ricky Person, *DHHS*  
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*  
Kayla Steinke, *DHHS*

**Attendees from the Public**

Angie Biersach, *Senior Leadership*  
Christie Carter, *LGBT Center*  
Thomas Gossett  
Matthew Hayes, *Senior Law*  
Karen Higgins, *MCC*  
Gary Ingram, *Senior Leadership*  
Ben Johnson, *Senior Leadership*  
Jill Kenehan-Krey, *ACL Interpreter*  
Laura Langer, *WI-DHS*  
Paulette Maclin, *Senior Leadership*  
Cathy Markwiese, *Senior Leadership*  
Katrina Mosley, *Senior Leadership*  
Patrick O'Brien  
Joyce Radke, *Senior Leadership*  
Barry Slagle, *Senior Leadership*  
Michele Stanton, *Senior Leadership*  
Brenda Thompson, *Senior Leadership*  
Mary Till, *Life Navigators*  
Denise Wesslerle, *Senior Leadership*  
Denise White, *Senior Leadership*  
Cathy Wood, *SOA*  
Stephanie Zito, *ACL Interpreter*

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Janice Wilberg called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Secretary Gloria Miller took the roll call; A quorum of the Commissioners was present.

**II. GUEST REMARKS, OPIOID PREVENTION, RICKY PERSON, DHHS/APS OPIOID PREVENTION COORDINATOR**

Ricky Person, DHHS Opioid Prevention Coordinator, provided a PowerPoint presentation on how Milwaukee County is addressing the opioid epidemic among the older adult population (ages 50 and older). The goal of the program is to prevent and respond to opiate misuse and increase Aging and Disabilities Services' ability to identify and track the frequency of opioid misuse among older adults in Milwaukee County's services population. Mr. Person informed the Commission that a grant was awarded to Milwaukee County to study the data, which he researched existing data and utilized different resources (Voice of Wisconsin and OD Phast) and to provide outreach to educate the community and collaborate with community partners to find the areas that are most affected by opiate use.

A few of the highlights from his report were that African Americans are at a much higher rate than any other group to overdose, and from this group, men are at a higher rate than women. Without their knowledge, some people are smoking and sniffing drugs that contain opioids, so they are not aware of the risks they are undertaking. Mr. Person presented a dashboard that outlined the zip code areas most affected by the epidemic. Mr. Person has designed a treatment model and is working with a partner organization to raise funds to use his model. For more information, please see the "Opioid Project Presentation ADRC."

**III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2024, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES**

Page 3, second paragraph, third sentence. The Senior Center Committee meeting date needs to be changed to Friday, June 7, 2024.

MOTION: To approve the April 26, 2024, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

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

**IV. COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS BY CHAIRS**

**Chair of the Advocacy Committee**, Commissioner Brian Peters, reported that the Advocacy Committee has moved its date and time to accommodate the Commission with the Advocacy Committee's submission of its recommendations. Now, the Advocacy Committee is meeting one week earlier than before. Currently, there are no new activities to report. The Committee is working on setting priorities. Matt Fortman,

DHHS CFO, attended their meeting and discussed some budget items. More details will come at the next Commission on Aging (COA) meeting.

**Commissioner Amber Miller, chair of the Service Delivery Committee (SDC)**, reported that the SDC, which wants to foster transparency, met this week based on the recommendations of Chair Wilberg. She emphasized the importance of more frequent meetings to keep the Commission updated on vendor contract issues. AAA Director Daniel Idzikowski and staff presented a few vendor contracts experiencing problems at SDC's May meeting. Two contracts have major concerns: Revitalize Milwaukee and TransDev. The contract with Revitalize Milwaukee will not work, so it will not proceed. TransDev is currently proceeding but has yet to sign their contract. Commissioner Miller encouraged existing and new Commissioners to attend an SDC meeting as it gives good insight into the vendors, goals, and deliverables; please attend.

**Chair of the Wellness Committee**, Gloria Miller, reported on their meeting on Wednesday, May 22, 2024, held at the Greendale Health Center. The Committee is thrilled about two projects and partnerships they are working on to increase the participation of African American Older Adults in Milwaukee County's Health and Wellness programs. Empower is a Milwaukee-based multicultural marketing and community engagement agency that explores opportunities to deepen engagement in evidence-based programs within the African American Community. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded this program. Empower conducted interviews with program facilitators, participants, and nonparticipants. The second project is the program "Living Well with Chronic Conditions," in partnership with the General Baptist State Convention of Wisconsin. The General Baptist State Convention of Wisconsin had six ambassadors trained in the program in the fall of 2023 and have conducted five Living Well workshops for the members of various churches in Milwaukee County. They will continue to provide workshops and train more ambassadors to facilitate the program in the future. The Wellness Committee meets every two months and will meet next on September 18, 2024.

**The chair of the Advisory Council**, Commissioner Denise Callaway, reported that they are working on the 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan, and their focus is compiling data. They have a subcommittee working on identifying focus groups that can help address some of the demographic gaps in responding to the online surveys. Commissioner Callaway will discuss this further in today's agenda.

**The Senior Center Chair**, Eugene Guszowski, reported that the Committee last met in April and presented their presentation at the highest level within Milwaukee County Administration. The Committee is excited to hear the positive response to their presentation. DHHS Director LaGrant-McClain shared some of her thoughts on reimagining Senior Centers. The Senior Center Committee and Jim Tarantino gave a fantastic presentation. The County Executive has requested that the administration meet internally to determine the next steps for senior centers.

Jim Tarantino created a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the work already completed at the senior centers. There were \$7 million investments over the last three years. The County made investments to replace hardware and improve the infrastructure of the buildings. At the Senior Center Committee's meeting **on June 5, 2024**, Mr. Tarantino and Director LaGrant-McClain will present their recommendations to the Senior Centers Committee. A next step to reach out to determine a long-term goal for McGovern Park senior center. Chair Wilberg mentioned that the Senior Centers have been a central focal point for the COA for four years.

## V. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consists of the following meeting minutes:

- a) Executive Committee meeting minutes (April 12, 2024)

MOTION: To approve the consent agenda items listed above.

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

## VI. ACTION/INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) **Action Item, Amendment to the Contract for Specialized Transportation for Older Adults (OATS):** Daniel Idzikowski, AAA Director, reported that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is still in the authorization process for TransDev's contract. Although Once the AAA has a signed agreement, Director Idzikowski will present a proposal to amend the budget to increase funding for rides and demands on TransDev. No action is needed at this time. The AAA also purchased eight new vans through a grant last year but is still waiting for them.

- b) **Action Item, Confirmations for New Non-Commission Members to the COA's Committee/Council, George Schneider, Advisory Council, Ramona Dicks-Williams, the Senior Center Committee, Katrina Mosley, Advocacy Committee:** The Commission on Aging approved the appointments.

MOTION: To approve the appointments of George Schneider to the Advisory Council, Ramona Dicks-Williams to the Senior Center Committee, and Katrina Mosley to the Advocacy Committee.

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

- c) **Discussion Item, 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan Progress Report update, Commission Denise Callaway, Chair of Advisory Council:** Commissioner Callaway reviewed the 2025-2027 Area Agency on Aging timeline and discussed the Council's achievements with online and paper surveys and their upcoming goals. The Advisory Council has received 300 online surveys and has printed 10,000 English and 1,000 Spanish surveys to distribute to individuals currently

utilizing aging services. The survey is available in other languages. The County staff noticed that the online surveys received did not represent Milwaukee County's population. About 91% of the surveys came from the Caucasian population, which makes up 77% of Milwaukee County. In the next couple of weeks, the Council will close those gaps. The Advisory Council is supplying the County's five-owned senior centers with surveys. Michelle Allison, the ADRC Outreach Coordinator will assist with survey distribution. The Advisory Council will next set up focus groups facilitate input from underrepresented groups.

- d) Informational Item, Social Development Commission Foster Grandparent Program and Senior Companions Program, Suspension of Programs, Daniel Idzikowski, AAA Director:** The Area Agency on Aging staff have noticed an increase in nonprofit agency vendors that are struggling operationally. One example is the Social Development Commissioner (SDC), who didn't have sufficient staff to complete the services funded through a contract with the County. SDC decided to end county programming without informing the County, which a third party informed the County.

There are two legacy programs that SDC ran through a federal contract given by the National Community for Service: The Foster Grandparent program and the Senior Companions program. The Foster Grandparent program has older adults mentoring young people, and the Senior Companions program is a peer-to-peer program, with seniors assisting seniors by visiting, providing companionship, and helping with tasks. Unfortunately, participants haven't been receiving their stipends. This item will be on next month's meeting agenda as a possible action item, and we urge your support in addressing this issue.

- e) Informational Item, Addressing the Increase of Homelessness with Older Adults in Milwaukee County, Jim Mathy, Administrator, DHHS Housing Services:** Chair Wilberg laid this item over until the June COA meeting.

## **VII. AGING UNIT DIRECTOR REPORT, DHHS AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES, AGING UNIT DIRECTOR DANIEL IDZIKOWSKI**

The Area Agency on Aging Director Daniel Idzikowski provided a few highlights from his May report. For more information, please see the attached report.

- The Area Agency on Aging has a new minority-owned dine-out site, Ruby J's Restaurant, located at 54th and Lisbon Ave. The restaurant will serve lunch on Thursdays for the County's nutrition program for older adults.
- Mark your calendars for May 29, 2024, when Milwaukee County will host a Senior Health and Fitness Day at all five County owned Senior Centers. This inclusive event is designed to improve health and wellness for older adults, with

a variety of vendors and workshops. We encourage everyone, from older adults to caregivers and organizations, to join us in this important initiative.

- Exciting news the AAA in partnership with the American Heart Association, is introducing its first blood pressure screening kiosk at Clinton Rose Senior Center. This program provides ten monitors that seniors can borrow, enabling them to proactively monitor their blood pressure at home. Stay tuned for a formal announcement in June.
- The AAA received a no-cost extension from USAging for the immunization outreach program. This door-to-door program works with pharmacists from 25 different clinics to provide vaccinations for COVID and the Flu. The AAA also trains the pharmacists on loneliness screenings to make appropriate referrals to behavioral health.

#### **VIII. WISCONSIN STATE OFFICE ON AGING REPORT, LAURA LANGER**

Ms. Langer reported that two grants, the Social Isolation and Loneliness grant, and the Livable Community grant, were awarded. There were 37 accepted applications out of 59, ranging from \$24,700 to \$97,503. The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received the total amount awarded for the Pharmacy program. Also, two of the grants were for livable communities and four for social isolation and loneliness, totaling **\$363,000** for Milwaukee County in these five areas, and several other organizations in Milwaukee County also received grants. Ms. Langer read a statement from Mr. Neil Minogue, giving a sincere thanks to the AAA for allowing him to speak at the two-day Senior Leadership Program.

#### **IX. COUNTY SUPERVISOR REPORT, SEQUANNA TAYLOR, COUNTY SUPERVISOR**

Chair Wilberg provided Supervisor Taylor's report. Supervisor Taylor announced to the County Board the need for Supervisors to tune into the Commission on Aging (COA) meetings and support the Commission by referring individuals from their districts to serve on one of COA's Committees and Councils. McGovern Night Out is on June 12, 2024, and Supervisor Taylor would love for the Commission to have a table at the event. Her office will send further details.

#### **X. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE**

Mr. Schabo reported that County Executive David Crowley took his oath for his second term in April. He was reelected with 85% of the vote, which was the most significant margin of victory of any County Executive. Milwaukee County is now in a better fiscal position than when the County Executive first came to the County. Executive Crowley did it within the framework of Milwaukee County's vision to achieve race and health equity. A few highlights of the County Executive's achievements are listed below.



- Utilized federal funds to keep over 13,000 families facing eviction during the pandemic to stay in their homes.
- Invested in the most extensive suburban affordable housing
- Redesign of the Behavioral Health systems to provide community-based services
- Increased access to life-saving tools for the State of Wisconsin
- Increased life-saving tools and services to combat the opioid crises
- Solved the County's decades of long-term pension problems
- Secured new revenue-generated tools for Wisconsin from the State of Wisconsin
- Closing financial gaps in affording affordable housing developments creates more housing and employment opportunities

Executive Crowley's unwavering commitment to the well-being of our community is evident in his continued pursuit of new investments throughout the County. These investments are aimed at enhancing our community's safety, stability, and vibrancy, ensuring a better future for all.

Mr. Schabo also highlighted the County Executive's active participation in community events. Two notable instances are his visit to the Wilson Park Senior Center, where he issued an Executive Proclamation to recognize May as Mental Health Awareness Month and Older Americans Month, and his support for the Social Wealth for Mental Health Event.

The County Executive is leading his third Annual Healthy County Challenge, "The 2024 Health County Challenge." The events will be posted on the County's website in partnership with Milwaukee County Parks, the Parks Foundation, and accessibility partners, as well as with the generous support of the Milwaukee Brewers Community Foundation. For more information on these events, please visit [Healthy County Challenge \(milwaukee.gov\)](https://www.milwaukee.gov/HealthyCountyChallenge)

Lastly, the Commission has two vacancies. If the County Board approves her appointment in the June cycle, Marni King is expected to fill one of those vacancies.

## **XI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

The Chair commented on the following for her report:

- **Aging Advocacy Day:** Chair Wilberg acknowledged the Commissioners who attended by thanking them and expressing her appreciation for their attendance.
- **Senior Leadership Program:** The Chair commented on how beautifully organized the program was, and she gave special thanks to Daniel Idzikowski,

AAA Director, and Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Policy Manager. Lastly, the Commission needs to make the County's Senior Centers a high priority.

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

Chair Wilberg announced that Senior Center Committee is meeting on June 7, The June COA meeting will be held at Marcia Coggs, Conference room 104 instead of at the Senior Center.

**XIII. SENIOR LEADERSHIP PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY**

Cathy Markwiese. I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Daniel Idzikowski and Emily Petersen for their exceptional work in organizing the three days of training. I am truly grateful for the wealth of knowledge I gained. Ms. Petersen's unwavering dedication to the program is truly commendable.

The passion and enthusiasm of the ADRC is a beautiful thing. It fills me with pride to now consider myself a seasoned advocate, ready to make a difference.

Gary Ingram shared that the best approach is to have a purpose. Is it for you or connecting to someone else? What is the problem? Figure out what you feel is the solution and bring depth where I can post no threat to step in. We are ready.

Angie Biersach. My passion is going to be for this experienced group. I appreciate the time and energy everyone has; the last three days were amazing. Keep fighting to keep services in Milwaukee County and not outsource them.

On behalf of my class, I would like to thank the Commission on Aging, and everyone associated with Milwaukee County for this opportunity. It has been excellent, and I enjoyed the experience.

Barry Slagle Shared how he came upon visiting the County's senior centers. He's optimistic and grateful for the opportunity to see how good they are and how people are dedicated to improving them. He is now interested in senior centers and remodeling.

**XIV. SENIOR LEADERSHIP GRADUATION CEREMONY, TIM SCHABO, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE, AND SHAKITA LAGRANT-MCCLAIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Due to a scheduling conflict, County Executive David Crowley could not attend. However, his Deputy Chief of Staff, Tim Schabo, was present. Executive Director Shakita LaGrant was also present to present the Graduation certificates to the Senior Leadership participants.



They both congratulated the participants on completing the Senior Leadership program and said they have gained valuable insight into how government systems work at the local, state, and federal levels. And their appreciation for their commitment to better understanding the health and human services system of caring for older adults and actively advocating for them. We need strong advocates.

The certificates were passed out and pictures were taken of Angie Biersach, Ben Johnson, Paulette Maclin, Cathy Markwiese, Joyce Radke, Barry Slagle, Michele Stanton, Denise White.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT: MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:A.M.**

MOTION: To adjourn

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

The next Commission on Aging meeting will be Friday, June 26, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang  
Executive Assistant