



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING
Advocacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2021**

Members Present

Milwaukee County Supervisor Jason Haas
Commissioner Elliott Moeser
Commissioner Janice Wilberg
Martha Collins
Maureen Conrad
Sopheya Farrell
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair
Gary Mikolajczyk
Cindy Van Vreede

Andrew Bethke, MCDA
Alena DeGrado, MCDA

Daniel Idzikowski, MCDA
Jon Janowski, MCDA
Pam Mathews, DOA
Vonda Nyang, MCDA
Carrie Vallejo, MCDA

Members Excused

Commissioner John Griffith, Chair
Barbara Bechtel
Sandra Dotson
Sally Lindner
Harold Oemig
Gary Sprong
Sherrie Tussler, *Hunger Taskforce*

Guests

Pat Dunn
Judith Free
K G
K H
Rita H
Sen. Timothy Carpenter
Rep. Kalin Haywood
Cathy Wood, Serving Older Adults

Milwaukee County Staff

Michelle Allison, MCDA

I. CALL TO ORDER & ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHAIR

The Advocacy Committee members convened virtually on Monday, November 1, 2021. Vice Chair Meunier called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Dan Idzikowski, Division on Aging Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Idzikowski noted that for a standing committee of the Commission on Aging, the presence of three members constitutes a quorum.

II. REVIEW OF THE OCTOBER 4, 2021 ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the October 4, 2021 Advocacy Committee meeting minutes

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Mikolajczyk moved, Moeser second).

Mikolajczyk notes his name is misspelled in the body of the October minutes. Will correct.

III. UPDATE ON ACTION ITEMS

1. **Quorum:** 3 members are necessary. Idzikowski encourages members to recruit new members in state legislative districts not currently represented on the Committee.
2. **Changing Name of Senior Statesman Program:** Commissioner Griffith was to raise at the Commission on Aging meeting. Not done. There is no required name for this program. Commissioner Wilberg suggests "Senior Advocates". Other suggestions include Senior Statesperson, and Senior Ambassadors.

MOTION: Recommend changing the name of the Senior Statesman program to Senior Leadership program.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Wilberg moves, Van Vreede seconds).

3. **ARPA Funding:**

MCDA still has not received the expected OAA ARPA funding distribution or parameters from the Wisconsin DHS. Once we receive notice we will begin discussions on how to utilize these funds. Milwaukee County itself received a direct allocation of ARPA resources. The County has established a task force and there are opportunities to advocate for the distribution of these resources to benefit older adults.

4. **FMAP – Transportation Carve Out for HCBS Long Term Care Programs**

Idzikowski explains federal/state Medicaid match requirements (60/40 in WI) and how under the pandemic, the percentage was adjusted for Home and Community Based Long Term Support Waiver funding to 90/10. No letter has yet been sent. WAAN has adopted a position in support. Will be presenting to the Survival Coalition of Disability agencies as well.

5. **Legislative Redistricting**

County has agreed upon a plan for Supervisory Districts. The State is still undergoing this process with both the Legislature and Governor submitting proposed maps and the matter is in the courts. Idzikowski notes this continues to be a matter to pay attention to.

County Budget and ARPA Funding

A question is posed on whether the Advocacy Committee should be providing any testimony at the full County Board meeting on the budget tonight at 6pm? Idzikowski notes that this year, the Division on Aging is recommended to receive its full request and there were no reductions in BCA or County Levy funds, so no testimony is needed to support additional funding requests by the Advocacy Committee/ Commission.

The discussion turns toward the use of County ARPA funding. Member Collins clarifies that the Older Americans Act ARPA funding is separate from the direct County allocation and advocacy on behalf of the release of those funds is not appropriately directed to the County Board. Vice Chair Meunier notes that this is an opportunity for the Commission to advocate for the direction of County ARPA funds to benefit older

adults, particularly to maintain and revitalize the Milwaukee County Senior Centers. Idzikowski agrees and notes that the Select Committee on Senior Centers is working on a recommendation in this regard. He encourages collaboration between the Committees on this issue. The County is taking a deliberative approach and there is still time for the Commission on Aging to present its asks/recommendations to the County Task Force. Martha Collins suggests that she and Maureen Fitzgerald could provide an advocacy training on issues in 2022. Meunier asks whether there should be a special meeting in December of 2021 to address recommendations to the County ARPA Task Force.

Meunier also expresses concern about publicizing expansion of the Mobile Psychiatric Crisis teams with non-police members. Thinks this is a good response.

IV. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATES (DISCUSSION & ACTION)

A. Federal Aging Policy Briefing

Brief updates were provided on the following federal legislative initiatives:

- **Infrastructure and Federal Budget Older American's Act (OAA)** still under consideration. Encourage reaching out to federal legislatures to ensure that OAA and other older adult provisions remain in the bill.
- **Expanding Medicare Coverage, Dental & Medical Nutrition Therapy Act of 2021 (S. 1536/H.R. 3108)**. Include Medicare expansion in the Build Back Better budget reconciliation package. Only hearing expansion has advanced. Some prescription drug price negotiation now included in the proposed bill.
- **Better Care Better Jobs Act (for HCBS Medicaid)** Not moved forward.

B. State Legislative Issues

- **Legislation pending & Autumn Session Priorities** – a bill is pending to equalize the response requirements for Adult Protective Services and Elder Abuse. Currently Elder Abuse calls MUST be investigated, but a response to abuse against people with disabilities younger than 60 is discretionary.
- **Wisconsin Redistricting** proceeding. Maps will be proposed by the legislature and sent to the Governor for consideration. Link to state redistricting site sent to Advocacy Committee members.
- **Wisconsin Election Commission** and voting investigation: Racine County Sheriff held press conference to announce findings of voting fraud by persons with disabilities in a nursing home and requested that the Attorney General open a statewide investigation but did not recommend any charges. Calls have come for the resignation of members of the Wisconsin Election Commission. People with disabilities who are citizens of Wisconsin have the right to vote unless they have legally been declared incompetent and have had their voting rights taken away in court; only one of the eight people identified by the Sheriff may have lost their voting rights. Family members, friends and others do not have the right to assess whether a person with a disability is capable of voting.

Commissioner Wilberg notes that this is really a pattern of attack on the right of older adults to vote by attacking the “indefinitely confined” provisions and investigating people in nursing homes. Repeated investigations of the 2020 election have concluded that it was safe, secure, and accurate.

MOTION: Send a communication to the Milwaukee delegation and state legislative leadership affirming the greatest possible access to exercise the right to vote by older adults and opposing any restrictions on the same, including ensuring accessibility and ease of voting for residents of nursing homes and other residential facilities.

ACTION: Passes unanimously. (Wilberg, Van Vreede seconds).

- **DHS State match of Nutrition Funding.** No response yet from WI-DHS.
- **NAACP is issuing a federal voting rights action alert to advance legislation pending in Congress.**

C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues

- **Milwaukee County Budget / ARPA distribution** – ARPA OAA funding still not released by DHS to Milwaukee County AAA. Milwaukee County has its own pot of ARPA funding directly allocated and is holding a series of public hearings.
- **Milwaukee County Redistricting** – new maps adopted by County Board.

Supervisor Haas provided a brief report. Discussed new County District maps. 6pm tonight is the annual County Board meeting regarding the 2022 Milwaukee County budget. Notes that he will not run again for election to the County Board. His district has been divided.

V. ADVOCACY DURING THE PANDEMIC: BEYOND SENIOR STATESMAN

Postpone discussion to 2022.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

Medicare 101 Series during Open Enrollment until December 7, 2021

VII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AND MEETING DATES

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at **3:03 p.m.**

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Wilberg, Meunier seconds).

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held virtually at 1:30 p.m. Monday, January 10, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Daniel Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator