



Attendance

Members Present

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair
Commissioner Janice Wilberg
Harold Oemig
Paul Pedersen
Cindy Van Vreede

Members Excused

Barbara Bechtel
Commissioner Ron Byington
Commissioner John Griffith
Sopheya Farrell
Sally Lindner
Gary Mikolajczyk
Gary Sprong
Sherrie Tussler

Milwaukee County Staff

Michelle Allison, MCADS
Andy Bethke, MCADS
Daniel Idzikowski, MCADS
Pam Matthews, MCDOA
Vonda Nyang, MCADS
Jeff Roman, OEI
Carrie Koss Vallejo, MCADS

Guests

Commissioner Gloria Miller
Christie Carter, LGBT Ctr of MKE
Judith Free
Beth Hengst
Trina Koch
Kim Jaly
Niki Schabo, Office of Lena Taylor
Cathy Wood, SOA

I. Call to Order

Chair Elliott Moeser called the Advocacy Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Chair Moeser welcomes Jeff Roman, the Chief Equity Officer for Milwaukee County.

II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of June minutes postponed until August.

III. Racial Equity & Advocacy (Reflection)

Milwaukee County Chief Equity Officer Jeff Roman gives a presentation on how Milwaukee County is centering its work on making Milwaukee County the healthiest county in Wisconsin by achieving racial equity. Framing racial equity – how generations of people have been marginalized in decision-making. Working to dismantle the system of racism that values white people more than people of color. Equity Manifesto by Angela Glover Blackwell – co-founder of [Policy Link](#):

It begins by joining together, believing in the potency of inclusion, and building from a common bond.

It embraces complexity as cause for collaboration, accepting that our fates are inextricable.

It recognizes local leaders as national leaders, nurturing the wisdom and creativity within every community as essential to solving the nation's problems.

It demands honesty and forthrightness, calling out racism and oppression, both overt and systemic.

It strives for the power to realize our goals while summoning the grace to sustain them.

It requires that we understand the past, without being trapped in it; embrace the present, without being constrained by it; and look to the future, guided by the hopes and courage of those who have fought before and beside us.

This is equity: just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Unlocking the promise of the nation by unleashing the promise in us all.

IV. Update on Action Items

- a. FFY 2023 Budget letter requesting increased funding for Older Americans Act and other programs sent to Congressional delegation from Milwaukee County.
- b. Idzikowski was able to meet with Representative Gwen Moore's staff on behalf of the Commission on Aging and passed on the Commission's interest in matters that it has taken action, particularly regarding the 2023 federal budget and the Hospice and Palliative Care Act.
- c. State Redistricting Maps & SC ruling in *Teigen v. WEC*
Idzikowski notes that Commission stood in partnership with the Disability Vote Coalition and the Wisconsin Advocacy Action Network. Most state legislation seeking to change election procedure were vetoed by the Governor. The matter of the use of ballot drop boxes by municipalities and disallowing assistance in placing an individual's ballot in the mail. The Wisconsin Supreme Court just ruled that ballot drop boxes were not allowed by state law and assistance in returning a ballot to a municipal clerk's office is not allowed. The court was silent on whether assistance placing a ballot in the mail was allowable. New matter is the change of leadership on the Wisconsin Election Commission. Meeting will take place tomorrow on WEC leadership and Idzikowski will forward notice.

V. Legislative & Policy Updates

- **Federal Aging Policy Briefing**

Idzikowski shares USAging's federal Policy Priorities for 2022. Notes that in 2022, despite strong advocacy and the effect of COVID-19 on older adults, Congress passed little to no increases to federal aging programs, particularly under the Older Americans Act. USAging encourages members to reach out to their U.S. Senators to adopt the FY2023 funding level for aging programs recently passed by the House.

MOTION: Commission on Aging send a letter to Senators Baldwin and Johnson advocating that the US Senate adopt the House of Representatives Full Committee Mark for Older Americans Act and ACL Older adult programs. Individual members encouraged to call on their own.

ACTION: Approved unanimously (Pederson, Wilberg seconds).

- **Privacy Rights Implication of the US Supreme Court ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization**

Moeser indicates his desire to have the Commission on Aging take a stance to protect the rights of older adults in the LGBTQ community, in light of the fact the *Dobbs* ruling called into question a Constitutional right to privacy, upon which the right of individuals who are LGBTQ to marry and engage in consensual sexual activity was partially premised. Meunier states that if the Constitutional right to marry was overturned by the Supreme Court, same-sex marriages in Wisconsin would no longer be valid due to a previous Wisconsin state constitutional amendment that states that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

MOTION: The Commission send a letter to Milwaukee County's supporting the federal Equality Act, banning discrimination based upon sexual orientation in housing, healthcare, social services, employment, and public accommodations.

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

- **Wisconsin State Budget**

Idzikowski notes that the next Wisconsin state biennial budget is being formulated by Departments and sent to the Governor. WAAN is working on state budget priority positions. These positions will be developed and then brought to the Advocacy Committee for the Commission on Aging's consideration.

- **Transit Budget**

Idzikowski notes that during the last state biennial budget, the state legislature cut operating funding to the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) by approx. \$30 million. Due to the declining revenue and ridership, exacerbated by the pandemic, MCTS is now in a fiscal crisis, with no positive options available. Rising costs including hiring and retaining drivers and fuel compounds the problem. Older adults and people with disabilities are primarily affected since these two population groups tend to rely on bus service more than the general population. Mentions the work of TransitNext to realign routes and establish more rapid bus lanes is in jeopardy. More borrowing or increasing the wheel tax is very unpopular. State holds the keys to providing the necessary funding to prevent system collapse. Report is included in materials.

- **Wisconsin State Aging Plan and OAA Funding Formula**

State of Wisconsin drafted and sent to the federal government (Administration for Community Living) its proposed 2023-25 State Aging Plan. In addition, the State has proposed a change in the formula for distribution of the Older American Act fund to counties. Idzikowski explains that Milwaukee County understands why the State wants to revamp its formula and supports a change in the criteria used to distribute funding. However, Milwaukee County is also concerned about the potential health equity impact of adopting this new formula and is pursuing a population health analysis to determine whether or not the formula does in fact inadvertently perpetuate health inequities based upon race.

Wilberg indicates support to review and challenge the formula on this basis of racial inequity because it will be in place for many years and could perpetuate inequity.

- **Wisconsin State Dementia Care Plan**

State of Wisconsin is developing a new five-year Dementia Care Plan and is seeking public input on goals and strategies. You can download the [Community Conversation Guide](#) to learn how to gather feedback from your community about dementia care systems. DHS has also created an [online survey\(link is external\)](#) that you can share to collect feedback. Contact Milwaukee County Dementia Care Specialist Cristina Huitron for more information or to share your ideas.

- **Governor's Task Forces**

Governor's Task Force on Broadband continues to meet. WAAN has monitored the work of the Task Force.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Milwaukee County budget being developed - opportunity for public comment. New proposals to fund ARPA projects will be presented to the Advisory Council.

VI. Aging Unit Director Position

Moeser notes that the Aging Unit Director position is currently open due to the departure of Jon Janowski to the Clerk of Courts Office. Notes that Chair Griffith indicated his desire to be involved in the selection process for the new director. Moeser asks about where the process is at? Idzikowski notes that the screening interviews have taken place and there will be panel interviews. Moeser indicates that he believes that that the Commission on Aging and Committee should be as involved possible in this process. Wilberg asks if there is a plan or strategy to involve the Committee in this process. Moeser indicates Chair Griffith is not present so that he

doesn't know if the Chair's wishes have been expressed to DHHS . Wilberg asks if it would be appropriate for Moeser to express the desire of the Committee to be involved in this important process.

MOTION: The Advocacy Chair will contact the DHHS Director to express the interest of the Commission on Aging to be involved in the selection of the new Aging Unit Director.

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

VII. WAAN Retreat

The Wisconsin Aging Action Network is convening a retreat to set the course for the future of advocacy in the Aging Network in Wisconsin. WAAN is staffed by GWAAR, but consists of several core groups broadly representing aging interests, most funded through the Older Americans Act and the Wisconsin Elders Act, such as the Wisconsin AAA's, Nutrition Directors, Senior Centers, ADRC professionals, Benefit Specialists, etc. Much change in leadership has occurred recently including the retirement of the GWAAR Executive Director and the Dane County AAA director. It is important to have representation of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging and the Advocacy Committee to participate in the WAAN retreat on August 10th in Fitchburg from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. Moeser commits to recruit participation.

VIII. Membership on Advocacy Committee

Moeser notes that an additional candidate is in the cue to join the Advocacy Committee. The Commission on Aging will not meet to confirm until the end of August.

IX. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

On July 12th there will be meeting of the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force that discusses the opening of the new County Mental Health emergency center on 14th & Cherry. Moeser asks to be informed if there is an opening ceremony for the facility.

X. Future agenda items & meeting dates

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

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: To Adjourn (Pederson, Meunier seconds).

ACTION: Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:27 p.m.