



Attendance

Members Present

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair
Sopheya Farrell
Commissioner John Griffith
Gary Mikolajczyk
Harold Oemig
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
Commissioner Janice Wilberg

Members Excused

Commissioner Ron Byington
Michael Glabere
Trina Koch
Sally Lindner
Paul Pedersen
Sherrie Tussler
Cindy Van Vreede

Milwaukee County Staff

Tina Anderson, MCADS
Andy Bethke, MCADS
Daniel Idzikowski, MCADS
Jill Knight, MCADS
Shakita LaGrant, DHHS
Vonda Nyang, MCADS
Carrie Koss Vallejo, MCADS

Guests

Commissioner Gloria Miller
Kate B, Interpreter
Cindy Bentley, CCSB
Christie Carter, LGBT Ctr of MKE
Maureen Conrad, St. Clare
Matthew Hayes, LAW
Mellena Hoppe, West Allis
Niki Schabo, Office of Lena Taylor
Cathy Wood, SOA

I. Call to Order

Chair Elliott Moeser called the Advocacy Committee meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Chair Moeser welcomes Shakita LaGrant, Director of the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services.

Moeser reviewed meeting times: Commission on Aging: September 23rd at 9:00 a.m. October 28th at 9:00 a.m., November 18th at 9:00 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of August minutes postponed until October.

III. Racial Equity & Advocacy (Reflection)

Milwaukee County Director of Health and Human Services Shakita LaGrant provided the reflection on racial equity & advocacy. She noted her personal journey of advocacy started at a young age advocating for herself and her siblings. Director LaGrant was raised in very diverse community and believes we can all get along to work for the common good. She wants to be an advocate for all people, helping them to find their voice. As a sibling, foster mom, mother to three African American boys, teacher, and social services director, she has exercised advocacy from a young age to the present. We have the chance to advocate to meet the needs of our residents throughout the lifespan and advocate for policies that meet the needs of people where they are at.

Milwaukee County's commitment to becoming the healthiest county by achieving racial equity acknowledges that racial policy and practices in government at all levels has worked to the disadvantage of people of color. This was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Critical time to have open and honest conversation about how to create intentional inclusion to ensure that all people have access to services to meet their needs.

Equity Manifesto by Angela Glover Blackwell – co-founder of [Policy Link](#):

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.

Hope that if we continue to advocate for whomever has a need in our community, regardless of race or background, we will begin to realize our vision that together we will create the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

IV. Update on Action Items

- a. Voting and Upcoming elections: A federal court has found that the federal civil rights of individuals with disabilities must be upheld and thus all individuals self-identifying with a disability have the right to assistance in the preparation and delivery of their ballot to a polling place, thus enjoining a portion of a previous Wisconsin Supreme Court decision disallowing assistance with ballot return. Guidance from the Wisconsin Election Commission to this effect was attached. Governor proclaimed this week Disability Voting Rights Week. Supervisor Taylor offered to help get out the word and promote voting rights. Ms. Bentley notes the media event announcing the week was well covered.
- b. Transit Funding: Idzikowski was not able to follow up on this item. Looking for further guidance.
- c. Update on Advocacy and Policy Manager
Idzikowski thanks the Committee Director LaGrant for their support in his new position. He notes that his former position will be posted this week and advertised through the usual County process as well as local law and public policy schools. Commission Chair Griffith asks Advocacy Chair Moeser to represent the Commission on Aging on the hiring panel for this position.

V. Privatization of FamilyCare (Long Term Care)

Idzikowski explains that two for-profit insurance companies have made offers to acquire two of the non-profit Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) – MyChoice Family Care and Community Care. These MCOs evolved from a County system delivering Home and Community Based long term care services to assist

individuals to remain in their homes and communities rather than in nursing homes under a Medicaid Waiver program. This county-based system has been replaced with a state-run long term care system which covers all of Wisconsin through five MCOs which manage networks of long-term care providers that serve residents with a nursing home level of need to remain in the community. A similar effort by the previous administration to turn this system over to for profit medical providers was defeated by advocacy groups, including the MCOs themselves, several years ago. Advocates were caught off-guard by this most recent development and believe the acquisition of the MCOs by for-profit insurance companies deserves heightened scrutiny. Idzikowski asks the Advocacy Committee to be aware of this issue and ask questions about how such entities might be regulated so the residents continue to receive a high level of care and that profits not siphon off funding from the program. Mikolajczyk offers a motion to oppose the acquisition of MCOs by for-profit insurance companies. Idzikowski believes that such a motion is premature.

VI. Legislative & Policy Updates

- **Federal Aging Policy Briefing**

Idzikowski notes that it is unlikely that the Congress will pass individual appropriation bills for Federal Fiscal Year 2023, but instead will likely pass a Continuing Resolution to keep the government running. The Senate did mark up the appropriation bills but at a somewhat lower level than passed by the House.

Congressional Earmark. Congress is again allowing earmarks of funding for individual districts. The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee, with the support of UWM and Milwaukee County did make a request to the local Congressional delegation to provide earmarked funding for mid-level affordable housing with a community/senior center on ground floor in Westlawn Gardens on 64th & Silver Spring Drive. HACM has not heard anything more about this earmark and the process for planning the complex in Westlawn is on hold.

- **Wisconsin State Budget**

Idzikowski notes that WAAN will likely support the same priorities as advanced during the last Aging Advocacy Day. These positions will be developed and then brought to the Advocacy Committee for the Commission on Aging's consideration by the November Advocacy Committee meeting. Please let Idzikowski know of any specific policy priorities that you would like to see included. Griffith notes that we have 180,000 older adults in Milwaukee County and

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Supervisor Taylor does not have anything in particular to report.

Milwaukee County budget is being developed. Public hearings were held and now opportunity for online public comment to the County Executive. Idzikowski notes that, while the ARPA Committee has recommended \$3.5 in County ARPA funding to improve the Milwaukee County senior centers, there is one additional capital budget item for \$90,000 to study and develop a plan for the replacement of the intrusion alarm and camera systems at the five Milwaukee County senior centers that needs advocacy in order to be sure it is included in the County Executive's 2023 capital budget plan. Idzikowski also asks the Advocacy Committee to support the set aside of \$300,000 in County Levy contingency to serve as local match for the Area Agency on Aging's federal Older Americans Act ARPA allocation.

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging request the County Executive and Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to include \$97,000 in its 2023 capital budget for a design study of improvements to the safety systems of the Milwaukee County senior centers, capital item # WS014501 Sr Centers Security System Upgrades.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Mikolajczyk, Oemig seconds).

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging requests the Milwaukee County Executive approve DHHS's Supplemental Request to set aside \$290,000 in local tax levy contingency funding from the 2023 County Budget to allow the Milwaukee County Area Agency on Aging to meet its non-federal match requirements and thus draw down its full allocation of Older Americans Act ARPA funding.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously (Griffith, Mikolajczyk)

VII. WAAN Retreat

Commissioner Griffith and Idzikowski attended the Wisconsin Aging Action Network retreat to set the course for the future of advocacy in the Wisconsin Aging Network in Wisconsin. Idzikowski notes that he and Griffith will be participating on the restructuring committee. Moeser asks Idzikowski to sent out the list of committees that members could participate on.

VIII. Membership on Advocacy Committee

Moeser notes that a newly appointed member has raised an objection to the time of the Advocacy Committee meetings since he works and the meetings take place during the day. Moeser would like to survey the members to see if we can find a better time for the meeting. Bentley notes that schedules are very busy. Idzikowski notes that the meeting also conflicts with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

IX. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

Moeser asks for announcements and notes that individuals are called to action on any of the advocacy items put forth today. Griffith announces that the LGBT Community Big Night Out on October 7th – opportunity to meet with public offices. Idzikowski notes that Thursday the 22th Wilson will host a Free from Falls Resource Fair and the Art of Aging Fair will be held on Thursday, September 29th at Washington senior center.

X. Future agenda items & meeting dates

Next meeting will be **Monday, October 3, 2022** at 1:30 p.m. by videoconference.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: To Adjourn (Mikolajczyk, Meunier seconds).

ACTION: Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Daniel Idzikowski, Aging Services Director