



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
COMMISSION ON AGING  
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes: Monday, October 3, 2022**

**Attendance**

**Members Present**

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair  
William "Bill" Meunier, Vice Chair  
Sopheya Farrell  
Commissioner John Griffith  
Trina Koch  
Gary Mikolajczyk  
Harold Oemig  
A. Paul Pedersen  
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor  
Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede

**Members Excused**

Commissioner Ron Byington  
Maureen Fitzgerald  
Michael Glabere  
Sally Lindner  
Sherrie Tussler  
Commissioner Janice Wilberg

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

**Guests**

Commissioner Gloria Miller  
Cindy Bentley, CCSB  
Amelia Berendt, Office of Sequanna Taylor  
Pat Bruce, ADRC Board  
Sen. Tim Carpenter  
Christie Carter, LGBT Ctr of MKE  
Dora Drake  
Matthew Hayes, LAW  
Colleen Galambos, ADRC Board, UWM  
Nicole Keeler, Interpreter  
Kent Mayfield, ADRC Board  
Amy S, Interpreter  
Cathy Wood, SOA

**Milwaukee County Staff**

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Elliott Moeser called the Advocacy Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, called the roll. A quorum was present. Moeser welcomed new member Trina Koch and new ADRC Director Tina Anderson.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** Approve the September 12, 2022 COA Advocacy Committee minutes.

**ACTION:** Unanimously approved (Oemig, Moeser seconds).

**III. Racial Equity & Advocacy (Reflection)**

COA Chair Griffith provides the reflection on racial equity. He recalls he church bombing in 1963 Birmingham and the many incidents of protest during the civil rights era of the 1960s and saw this was a turning point as a child thinking that a change needed to happen and that individuals had to step up. During college he was invited to meet Gene McCarthy and advocated for the end of the Vietnam war. We have to find a way to come together as a society and work with people on the other side of issues. Building coalitions to make change, but also be willing to do so in a cooperative way.

**IV. Update on Action Items**

- a. Poll on meeting times. Chair Moeser reminded staff that he would like to survey the Committee to determine the best time for the meetings to allow everyone to participate.
- b. Voting and Upcoming elections: The November general election is approaching. A number of the senior centers will be used as either early voting sites or polling places. Courts have now clarified that individuals with disabilities have right to assistance in the preparation and delivery of their ballots. More information on voting can be found in the attachments.
- c. Transit Funding: Alena DeGrado, ADS Transportation Coordinator reports that she has worked on drafting a letter to support transit funding in alignment with the needs of MCTS. She expects the letter to be finished soon.  
**MOTION:** That COA Chair Griffith and Moeser are authorized to review and send out the letter without further committee review.  
**ACTION:** Passes unanimously (Mikolajczyk, Van Vreede seconds).
- d. Update on Advocacy and Policy Manager  
Idzikowski thanks Chair Moeser for his willingness to assist with the selection process. Thus far, we have had 28 applicants.

**V. Privatization of FamilyCare (Long Term Care)**

Idzikowski notes that there has been a meeting between WAAN legislative liaison Janet Zander and Wisconsin DHS staff regarding this issue. Not clear what the outcome of this meeting will be, but DHS did indicate it will hold public hearings on the matter. Neither Humana nor Molina have submitted applications to OCI at this point. The issue has been raised with the full Commission on Aging and the ADRC Governing Board. Chair Griffith indicates that this is the type of issue that folks should be speaking with state legislators and those running for office in November. We have an opportunity for advocacy. Mikolajczyk notes that there are both Republicans and Democrats that are passionate about the system of Long Term Care because they have family members affected. Meunier states his opposition to this proposed takeover and indicates that he doesn't understand how this could be happening. Galumbos echoes Meunier's sentiments. A for profit entity will not advocate for the best interests of the long-term care participants – nor will there be cost savings. ADRC Board Chair Pat Bruce also notes that there are several members of the ADRC Board very concerned by this and wanted to respond.

**MOTION:** Send a letter to Wisconsin DHS and state representatives opposing the privatization of Wisconsin's long term care system and raising questions regarding the proposed acquisition.

**ACTION:** Passes unanimously (Mikolajczyk, Meunier seconds).

## VI. Family Caregiver Support

Caregiver support has become a very important issue for older adults and people with disabilities across the state and nation. The population is aging and fewer people willing to work for low wages as a paid caregiver. Moreover family caregivers are facing financial and emotional strain in caregiving. The issue has been taken up at both the state by the Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving and at the national level by the RAISE Caregiver Task Force. Both a state and national caregiver strategy have been developed to address the caregiver shortage and provide support for volunteer/family caregivers. The national strategy is posted online and is open for public comments. In Milwaukee County we will be hiring a Caregiver Coordinator to review and put these strategies into practice. We are also looking at moving coordination of the federal and state caregiver support programs from the Alzheimer’s Association to the County over the next year.

USAgings has also issued a Caregiver Workforce Issue paper and the Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations has published results of a survey of caregiver needs. Finally, WAAN received a grant to train local advocates on this issue. The Commission on Aging will also consider adding a Caregiver Support Council to its standing committees in the next year.

Mikolajczyk notes the importance of this issue as there is a shortage of healthcare workers generally and we need to work to keep folks in their homes and out of the hospital and nursing homes. Griffith notes that we should encourage the next generation of college students to pursue a caregiving career. Koch notes that we are approaching an age where the current caregivers will need to be cared for and because of demographics there won’t be anyone available to care for them. We aren’t throw away people. Meunier also notes that there was a neighborhood network of caregivers through faith communities, but this network doesn’t exist anymore. We may want to revisit that program to reestablish such a network of volunteer caregivers and companions.

- a. Milwaukee County Caregiver Support Coordinator
- b. 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers
- c. USAgings – Caregiver Needed Workforce Issues Paper
- d. Survival Coalition – Family Caregiver Survey Results
- e. Changing the Care Conversation grant project update

## VII. Legislative & Policy Updates

- **Federal Aging Policy Briefing**

Idzikowski notes that Congress failed to pass any individual appropriation bills for Federal Fiscal Year 2023, but instead passed a Continuing Resolution to keep the government running through December 16<sup>th</sup>. We are concerned there will be no increases for aging programs.

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 64<sup>th</sup> & Silver Spring Drive. HACM has not heard anything more about this earmark and the process for planning the complex in Westlawn is on hold.

Inflation Reduction Act. Passed by Congress did contain some provisions of interest to older adults including the ability of Medicare to negotiate drug prices for the first time in certain categories of high cost medications over the next several years.

- **Wisconsin State Legislative Issues**

Idzikowski notes that WAAN is working on issue briefs for the 2023-24 state budget process. Idzikowski is also drafting updates to the Commission on Aging's Public Policy priorities for future consideration by this committee.

The Governor's Task Force on Broadband continues to meet. Milwaukee County is expected to receive additional funding to extend Internet service to low-income populations. Affordability is a real issue and the PSC does have a program to assist low income Wisconsinites in gaining broadband access.

The third iteration of the 5 year Wisconsin Dementia Care plan has been developed and is available for comment on the Wisconsin DHS website. We have two Dementia Care Specialists in Milwaukee County. Encourage members to review and comment on the plan.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Supervisor Taylor's Legislative Aide reports that the County Executive has released his 2023 Executive Budget and now there is the opportunity to advocate with your local County Supervisor. Many County Supervisors will be holding local town halls on the budget. You can also follow the process through the County Board Finance Committee on CLIC.

The Commission on Aging did send a letter encouraging the County Executive to include a 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, but wasn't included in the Executive Budget and needs advocacy in order to be sure it is included in the final County Capital Budget.

**VIII. WAAN Retreat Follow-up & Aging Advocacy Day**

The WAAN Aging Advocacy Day has been scheduled for May 9, 2023.

**IX. Membership on Advocacy Committee**

Moeser notes that the Commission on Aging will be considering an additional candidate for membership on the Advocacy Committee at their October meeting. Reminds the Committee members to recruit new members.

**IX. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities**

Moeser asks for announcements. Mikolajcyk notes that Souls to the Polls will be hosting an event on October 19<sup>th</sup> relating to preserving Social Security. Moeser notes that Chair Griffith recommended that the Commission on Aging hold a meeting with public officials in the new year. He also notes that the Commission will be honoring two former members of the Committee who have recently passed away: Barbara Bechtel and Bob Hasse. Griffith announces that the LGBT Community Big Night Out on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

**X. Future agenda items & meeting dates**

Meetings will continue to be virtual. Next meeting will be **Monday, November 7, 2022** at 1:30 p.m. by videoconference.

**XI. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** To Adjourn (Koch, Oemig seconds).

**ACTION:** Passes unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Daniel Idzikowski, Aging Services Director