



**Commission on Aging  
Meeting Minutes  
November 18, 2022**

A quorum of **Commission on Aging** (COA) members convened virtually on Friday, November 18, 2022. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting with video conference and conference call options (computer or telephone).

**Commissioners Present:**

John Griffith, *Chair*  
Amber Miller, *Vice-Chair*  
Janice Wilberg, Ph.D., *Secretary*  
Elliott Moeser, Ph.D., *Legislative Officer*  
John Gaines  
Gloria Miller  
Terrance Moore, Sr  
Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, Ed.D.  
Cherie Swenson  
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor  
Cindy Van Vreede

**Commissioners Excused:**

Ronald Byington

**Milwaukee County Staff:**

Michelle Allison, *DHHS*  
Amelia Berendt, *County Board*  
Andrew Bethke, *DHHS*  
Alena DeGrado, *DHHS*  
Schinika Fitch, *DHHS*

**Milwaukee County Staff:**

Debra Horton, *DHHS*  
Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*  
Jill Knight, *DHHS*  
David Muhammad, *DHHS*  
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*  
Lorie O'Connor, *DHHS*  
Mary Proctor-Brown, *DHHS*  
Gaylyn Reske, *DHHS*  
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*

**Attendees from the Public**

Pat Bruce, *ADRC Governing Board*  
Christie Carter, *Milwaukee LGBT*  
Michelle Drouillard, *Goodwill*  
Thomas Gossett, *Goodwill*  
Laura Langer, *WI-DHS*  
David L  
Zongsae Vang  
Vevette Hill-Nwagbaroacha, *SOA*  
Song Xiong-Buck, *MCC*

**MINUTES**

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

Chairman John Griffith called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., and Secretary Janice Wilberg took roll. A quorum was present.

## **II. COMMISSIONER REFLECTION:**

Due to technical issues and interpreters canceling at the last minute Commissioner Byington's reflection was postponed until the January 2023 COA meeting. Chair Griffith asked COA members to take a few minutes to reflect on those who don't have the capability and inability to communicate regularly with others.

## **III. COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL REPORTS BY CHAIRS:**

Commissioner Wilberg reported that the Advisory Council met last week to discuss the progress made on the Area Agency on Aging Area Plan, the planning and implementation of an Aging Network Summit that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is hosting in May, and an alternative meeting schedule for 2023.

Commissioner Moeser reported on the Advocacy Committee's November 7, 2022 meeting. First, the Committee discussed a letter they wrote to the County Board of Supervisors asking to reconsider action in the 2023 Budget on the Paratransit Taxi Service, which the County Board has now restored funding for the program. The Advocacy Committee also passed a resolution expressing their concerns with how the State handled vacating the first floor at the Coggs Building, as there were issues with communication to their clients on that action that caused confusion and client service disruptions. The Advocacy Committee will hold a poll to decide on their 2023 meeting schedule due to scheduling conflicts with other Committees and Councils. The Committee is planning a Commission on Aging (COA) policymakers in-person reception; the date and time are not solid. However, the WAAN Aging Advocacy Day is set for May 9, 2023.

Commissioner Amber Miller reported that the Service Delivery Committee is waiting to hear from Goodwill of Wisconsin on its plan for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Commissioner Gloria Miller reported on the Wellness Committee's Wednesday meeting; several workshop updates were discussed, including Healthy Living with Chronic Pain and a presentation on Health Care partnerships with the Stepping-On program for falls prevention. The Wellness Committee meets bi-monthly. They conducted three breakouts and a few of the topics discussed were: How do they expand evidence-based prevention programs, where would they hold events, and how to encourage people to become a facilitator. They discussed having an in-person meeting in the summer to get to know one another.

Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas reported that the Senior Center Select Committee met twice in November. At their second November meeting, the Housing Authority and City Development attended and discussed a new wellness facility project for the corner of 64th and Silver Spring. They had extended an invitation for the Senior Center Select Committee to attend future meetings to discuss the new facility. The Chair wants everyone to know that this new development is not a replacement for McGovern Park

Senior Center and that McGovern's Center would like to be present at future meetings discussing the new facility. Lastly, the Senior Center Select Committee will present its final report in January 2023.

#### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda consists of the following meeting minutes:

- The Executive Committee meeting minutes for September 12, 2022
- The Advisory Council meeting minutes for September 14, 2022

**MOTION:** To accept the above consent agenda meeting minutes.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser moved, Van Vreede second).

#### V. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE REPORT: SCHINIKA FITCH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

Director Fitch reported that yesterday the County Board passed the 1.2 billion 2023 Operating Budget, which addresses acute community needs through targeted investments and is taking steps forward to make Milwaukee County the healthiest county in the State by advancing a strategic plan to achieve racial equity. A few highlighted areas addressed in the budget in terms of equity are:

- An investment of \$21 million in Adult Behavioral Services
- An Increase in the Credible Messenger Program for youth
- An expansion of Children's Long-term support
- Paratransit (Taxi Program)
- An increase in funding for Parks (Milwaukee County Parks)
- Funding for a new Center for Forensic Science
- An increase in funding for the Community Reintegration Center (renamed from the House of Correction)

Director Fitch explained the Milwaukee (MKE) Coalition/Move Forward Coalition as a partnership with the business community, state legislators, municipal government, and community groups to advocate on a state level for local operations sales tax to decrease property tax, address ongoing County legacy costs, and preserve local services.

Currently, the Commission on Aging has three vacancies. Two appointments are in the approval process of being reviewed by the Health and Human Needs board in November; if approved, they will move forward to the final process and go before the full County Board in December. Commissioner Amber Miller and Gloria Miller have agreed to serve a second term. Commissioner Miller's term is up in December, and Gloria Miller's in January 2023.

Commissioner Wilberg asked if the Commission could extend an invitation to County Executive Crowley to attend the COA meeting in January 2023. Director Fitch will forward the MKE Coalition information and link to Vonda Nyang, Executive Assistant, to send to the Commission. Also, Director Fitch will have Executive Assistant Vonda Nyang work with the County Executive's assistant to schedule him for the January 2023 meeting.

## VI. ACTION/INFORMATIONAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a) **Action Item, Appointment of Sharon Jackson to the Advocacy Committee, Advocacy Committee Chair, Commissioner Elliott Moeser:** Chair of the Advocacy Committee, Elliott Moeser, is requesting approval of Sharon Jackson's appointment to the Advocacy Committee from the Commission on Aging.

**MOTION:** To accept Sharon Jackson's appointment to the Advocacy Committee.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Miller second).

- b) **Action Item, COA Bylaw Changes for Election of Officers:** The Commission on Aging is changing its bylaws in Article IV, Section 2. Election of Officers, Item A. Elections shall be held annually during the first month of each calendar year. The change is to Item A to change two words "first month to read "last meeting" to read as follows: "Elections shall be held annually during the last meeting of each calendar year."

**MOTION:** To accept the proposed COA Bylaw change to hold election of officers for the Commission on Aging at the last meeting of the year rather than the first.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser moved, A. Miller second).

The Commission discussed dates and times when they should hold a special meeting in December to have COA Officer elections. The Commission decided to vote on the December 9, 2022, meeting at 9 a.m.

**MOTION:** To hold a special meeting on **December 9, 2022, at 9 a.m.** to hold COA Officer Elections and any other emergent business.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Wilberg second).

- c) **Action Item, Award of Contract for Older Adult Financial Navigator Service:** The agenda item was passed and suggested to add to the Commission on Aging's December 9, 2022, Special Assembly.

- d) **Informational Item, Commission on Aging Alignment with County Strategic Direction and Update on Racial Equity Initiative in DHHS, Service Delivery Committee Chair Commissioner Amber Miller:** The agenda item was passed

and suggested to add to the Commission on Aging's December 9, 2022, Special Assembly.

- e) **Informational Item, Senior Center Select Committee Senior Center Report and Recommendations to the COA, Senior Center Select Committee Chair Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas:** The agenda item was passed and will be added to the January 2023 agenda.
- f) **Informational Item, Update on Older American's Act and American Rescue Plan Act (OAA-ARPA) Funding,** Daniel Idzikowski Aging Unit Director reported that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) received \$2 million in Older American Act ARPA Funding, separate from the County's ARPA funding allocations. The first allocation ended on September 30, 2022. The AAA is waiting on its second payment of **\$2 million**, which the State is processing.

Bekki Schmitt, DHHS/ADS Community Programs Supervisor, and her team have translated the Aging and Disabilities Services (ADS) Brochures/materials into several different languages (Spanish, Russian, Lojban, Chinese). They are working on posting American Sign language videos and captions on the ADRC websites. Also, the AAA is revising its communication platform by streamlining its email communications with the public, boards, and their committees and councils.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is holding an Aging Network Summit in May, which is Older American's month, in collaboration with the State Office on Aging, United Way, AARP, and the Milwaukee Area Healthcare Coalition. More information to come.

The serving Older Adults (SOA) "Technology Connect" program, in collaboration with the City Housing Authority (HACAM), is expanding its program and adding additional sites. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has assisted SOA with technology training.

**Request for Proposals (RFP) Updates:** The AAA has finalized its contract with River Works for financial navigation services, which started in September 2022.

The AAA is working with Employ Milwaukee, the state funded senior employment program, to assist older adults who have difficulty finding employment and are low-income to ensure they have connections with the County's five-owned Senior Centers and AAA's networks.

Alena DeGrado, DHHS/ADS Transportation Coordinator, coordinates a program titled "Senior Walks in the Parks," which provides free transport to cultural sites, beginning with the Milwaukee Domes. Also, the AAA is finalizing its contract with the Older American Transportation Service (OATS) and is working on a rate increase for this contract.

**Update on the home repair/modification, home chores, and fall prevention RFPs:** The AAA has applied for a federal grant with the Housing Division for \$250,000 to hire an OT Assistant to assist with the falls prevention program.

**Milwaukee County ARPA projects/Senior Center Updates:** The AAA has applied for ARPA funding to provide new video conferencing systems within the County's owned Senior Centers.

**Nutrition Updates:** Adding a new minority vendor to the nutrition program (Pass the Peas) on Tuesdays; the restaurant located on 75th and Appleton Ave., Nutrition consultant update, conducting phone calls and interventions with seniors who have nutritional risks. Catering and site management fees have gone up this year. The AAA has provided extra funding. Has decided to keep current caterers, Davians and Aramark. Gaylyn Reske, the DHHS/ADS Senior Dining Program Coordinator, provided an update on the reopening of congregate dining sites. The United Community Center (UCC) is open, the Milwaukee Community Center (MCC) opened on November 1, 2022, and the Indian Council will reopen on January 1, 2023. All other sites are looking at other options.

**Wellness updates on evidence-based prevention programs, wellness workshops, and facilitator training:** The ADS is increasing the recruitment of facilitators for their evidence-based programs and new initiatives with Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA).

**National Family Caregiver Support Program:** The ADS is in the process of hiring a Caregiver Support Coordinator. Interviews are complete, and Director Idzikowski expects to hire someone for this position next week. Over the next nine months, the AAA is working with the Alzheimer's Association to transition two of their programs (the National Family Caregivers Support program and the Alzheimer's Family Caregivers Support program) to the AAA. They are exploring how to bring on additional minority-based respite providers. Also, there was increased funding to Life Navigators for their program that supports older adults who care for their adult children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- g) Informational Item, Milwaukee County 2023 Budget Update:** Supervisor Taylor provided an update on the 2023 County Budget. The County Board met yesterday to discuss a partial veto, and they voted to accept the proposed final 2023 County Budget, which included an amendment for safety measures in the amount of **\$97,000** submitted by Supervisor Taylor on behalf of AAA requesting additional funding for Milwaukee's County's five owned Senior Centers, which passed. Also included in the budget were the paratransit and backup generator requests. Supervisor Taylor ended her report by stating that if there is any other information the Commission would like to know regarding the to, feel free to contact her.

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

The County Executive proclaimed Social Isolation and Loneliness this week as social isolation and loneliness week. Bekki Schmitt released a series of social media posts recognizing the seriousness of this topic and encouraging others to reach out to neighbors experiencing isolation and loneliness. Also reported were Area Agency on Aging's (AAA) Request for Proposals (RFPs). The AAA is continuing contracts with caterers Davians and Aramark. There was a switch around with service areas between the two. No contracts have been awarded at this time, as they must appear before the County Board for approval before being awarded.

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

Laura Langer reported on three items: Employ Milwaukee, who oversees the Senior Community Services Employment Program contract, started their contract started November 1, 2022. She has enjoyed working with them and feels they are a great fit. The Social Isolation and Loneliness taskforce, Carley Olson, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, is the State contact. Ms. Langer will contact her to see if she has any updates to share with the COA at their next meeting. The State Department of Health Services (DHS) has been meeting with all the state's ARCs to discuss ongoing partnerships with the ADRC's, policies and practices related to the Older Americans Act programs, and funding updates.

**IX. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chair Griffith stated that this is Social Isolation and Loneliness week. He discussed how it affects all ages and encouraged everyone to reach out to a friend or family member, engage in conversation or activity, and help them make connections. And how important it is to help one another and turn around the violence and COVID isolations.

The Chair is interested in creating a Communications Committee and asked for a motion to create a communications committee. Due to a non-quorum of Commissioners, a vote couldn't take place. The Chair is going to hold the motion for the next COA meeting.

**X. COUNTY SUPERVISOR REPORT, SEQUANNA TAYLOR, COUNTY SUPERVISOR**

Sequanna Taylor reported on her meeting with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Executive Director Shakita LaGrant-McClain. Both met to discuss Supervisor Taylor's plans to visit Milwaukee County's five-owned Senior Centers and some catering sites and to build relationships with seniors. Supervisor Taylor mentioned she had recommended two individuals to serve on the Commission and or one of its committee or council members.

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

- Director Idzikowski mentioned that DHHS is looking into moving some of its services to the first floor to help those with mobility issues. Medicare open enrollment is taking place. He encouraged everyone who needed assistance to contact the ADRC.
- Discussed COA flyer announcements provided in today's meeting packet.
- There is a correction with the last Medicare 101 series. It is scheduled for Monday, November 21, 2022, from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. at the Clinton Rose Center.
- Supervisor Taylor announced Thanksgiving food giveaways. She will send the flyers to Director Idzikowski to send out to everyone.
- Pat Bruce, Chair of the ADRC Governing Board, is sending their Listening Session report by the end of December 2022 or early January 2023 to Commission for review.

**XII. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m. (Van Vreede/Taylor)

The next Commission on Aging meeting will be Friday, December 9, 2022, a virtual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang  
Executive Assistant