



COMMISSION ON AGING Advocacy Committee May 4, 2023

Advocacy Committee/Council members convened virtually on Thursday, May 4, 2023. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting with video conference and conference call.

Members Present:

Commissioner Elliott Moeser, Chair
Sharon Jackson, Vice Chair
Commissioner John Griffith
Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede
T.R. Edwards
Sopheya Farrell
Harold Oemig
Supervisor Sequanna Taylor

Members Excused:

William Meunier
Maureen Fitzgerald
Gary Mikolajczyk
Paul Pedersen
Trina Koch

Staff Present:

Jill Knight, DHHS-ADS
Daniel Idzikowski, DHHS-ADS
Emily Petersen, DHHS-ADS
Alena DeGrado, DHHS-ADS
Ortrialla Paris, DHHS-ADS
Mary Proctor-Brown, DHHS-ADS
Tamika Roberson, DHHS-ADS
Terrell Thomas, DHHS-ADS
Michelle Allison, DHHS-ADS

Attendees from the Public

Interpreter Brice
Interpreter Leslie
Brian Peters, Independence First
Melvin Reese
Sharon Roy, West Allis Senior Comm.
Cathy Wood, Serving Older Adults

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Elliot Moeser called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Emily Petersen, Policy and Advocacy Manager called the roll and a quorum was present.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE April 3, 2023, Advocacy Committee Minutes.

MOTION: To accept the April 3, 2023, Advocacy Committee meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith, Van Vreede seconds)

III. UPDATE ON ACTION ITEMS: (Information/Discussion)

- a. Advocacy & Policy Manager position
- b. Testimony before the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee
- c. CoA Public Policy Priorities-Medicaid Expansion
- d. County Budget Funding for Aging Issues
- e. Ageism in Wisconsin

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

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Idzikowski introduced Emily Petersen as the new Advocacy and Policy Manager for the Area Agency on Aging. Chair Moeser welcomed Emily.

Several members of the Commission on Aging and the ADRC Governing Board testified in person before the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee. Topics covered included caregiver support, transportation, ADRC and APS funding, and state shared revenue.

The Commission on Aging approved the Advocacy Committee's recommendation to formulate a special budget request for an additional 10% of County tax levy funding for Aging Services projects in the following areas:

- Caregiving - \$50,000
- Ombudsman-\$50,000
- Senior Centers - \$30,000
- Transit - \$20,000
- Food Security - \$20,000

Chief Financial Officer Matt Fortman informed the Commission that he would work with the Commission to formulate supplemental funding requests that don't count against tax levy targets.

While the COA advocated for Medicaid expansion under the ACA in Wisconsin and Gov. Evers included this item in his proposed 2024-25 biennial budget, the JFC removed Medicaid expansion & 500 other items from the budget yesterday.

Idzikowski reported that he has not made progress in formulating additional communication with the Governor's office on the issue of ageism.

IV. Legislative & Policy Updates: (Discussion/Action)

- **Federal Aging Policy**—Emily Petersen provided an update on the USAging Conference that she and Director Idzikowski attended in April. They met with the legislative offices that represent Milwaukee County, including Congressman Steil, Congresswoman Moore, and Senators Baldwin and Johnson. USAging established their 2023 Federal Policy priorities, which largely align with the County's priorities. These priorities include increased funding for support services, caregiver funding and workforce development. Milwaukee County also discussed increased funding for transportation and home delivered meals. Members of Congress will be reintroducing the Volunteer Tax Appreciation Act this session which will benefit volunteer drivers and the amount they can write-off for mileage reimbursements.
- **State Legislative Issues**—Focus continues to be on the State Budget as the Joint Finance Committee begins working on it. Some Aging-related items were removed as part of an omnibus motion earlier in the week. The Committee removed paid family and caregiver leave funds, money for healthy aging grants, and Medicaid expansion.

Two new bills were introduced in the state Legislature that are important to watch. The first is SB263 which will allow individuals on SeniorCare to utilize 100-day prescription refills. This was a provision enacted during the COVID-19 pandemic that legislators are trying to make permanent. The next piece of legislation is AB245 which is the comprehensive shared revenue reform and sales tax increase. This is important County-wide and will provide additional needed funding for the County to address its complicated pension system and free up funding for other priorities.

Commissioner Griffith identified two issues important for the Commission to focus on: the lack of ombudsmen in the State and the need for additional benches on trails/overall trail accessibility.

- Milwaukee County Legislative Issues
 - a. Milwaukee County Budget & Legislation
 - b. Aging items of interest

V. Wisconsin State Budget Issues (Discussion & Action)

- [ADRC Investment 10-2022 Issue Brief](#)
- [Family Caregiver 11-2022 Issue Brief](#)
- [Long-Term Care Workforce 02-2023 Issue Brief](#)
- [Home Delivered Meal Services 11-2022 Issue Brief](#)
- [Transportation 11-2022 Issue Brief](#)

VI. MCTS Save the Bus Campaign (Discussion)

Transportation Coordinator Alena DeGrado presented on the MCTS Save the Bus campaign. The campaign focuses on educating the public on the upcoming MCTS fiscal cliff. MCTS faces a \$25 million revenue shortfall by 2025. In response, the Wisconsin Policy Forum put together a variety of solutions to address a lack of transportation funding. The MCTS Save the Bus campaign encourages advocates to send letters to their state and federal legislators asking for more transportation funding.

MOTION: Send a communication to Milwaukee County Supervisors, State Legislators, and Federal Legislators advocating for additional transit funding for MCTS in accord with the *Save the Bus* campaign.

ACTION: Approved unanimously (Griffith moved, Oemig seconds).

VII. Commission on Aging Policymakers Gathering & WAAN Aging Advocacy Day (Information & Discussion)

The Commission on Aging and Advocacy Committee is hosting a policymakers gathering on May 24th at 3:30 p.m. at Washington Park senior center. Chair

Moeser and Commissioner Griffith discussed details of the event including the agenda, invitation list, and other event details.

Director Idzikowski also discussed the WAAN Aging Advocacy Day on May 9th. Registration for the event is now closed. Anyone still wanting to attend would need to make a special request as soon as possible. Additionally, any individual wanting to take the group transportation needs to reach out right away so arrangements can be made.

VIII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities (Inform.)

a. WAAN Aging Advocacy Day - Tuesday, May 9th

IX. Adjournment: Meeting Adjourned at 4:25pm (Jackson, T.R. Edwards second)