



Milwaukee County Department on Aging Advocacy Committee April 2, 2018

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on March 5, 2018 at the Marcia Coggs Building, 1220 West Vliet Street, Room 104, Milwaukee, WI 53212 in Room 104.

Commissioners Present

Fred Kneuppel
Bettie Rodgers

Commissioners Excused

Gwen Jackson – Commissioner Emeritus

Advocacy Members Present

Barbara Bechtel
Tom Frazier
John Griffith
Bob Haase
Tim Harrington
David Hoffman
Dain Maddox
Gary Mikolajczyk
Dr. Elliott Moeser
Judith Troestler

Advocacy Members Excused:

Casper Green

Milwaukee County Staff Present

Andy Bethke
Bashir Easter
Jon Janowski
Jill Klecha
Ayame Metzger
Carmen Pangilinan

Guests Present

Tom Gossett- Goodwill
Mike Helbick- Office of Senator Baldwin
Tammy Keen- Hunger Task Force
Deborah Lewis- Senior Ambassador
David Pifer- Legal Action
Stephanie Sue Stein- League of Progressive Seniors

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fred Kneuppel called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Mr. Haase asked to add an election of Vice-Chair to the agenda. Mr. Kneuppel agreed to add the election to the agenda and thanked Mr. Haase for his service as Chair. Mr. Mikolajczyk asked Mr. Kneuppel to explain how it came to be

that he was serving as Chair. Mr. Knueppel explained that former Commission on Aging Chair Sylvan Leabman asked him to be the Chair of the Advocacy Committee. Mr. Leabman resigned and Ms. Barbara Wyatt-Sibley was elected Chair and has decided to continue with Mr. Leabman's appointments. Mr. Mikolajczyk asked what this does to the election which took place at the Advocacy Committee in January. Mr. Knueppel stated that Ms. Wyatt-Sibley's appointments stand and since Mr. Haase is no longer a Commissioner he cannot serve as Chair.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MONDAY, MARCH 5, 2018
MOTION: Approve the March 5, 2018 minutes.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Bechtel moved, Harrington seconded)

III. INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM- UPDATE ON SENIOR CENTER ASSESSMENT PROJECT, HOLLY DAVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MCDA

Ms. Davis provided an update to the Committee regarding the last Performance Management meeting where she was asked to update them on the status of the project. Ms. Davis stated that all agree they must be very deliberate and cautious throughout this planning phase. She shared a report with the group. Please see attached update for more details of Ms. Davis's report. Once MCDA satisfies the requirements of the Performance Management group they can move onto identifying a private contractor to engage in a strategic planning process.

The Committee asked some follow up questions and asked for some clarification on some items:

- Mr. Frazier asked how MCDA will select a contractor. Ms. Davis indicated a proposal will go out and she is looking for someone with experience in senior center planning.
- Ms. Bechtel asked for clarification regarding who makes up the Performance Management (PM) Committee. Ms. Davis explained that each Department has to create performance management goals and senior centers is one of MCDA's goal areas. Ms. Roberta Drews and Ms. Sarah McLaughlin lead the PM efforts. Ms. Bechtel asked if there was funding available. Ms. Davis stated there is funding available through the Department of Administrative Services for the strategic planning process. Ms. Bechtel asked if the Committee could make recommendation to increase staff to increase capacity for the project. Ms. Davis stated that she feels it is under control and working right now. She also stated she plans to approach foundations in the future.
- Mr. Griffith asked if alternative funding sources were being pursued such as endowments, naming rights, working with other departments. Ms. Davis stated she has been doing visioning around this and we need to figure out where we are going before asking for money. Mr. Knueppel echoed the fact that foundations want to see a good plan before handing out money and there will be more budget cuts from the county in the future.
- Mr. Haase stated that since there are no foundation funds available at this time, it makes sense to pursue the \$200,000 in the contingency fund for senior centers. He recommended sending a letter to County Executive Abele asking for the funds to be released. Ms. Pangilinan referred the Committee to the letter that was sent out with the agenda and provided all members with a hard copy of the letter.

- Mr. Hoffman stated that he thinks it is premature to cut funding to senior centers prior to developing a plan about what should be done with them.
- Mr. Kneuppel asked for clarification about what is happening with the \$200,000 and stated he did not think it was in a contingency fund. Ms. Davis clarified that indeed it is in a contingency fund and MCDA is allowed to go back and ask for the dollars. Mr. Kneuppel asked if the funds could be used for something other than the Unison contract. Ms. Davis said that it is possible but ideally it would go to Unison, ultimately it is up to the Board.
- Mr. Maddox provided some further clarification about the \$200,000. Unison's contract was cut by \$200,000 and developed its programming based upon that cut. The money was restored into a contingency fund, but Unison has to operate with \$200,000 less by cutting staff. One third of the funds in the contract are needed for utilities, so the impact of the cut to staff was huge. MCDA has to answer two questions: could MCDA provide the services? Could another agency provide the services? Ms. Davis's written report states that MCDA running the senior centers would cost considerably more. Ms. Davis's letter of 3/31 states that the centers are in a dire situation, why are we not asking for the \$200,000.
- Ms. Davis stated that MCDA is entering into a Request for Information (RFI) process through Procurement to see if any other vendors could provide the services. So as of right now there is no other agency to provide the services. There were staff cuts at Unison and they indicate that all is functioning well even with the cuts. MCDA staff are visiting the centers and asking for feedback from participants. The money in the contingency may be able to be used for facilities, but she is not sure. There are many updates that need to be made to the centers and all will be in poor condition within the next five years. There are options, but Ms. Davis needs to sit down with Unison's executive director to talk further.
- Mr. Kneuppel noted that the letter in consideration states the Committee will work with Unison to develop a budget to use the money. Mr. Kneuppel suggested asking for the money on our own and use it for our own purposes since Unison states they are getting along without the funds.
- Mr. Maddox stated he feels Unison is in an uncomfortable position where they have to appease the County and may not want to talk about their struggles. Mr. Maddox questions how much time has really been spent talking to seniors about these issues as he is hearing complaints and concerns when out in the community.
- Mr. Frazier stated that this has been a confusing situation and we are talking about long-range planning and haven't done a big evaluation to say that Unison is not doing its job. The County Executive proposed the cut, the Department had to tell Unison there was \$200,000 less available in their senior center contract, and the Board said they restored it, but did so in a contingency report pending the report. The report asked if MCDA or another agency could provide the services. These questions have been answered. The Board feels they championed the senior centers, but the money still sits there. The letter asks the County Executive for the money back since he made the original cut. It's asking him to reconsider and to ask his staff to work with Unison to come up with a budget. It's asking him if older people are really a priority.

- Mr. Mikolajczyk stated that the Committee has an obligation to be advocates and would be expected to advocate for this money.
- Mr. Moeser asked Ms. Davis to succinctly state the purpose of the senior center project. Ms. Davis replied that knowing the infrastructure of the senior centers is bad, it is to lay the groundwork of what is out there, what's going on and what we really need. The buildings are a problem. The cut was result of need to make cuts for tax levy purposes. These are two different issues. Mr. Moeser referred to a memo written by Ms. Davis on February 14, 2018 which indicates that Unison is managing the budget cut with minimal impact. Mr. Moeser states he feels this means there is no crisis based upon what is in the memo. Mr. Moeser questioned whether the Committee should write a letter asking for the funding given what is stated in the memo.
- Mr. Knueppel stated he didn't want to hear long speeches from members and in the future may limit members' comments to two minutes until all may be heard.
- Mr. Griffith asked for an amendment to the motion by copying the County Board.

MOTION: Send a letter to the County Executive and copy the County Board of Supervisors asking for release of the \$200,000.

ACTION: Motion carried 10-1 (Haase moved, Mikolajczyk seconded); 1-Nay (Moeser)

- Mr. Maddox had follow up questions and suggestions about the study. Specifically, what is the timeline? Ms. Davis stated she wanted to move things forward quickly. Will meet with PM within two weeks and the RFI will go out within two weeks. Ms. Davis stated she does not feel there will be an answer to what is happening with senior centers by the end of 2018 and this will be a long-term process. Mr. Maddox requested that Committee members have the opportunity to have input into the RFP process for the strategic planning partner as well as input into how the study moves along.
- Mr. Hoffman also noted that the Advisory Council should be involved in the planning related to senior centers as this is part of their area of responsibility.

IV. INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM- INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM – Federal and State Legislative Update and Overview of State Shared Revenue Policy, Eric Peterson, Office of the County Executive

Mr. Peterson did not appear at the meeting nor did he send any materials for the Committee to review so no information was shared.

V. INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM- FEDERAL UPDATES ON AGING ISSUES

Mr. Helbick stated the Omnibus budget ended up being much more favorable towards older adults than anticipated. There was also an increase for Social Security to improve their technology. Medicare Part D donut hole to be closed by 2019 versus 2020. \$668 million for senior housing

represents an increase. And increased funding for CDBG was a happy turn of events. The 2019 budget will be the next focus.

VI. MILWAUKEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT ON AGING UPDATES

Ms. Pangilinan shared some opportunities with the group:

- Election being held tomorrow, please remember to vote.
- Area Plan Public Hearings coming up on April 30 from 1:30-3:30pm at Wilson Park Senior Center and May 22 from 9:30-11:00am at Clinton Rose Senior Center. Please come and share your thoughts on proposed goals for the Area Plan.
- Aging Advocacy Day is May 16. Remember to sign up!
- Wisconsin Dental Association Mission of Mercy, two days of free dental care June 22 and 23 in West Allis.
- Welcome to Medicare events this year. Monday, May 14 from 1:30-3:30pm at Washington Park Senior Center and Wednesday, August 22 from 1:30-3:30pm at Wilson Park Senior Center.
- Senior Statesman Program coming up on April 24.

VII. ADVOCACY COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS

- Wisconsin Labor History Society is holding its annual conference on April 7, 2018.
- Mr. Frazier encouraged everyone to become familiar with Common Cause in Wisconsin. It focuses on voting rights, gerrymandering, voter ID and other related issues. He encouraged people to become members.
- Mr. Harrington updated the group that the Uniform Guardianship and the Awareness Grants bills will be signed tomorrow and Supported Decision Making will be signed soon. Federal funding increased for Alzheimer's research as well.
- Mr. John Griffith stated that Westlawn and Ravenswood have received awards for development of their neighborhoods. Mr. Griffith noted that he would like to give a presentation to the Committee about the LGBT Center as well. And he suggested sending letters to state candidates to ask what their plan is to increase shared revenue. Ms. Pangilinan stated that efforts will continue to get Eric Peterson from the County Executive's office at a meeting to share more information about this issue with the group.

VIII. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Mr. Haase was nominated by Mr. Mikolajczyk. Mr. Haase accepted the nomination.

MOTION: To approve of Mr. Haase as Vice-Chair.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 PM. **Next meeting will be held on Monday, May 7 at 1:30pm at 1220 W. Vliet Street, Room 104.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Carmen Pangilinan".

**Carmen Pangilinan
Program and Policy Coordinator**