



**Milwaukee County Department on Aging
Advocacy Committee
November 6, 2017**

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on November 6, 2017 at Marcia Coggs Human Services, 1220 West Vliet Street, Milwaukee, WI 53205 in Conference Room 104.

Commissioners Present

Bob Haase
Gary Mikolajczyk
Bettie Rodgers

Commissioners Excused

Gwen Jackson – Commissioner Emeritus
Fred Kneuppel

Advocacy Members Present

Barbara Bechtel
David Hoffman
Tom Frazier
Dr. Elliott Moeser
Judith Troestler
Marissa Burns
Dain Maddox
Tim Harrington

Advocacy Members Excused:

Jean Davidson
Casper Green

Milwaukee County Staff Present

Carmen Pangilinan
Holly Davis
Andy Bethke
Jill Klecha

Guests Present

Bill Meunier – SDC
John Griffith – Milwaukee LGBT Community Center
Stephanie Stein – Advocate
Pat Dunn – State Aging Advisory Council
Tom Gossett- Goodwill
Martha Collins- Hunger Task Force
Eric Peterson- County Executive’s Office
Jesse Barnes- UAW Retiree

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bob Haase called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017

MOTION: Approve the October 2, 2017 meeting minutes

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Hoffman moved, Mikolajczyk seconded)

III. INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM – MOTION REFERRED BY COMMISSION ON AGING AT SEPTEMBER 29, 2017 MEETING, “HELEN’S WISH”, FRED KNUEPPEL

Due to Mr. Knueppel’s absence from the meeting, this item was not covered.

IV. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM, UPDATE ON SENIOR CENTER MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE, JON JANOWSKI, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION, MCDA

Mr. Janowski was out ill and was not available to present at the meeting. However, he did provide Ms. Pangilinan with information to share with the Committee regarding the senior center modernization initiative:

- About 90 people participated and a lot of good ideas were shared.
- Jill Klecha and Lorie O’Connor compiled the information which will be used to send an update to the all session participants. The update will include all major themes/feedback points shared by the participants.
- Mr. Janowski will complete a PowerPoint for the Performance Management session with the County Executive’s office which is scheduled for the first week in December.
- The PowerPoint can be shared with participants after it is presented at the Performance Management session.
- Ms. Pangilinan informed the group that they can sign up to be added to the input session database to receive updates. Ms. Pangilinan asked the group to contact her directly to be added to the list.

There were questions about the timeline moving forward. Ms. Davis explained figuring out what to do with the senior centers is one of MCDA’s Performance Management goals and a facilities report was completed on the physical state of the buildings. Ms. Davis added that now that the facilities evaluation has been completed, and some public input has been gathered, all of that information will be compiled to be presented at the Performance Management meeting and then will get shared with the Commission on Aging and Advocacy Committee shortly thereafter. There will be a formalized strategic planning process around senior centers which will begin next year. Ms. Davis noted that there may or may not be funds available from the Department of Administrative Services to hire an outside consultant to assist with this process. David Hoffman noted that he believes there are retired consultants who may be willing to take on a project like this on a pro bono basis because they will see it as a way to serve the community.

V. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM, UPDATE ON COUNTY BUDGET, HOLLY DAVIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MCDA

Ms. Davis informed the group that the County Board of Supervisors adopted a budget earlier in the day. Ms. Davis explained the amendments that passed which directly impact the Department on Aging:

- Chairman Lipscomb's Super Amendment which called for a .75% decrease across the board for all departments. This translates into an additional \$105,000 cut to MCDA.
- Supervisor Steve Taylor and Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic's amendment which initially put \$130,000 in a contingency fund for the Department. This contingency takes that amount off of Interfaith's Senior Center contract and limits the contract with Interfaith to five months (through June 1, 2018). This amendment also requires programming at all five County owned senior centers five days a week.
- Supervisor Steve Taylor and Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic adjusted the amendment to increase the amount from \$130,000 to \$200,000 for the contingency fund for the Department. Senior Centers will continue to be required to provide programming at all five centers five days a week and the contract will only be guaranteed through June 1, 2018.

The group entered into a lengthy discussion about their concerns related to the contingency fund and the limited contract with Interfaith. The group was questioning why the amendment to restore senior center funding was written the way it was since there have been no prior issues with Interfaith.

MOTION: To request that the Commission on Aging invite Supervisor Steve Taylor and Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic to have a discussion to find out why it is they included the contingencies in the amendments related to senior center funding.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Moeser moved, Rodgers seconded)

Further discussion took place about how the Service Delivery Committee contract recommendations are going to the Commission on Aging on Friday, November 10, 2017. Many in the group stated that they would like to see any issues with Interfaith and the senior center contract resolved sooner rather than later.

MOTION: Given the longstanding and positive relationship between MCDA and Interfaith, the Advocacy Committee requests that the Commission on Aging do everything possible to find out what, if any, issues there are with Interfaith and the senior center contract, resolve the issues, and have the contingencies removed from the contract.

ACTION: Motion carried 10-1 (Frazier moved, Mikolajczyk seconded, Rodgers abstained)

VI. INFORMATIONAL AND ACTION ITEM – MIKE HELBICK, OFFICE OF SENATOR TAMMY BALDWIN

Mr. Helbick was out ill, but provided Ms. Pangilinan with the following federal updates to share with the group:

- The FY 2018 budget resolution reduces Medicare and Medicaid to help pay for tax reform.

- The budget cuts Medicaid by \$1 trillion over ten years and would cut Medicare by more than \$470 billion.
- Senator Baldwin supported an amendment to the budget that would have reversed the cuts to Medicare. The amendment failed
- Senator Baldwin introduced an amendment that would ensure the tax reform bill does not add to the deficit. The amendment failed.

The House bill includes some items that impact older adults:

- The House bill includes the elimination of the deduction for medical expenses. This currently applies to taxpayers, spouses, or other dependents with health expenses that exceed a tenth of the taxpayer's income.
- Repeal of the tax credit that drug companies use to perform clinical testing for drugs that treat rare diseases. This could mean that drug companies will have little incentive to invest in drugs that help small patient populations.
- The House Republicans released their tax reform bill on Thursday, November 2 and will mark it up in Committee this week. It is anticipated that after that, Senate Republicans will introduce their bill. President Trump has stated he wants to sign a bill by Christmas.

Tom Frazier added some additional information about federal issues:

- Mr. Frazier stated that after the repeal of the ACA failed, the plan has shifted to pass huge tax cuts to add \$1.5 trillion to the deficit. The next step may be to say this is unsustainable and huge cuts to Medicare, Medicaid and non-defense discretionary funding are needed.
- For Older Americans Act and related programs there are two big areas of proposed cuts; Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) cut by \$34.4 million and State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) cut by \$5 million. Most other OAA programs are proposed to be level funded with a few areas with small increases.

MOTION: To email federal representatives who represent Milwaukee County to express opposition to cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Hoffman moved, Frazier seconded)

VII. MILWAUKEE COUNTY DEPARTMENT ON AGING (MCDA) UPDATES

No updates were provided.

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

- Eric Peterson added that the tax reform bill will be marked up this week and Congress wants to have the votes done by Thanksgiving. There is a provision in the tax reform bill which affects private activity bonding. Locally this pays for bonding at the airport, Marcus Center, Charles Allis Museum and others, which means all of

that bonding would be repealed. This would cause the cost of the County debt service to rise as a result.

- Mr. Peterson also discussed a bill in the state legislature related to sanctuary cities. If the bill passes a judge could construe that Milwaukee County is a sanctuary city, even though the federal government has said we are not, and it would cost a maximum of \$1.8 million in shared revenue per year.
- John Griffith made an observation that the advocacy of the group needs to be taken farther into the community and suggested partnering with other Commissions on Aging from neighboring counties. Mr. Griffith also suggested engaging elected officials by hosting a public official's reception, possibly in partnership with another agency. He also suggested inviting a representative from Rep. Sensenbrenner's office to attend advocacy meetings in the future.
- Bill Meunier echoed Mr. Griffith's statements that more outreach is needed in the community to educate older adults about the issues which affect them.
- Ms. Pangilinan announced to the group that MCDA will be holding the senior statesman program on April 24, 2018 to try to engage and train new advocates. She encouraged the group to give her names of potential participants. Invitations will go out in 2018.
- Ms. Pangilinan directed the group to see the listing in their folders of Alzheimer's and caregiver bills proposed by Rep. Ken Skowronski.

MOTION: To write a letter of support for Representative Skowronski's Alzheimer's and caregiver package of bills.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Hoffman moved, Haase seconded)

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:02 PM. Motion for adjournment was moved by Hoffman and seconded by Bechtel. Motion carried unanimously. **The Advocacy Committee does not meet in December. See you in 2018!**

Respectfully submitted,



**Carmen Pangilinan
Program and Policy Coordinator**