



The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging *Advocacy Committee* held its monthly meeting on February 4, 2019 at the Marcia Coggs Building, 1220 West Vliet Street, Room 104, Milwaukee, WI 53212 in Room 104.

Commissioners Present

Barbara Wyatt Sibley
Fred Knueppel

Committee Members Present

Sharon Abston Coleman, PhD
Barbara Bechtel
Tom Frazier
Casper Green
Bob Haase
Tim Harrington
David Hoffman
Gary Mikolajczyk
Elliott Moeser
Judith Troestler

Committee Members Excused

John Griffith
Johnny White

Milwaukee County Staff Present

Holly Davis, MCDA Executive Director
Jon Janowski, MCDA Director of Administration

Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Program & Policy Coordinator
Jill Knight, MCDA Program Coordinator
Andy Bethke, MCDA Human Service Worker - Outreach

Guests Present

Sen. Tim Carpenter, State Senate District 3
Christie Carter, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center
Tom Gossett, Goodwill
Cathy Healey, Neighborhood Outreach Program
Matt McGovern, County Executive Government Affairs Liaison
Shannon Meagher, Neighborhood Outreach Program
Harold Oemig

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fred Knueppel called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. Each Committee member introduced themselves.

I. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM January 7, 2019

MOTION: Approve the January 7, 2019 Committee minutes.

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

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Cathy Healy with the Neighborhood Outreach Program spoke. This program serves 112,000 adults through peer accompaniment, companionship, and personal advocacy. The program voted to disaffiliate with UNISON and are looking for a new partner. The goal of the program is to keep older adults from feeling isolated.

Gary Mikolajczyk asked who is the Commission on Aging's legislative representative? Commission chair Wyatt Sibley reviewed Milwaukee County Ordinance 53.03: COA consists of 16 members with at least 8 senior citizens – 4 from suburbs, 4 from City of Milwaukee & 1 County Board Supervisor. Commission shall elect a legislative officer. The LO has been the chair of the Advocacy Commission in the past. The COA is revising bylaws and will revisit this question.

III. ACTION: REVIEW and ADOPTION of 2019 COA Advocacy Committee Policy Priorities

Dan Idzikowski, the new Program and Policy Coordinator at the Milwaukee County Department of Aging, introduced himself.

The Committee proceed to review the draft of the 2019 Advocacy Committee's 2019 Public Policy Positions and List of Priorities. Fred noted that most of the items were continuations of positions taken in the past and that the Committee may wish to affirm those positions.

Discussion on possible priority issues for consideration:

1) Elderly SNAP simplified application process

The federal USDA Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) has a demonstration grant program that allows states to reduce the administrative burden to enroll adults 60+ in FoodShare (SNAP). This would reduce the application to 2 pages, eliminate the necessity of annual in-person re-certification interviews, and simplify the verification process. States need to seek a waiver to operate the program and there is added administrative burden on states to track applications using the simplified format vs. the traditional enrollment format, and to report on increases in enrollment and program quality.

A question was asked about states currently participating, Answer: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington. There was discussion about why Wisconsin had not applied, probably due to focus of program in Wisconsin and added administrative burden on state agency.

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging encourages the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to apply for the necessary waivers to operate a SNAP Elderly Simplified Application Process.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Haase moves, Mikolajczyk seconded).

2) Long Term Investment Savings plan

WAAN has supported creating a long-term care investment saving program similar to EdVest in Wisconsin. This would allow individuals to invest funds pre-tax in mutual funds to save for long term care needs.

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging support the establishment of a state tax-advantaged long-term care investment savings plan program.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously Haase moves, Hoffman seconded.

3) Medicaid Expansion

Tom Frazier alerted the Committee that, with the Governor's support, there was now an opening to consider accepting Medicaid expansion funding in Wisconsin under the Affordable Care Act. Frazier noted that accepting federal Medicaid expansion funds would add hundreds of millions of dollars to the state Medicaid budget because of the enhanced 90% federal match on state Medicaid spending that accompanies accepting expansion (Wisconsin's current federal match is 58.5%). If the state were to expand Medicaid to cover adults earning up to 138 percent of the poverty level, the federal government would pay 94 percent (in 2018, dropping to 90 percent by 2020) of the cost of covering able-bodied, childless adults. For purposes of enhancing the budget and ensuring that more individuals have access to coverage, Frazier believed the Committee should make a strong affirmative statement encouraging the State to pursue a waiver to accept the Medicaid expansion funding.

Moeser asked how this would help seniors, since the expansion dollars are tied to expanding income limits for childless non-elderly adults. Frazier replied that the additional federal funding would free up almost \$300 million dollars that could be used for other purposes, particularly for publicly funded long-term care & supports that constitutes nearly half of Wisconsin's current Medicaid budget.

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging support Medicaid expansion in the State of Wisconsin and accept full Medicaid expansion funding from the federal government available under the Affordable Care Act in order to free up additional Medicaid funding for long term care.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously. (Frazier moves, Mikolajczyk seconded).

Mr. Knueppel noted that there were updates on all the other items in the existing public policy document. Mr. Mikolajczyk thought the Committee should reaffirm the rest of these priorities.

MOTION: That the Milwaukee County COA accept the 2019 Public Policy Positions and list of Priorities as amended.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously (Mikolajczyk moves, Frazier seconded).

Mr. Hoffman noted that the Commission was awaiting a report from the Public Policy Forum on the future of the senior centers. He asked about whether there was going to be a

discussion about protecting the Senior Centers as stated in the local priorities section. Commission Chair Wyatt Sibley responded that the Commission needed more detail regarding what the Committee meant by “Protect the Senior Centers” and the other local priorities, since these positions were not elaborated in the current document.

MOTION: That the Program and Policy Coordinator draft expanded advocacy statements for each of the “local” issues in the 2019 Public Policy Positions and List of Priorities for consideration at the March Advocacy Committee meeting.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously. (Knueppel moves, Hoffman seconded.)

IV. INFORMATIONAL: LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

A. Milwaukee County Fair Deal Workgroup

After being recognized by Chair Knueppel, Matt McGovern, the County Executive’s Government Relations Liaison, summarized work of Milwaukee County’s Fair Deal Workgroup jointly chaired by the County Executive and County Board Chairman. Mr. McGovern noted that the Committee was finalizing its recommendations, which will be passed along to the County Board’s Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and eventually the full County Board. The Committee conducted research on other jurisdiction approaches to shared revenue. The main ideas are:

- Milwaukee County should gain back local control to raise revenues – (adopt the Pittsburgh model: penny sales tax, county & municipal split + set aside for capital projects). This would be accompanied by some reduction in property tax. Allow local referendum.
- Shared revenue programs Community Aids, Youth Aids, etc. have been flat. Ask that these shared revenue sources grow by inflation each year, and not offset by other revenues.
- Milwaukee County to receive full reimbursement for patrol of state highways.
- Courts: 80% of court fees go to state. Make it a 50/50% split with counties.
- Add Medicaid Expansion – help with retirees.
- Youth Justice facility expansion: include sufficient ongoing operational funding for quality programming and not just capital funding to build a new facility.

Much discussion ensued. The Committee members expressed general support for returning local control of revenue mechanism to Milwaukee County. Committee will await a full report and action by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the County Board.

B. State Budget Process & Engagement

Upon recognition by Chair Knueppel, Dan Idzikowski noted that with a new Administration, the biennial budget process has been extended as the new Governor reviews all the Department’s budget requests and formulates a new state budget. He noted that now is the time for the Committee to advocate with the Governor’s office – identify senior needs and priorities.

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Tom Frazier noted that Governor Evers did not mention senior issues in State of the State address. There is growing concern that with the Governor's focus on children, the Governor is not paying attention to senior issues or to Long Term Care.

Mr. Moeser suggested a meeting with the DOA Secretary, since DOA produces the Administration's budget. Idzikowski noted that WAAN was facilitating some meetings with the Administration and he would check to see if a meeting with the DOA Secretary was planned.

Tom Frazier notes that Senator Tim Carpenter is present and asked Sen. Carpenter what would be the most effective avenue to advocate on the budget at this juncture? Sen. Carpenter replies that the Committee can draft a letter from the Commission on Aging with the Committee's budget priorities and he will incorporate into his ask to the Governor's office.

Committee discussion followed. There was general consensus that a letter should be addressed to the Governor and Lt. Governor and copied to the entire Milwaukee County state legislative delegation regarding our Milwaukee County Commission on Aging budget priorities. Sen. Carpenter, and perhaps other Milwaukee area legislators, could then incorporate these priorities into their asks to the Governor and in formulation of any alternative budget by the legislature. Mr. Frazier suggested that the Committee then follow-up with a meeting with the Lt. Governor here in Milwaukee.

MOTION: That the Program and Policy Coordinator draft a letter to the Governor, Lt. Governor and members of the state legislature from Milwaukee County outlining the state budget priorities of the Advocacy Committee on behalf of Milwaukee County seniors.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously (Frazier moves, Hoffman seconds).

V. DISCUSSION: 2019 MEETING LOCATIONS & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Chair Knueppel indicates that he would like to hold an April or May Committee meeting at Clinton Rose on MLK Drive and a future meeting at Kelly Senior Center. Discussion: Why would we move? Knueppel replied that we would gain community involvement and hear from different voices. Lots of seniors don't know about the Commission on Aging. We need to plan for the future. Accessibility at Coggs is also a concern.

VI. INFORMATIONAL: ADVOCACY COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS

Chair Knueppel announced that the WAAN Aging Advocacy Day would be held on Tuesday, May 14th at the Capitol in Madison. He hoped that all Committee members would be able to attend. Registration begins on February 26th.

Tim Harrington noted that Alzheimer's Advocacy Day would be held Tuesday, February 19th at the state Capitol.

Tom Frazier reminded the Committee that he serves as co-chair of the Long-Term Care Coalition. The Coalition recently met and decided to focus on two main issues this budget cycle: 1) Caregiver workforce crisis; and 2) FamilyCare/IRIS waiver renewal (up this year), while monitoring two other issues: Medicaid expansion & transportation.

VII. DISCUSSION: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS and MEETING DATES

Meeting dates are listed in the Committee packet. Provide Chair Knueppel with future agenda items by February 12th.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM. Next meeting will be held on Monday, March 4th at 1:30pm at 1220 W. Vliet Street, Room 104.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Idzikowski

Daniel Idzikowski
Program and Policy Coordinator