



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

Commission on Aging
Advocacy Committee

Minutes – April 1, 2019

The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging *Advocacy Committee* held its monthly meeting on March 4, 2019 at the Clinton Rose Senior Center, 3045 N. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street, Milwaukee.

Commissioners Present

Barbara Wyatt Sibley
Fred Knueppel

Tim Harrington
Elliott Moeser
Judith Troestler

Committee Members Present

Sharon Abston Coleman, PhD
John Griffith
Jason Haas
Bob Haase
David Hoffman
Gary Mikolajczyk

Milwaukee County Staff Present

Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Policy Coordinator
Beth M. Zatarski, MCDA Program Coord.
Andy Bethke, MCDA - Outreach

Guests Present

Rosie Caradine-Lewis
Christie Karter, LGBT Center
Pat Dunn, SAAC
Vivette Hill-Nwagbarascha, SOA
Shannon McCoy, Sen. LaTonya Johnson
Alyna Romain, LGBT Center

Committee Members Excused

Barbara Bechtel
Tom Frazier
Casper Green

I. CALL TO ORDER

Fred Knueppel called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM followed by roll call.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

One public comment was made reminding participants to vote the next day on April 2, 2019 and that Clinton Rose was a polling site.

Another member of the public suggested that the Commission on Aging put the AAA Area Plan on the website and reach out to those who had participated in hearings to develop the plan to present the survey results and the final plan. She also commented that in the feedback sessions on the last County budget, she felt the County Executive was leading to participants to a particular conclusion regarding the wheel tax, rather than seeking open feedback.

III. REVIEW /APPROVAL OF MAR 4, 2019 COMMITTEE MINUTES

MOTION: Approve the March 4, 2019 Committee minutes.

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

IV. VOTING AWARENESS, REGISTRATION & ACCESSIBILITY

Idzikowski pointed out that the packets contained information about the Special Voting Deputy programs. Idzikowski asked Committee members to review this information and consider reaching out to their local municipal clerk's office to determine the need for Special Voting Deputies in their municipality. Special Voting Deputies assist individuals who are homebound or live in residential care centers to register to vote and to vote by absentee ballot. This might be a good way that Committee members can become actively engaged in voting rights advocacy for seniors in Milwaukee County.

V. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES

Idzikowski noted that the Wisconsin Congressional delegation had sent a letter to CMS requesting that they approve a 10-year extension of the SeniorCare program. Information on the President's budget and the Older American's Act reauthorization was also included in the packet for reference.

Jason Haas noted that the County Board will hold budget hearings in October and that right now Departments are preparing their budget requests. In the past few years all Departments had to cut their budgets to avoid a wheel tax. The County is required by state law to have a balanced budget. Knueppel asked if the County would make the online budget balancing webtool available again – Haas believed they had good participation and would offer this tool to the public again.

VI. STATE BUDGET PROCESS & ENGAGEMENT

Chair Knueppel noted that the Committee had adopted 2019-21 state budget priorities at the February meeting. The Joint Committee on Finance has now scheduled hearings on the Governor's Executive Budget, including a hearing in Oak Creek on Wednesday, April 10th. Idzikowski asked the Committee to discuss and rank their priorities, so that the Commission could highlight 3-4 main issues in oral testimony at the JCF hearing. Discussion ensued, and the Committee agreed to highlight the following issues:

- Direct care workforce
- Family caregiving
- Transportation
- Shared Revenues/ Fair Deal

The Committee polled members and Commission Chair Wyatt Sibley, Committee Chair Knueppel, Griffith, Haase, Hoffman, and Mikolajczyk indicated they would come to the hearing to testify. Idzikowski will prepare remarks for the Commissioners, submit written testimony including the full budget priorities, and register them as a group. Members who are present, but not testifying can stand in support. All agreed to this plan.

Idzikowski noted that he will be delivering a series of five informational presentations across the County on the Wisconsin State budget and issues of interest to seniors. Members were reminded that this will likely be a long process this year, given divided government, and that there will be many opportunities to advocate along the way. Bechtel noted that she has a good relationship with Senator Darling and will continue to develop that connection for advocacy on the state budget.

VII. MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Commission Chair Wyatt-Sibley mentioned that she would like to see a representative from every Assembly District in Milwaukee County on this Committee. Need to increase our relationship with our legislators. When they are doing a good job, tell them that. When not, hold them accountable. People have to become active and build relationships with their legislator, not just serve on a committee. Another Committee member noted that is a wonderful strategy, but we don't necessarily need someone from every assembly district on this committee.

Also there are 5 Commissioners terming off in January. Need to recruit new Commissioners – and have representation that reflects Milwaukee County. We need to build a Commission that is effective and willing to work.

Commissioner Knueppel mentions that the Commission plays an oversight role. The Commission and the Committees worked with staff to ensure that all services continued, for example, when Unison contracts ended.

Staff are to be commended for their extraordinary work in keeping the Senior Centers operative and other programs functioning during this winter's transition.

MOTION: Commend MCDA staff for exemplary service beyond the call of duty during the winter of 2018 -2019 to maintain MCDA's commitment to serve Milwaukee County seniors through the Senior Centers and other programming.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Griffith moved, Haase seconded).

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS & ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- Senior Statesman Program (April 24-26th)
Idzikowski again encouraged participation in the Senior Statesman program.
- Aging Advocacy Day (May 14th)
Commission Chair Wyatt Sibley mentions that the Wisconsin Policy Forum gave a presentation on the future of Senior Centers in Milwaukee County, comparing data from other jurisdictions. The Policy Forum's final report is due in 2 weeks. This report will spark a series of questions – How do we move forward as a Commission in light of findings? The Commission will likely focus its May meeting on this topic and Wyatt Sibley encouraged everyone to read and consider the final report when it is released.

IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & MEETING DATES

Griffith indicated that Judge Pedro Colon offered to speak to the Committee – perhaps he could speak at the next meeting about older adult guardianship and elder abuse. Idzikowski will invite Judge Colon to the next meeting.

Knueppel reminded members to forward items they wished to consider on the next agenda by e-mail within two weeks of this meeting.

X. ADJOURN

MOTION: Adjourn meeting until May 6, 2019.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Griffith moved, Abston-Coleman seconded).