



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes
June 3, 2019**

The Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, June 3, 2019, at the Wilson Park Senior Center, 2601 W. Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53221.

Attendance was taken and documented by written sheet.

Committee Members Present:

Commissioner **Fred Knueppel**, Chair
Commissioner **Sharon Abston Coleman**, PhD
Barbara Bechtel
Tom Frazier
Casper Green
Commissioner **John Griffith**
Supervisor **Jason Haas**
Bob Haase
Tim Harrington
David Hoffman
Gary Mikolajczyk
Elliot Moeser

Commissioners Present:

Barbara Wyatt Sibley, Chair
Ron Byington
Jordon Lehr
Elizabeth Meyers Arnold
Bettie Rogers, JD

Staff Present:

Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Policy Coordinator
Jill Knight, MCDA Program Coord.
Andy Bethke, MCDA – Outreach

Attendees from the Public

Patricia Adams
Marianne Allen
Ted Allen
Mindy Anderson, SOA
Christie Carter, LGBT Center

Martha Collins, Hunger Task Force
Ann Cook
Kurosh Dejgoshia
Pat Dunn, SAAC
LaVerne Frycierski
Mike Helbach (Sen. Baldwin)
Delores Henry
Vivette Hill Nwagbaraocha, SOA
Ethel Hoff
Julie Jacobsen
Jan Kabat
Joan Kadow
Alice Steuck Knokel
Ken Kroll
Cynthia Laures
Elaine Leach
Dain Maddox
Rebecca Martinez
Anne Mercer (Rep. Moore)
Sherie Moore
Harold Oemig
Ellen Parr
Robert Quinn
Barbara Rea
Desiree Rembert
Charles Rush
Dennis Schwab
Shirley Sharp
Gary Sprong
Stephanie Sue Stein, LPS
John Shwitzer
Cathy Wood, SOA

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Knueppel called this meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Knueppel opened the meeting with an opportunity for members of the public to comment or ask questions. There were several questions regarding the role of the Committee which were answered by Knueppel.

Another member of the public posed questions about the Wilson Senior Center, including the condition of the building – and asked who is managing the facility. Notes that volunteers are often doing the repair work. Asks how budgets are determined Notes that SOA (Serving Older Adults, the agency contracted to run the Centers) is now a nonprofit. Asks who will help write grants and raise funds for capital improvement for the senior centers?

Haase and Knueppel notes that the shortfall in capital funding largely stems from the overall shortfall in revenues at the County, which is driven by the lack of shared revenue from the State of Wisconsin. Notes that minor repairs are the responsibility of the senior center vendor.

Idzikowski notes that the Advocacy Committee of the Commission on Aging takes positions on public policy matters, particularly legislation, on behalf of the older adult population in Milwaukee County.

The *Advisory Council* of the Commission on Aging is holding a public hearing on the future of the senior centers next week Monday at the United Way and encouraged participants to come and contribute to that discussion. Idzikowski noted that SOA has an advisory committee for each senior center and encouraged the questioner to participate in these SOA advisory committee meetings and bring any specific concerns about the senior centers to SOA staff.

Griffith discusses the structure of the Commission on Aging, invited people to come to the Commission meeting. Notes there are 16 members of the Commission, plus several committees and councils. This meeting is an attempt to better hear from the public and letting the public know about the structure of the Commission. Notes that all of the Commissioners and Committee members are volunteers are unpaid. Announces the next Commission meeting.

Frazier notes that there was some incorrect information in the question. Idzikowski notes that it is outside of the jurisdiction of the Committee to address issues related to these matters. Notes there is no one in currently in jail and there was no lost money recovered from Interfaith. Again states the Advisory Council will hold a series of hearings of on the future of the senior centers.

Another comment – have a meeting of the Commission on Aging in a public venue outside of Cogs and not have an agenda, just hear from people. Given an answer to the questions.

Moeser notes that this is a meeting, not a public hearing. Moeser notes that it is not necessary in a meeting to entertain public comments. The Chair has been generous to add that to the agenda. When committees hold public hearings, there is not an expectation for committee members to respond, rather, just to listen to public comments. Thanks the public members for expressing themselves to the Committee and asks them to refrain from debate.

Green notes that the time for public comment has passed and Knueppel closes public comment period at 1:59 p.m.

III. REVIEW /APPROVAL OF MAY 6, 2019 COMMITTEE MINUTES

MOTION: Approve the May 6, 2019 committee minutes.

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

Knueppel notes that the Commission on Aging is looking for new Commissioners and invites members of the public to apply for appointment by the County Executive.

IV. AAD / WAAN PRIORITIES: (Dementia Care Specialists, Specialized Transportation & Transit, Long Term Caregivers, Healthy Aging Grants, Caregiver Tax Credit, Elder Benefit Specialists) (Discussion / Action)

Fred introduces the WAAN priorities and mentions that the 2019 Aging Advocacy Day was a success with more than 300 participants discussing issues affecting elders with their state representatives. Idzikowski extrapolates on Aging Advocacy Day and commends Tom Frazier for help in securing Gov. Thompson for an inspiring opening to Aging Advocacy Day. Idzikowski points out that a handout from the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network lists the main issues addressed by the advocates at Aging Advocacy Day. Notes that tomorrow the Joint Committee on Finance will be voting on many of the matters listed as priorities on the WAAN handout. Encourages members of the public to participate by contacting members of the Joint Committee on Finance. Frazier reinforces.

Idzikowski references the letters that were sent by the Commission regarding a variety of legislative initiatives: supporting increase in Public Defender and County appointed counsel reimbursement; encouraging Medicaid expansion; opposing reduction in training requirement for Certified Nurse Aids and encouraging the closure of the “dark store” property tax loophole.

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Moeser commends Frazier on securing Governor Thompson for Aging Advocacy Day. Found the day helpful and informative. Moser notes he is disappointed that the Joint Committee on Finance has removed Medicaid expansion from consideration in the budget. Disappointed that WAAN did not make this one of the top priorities. Believes it is the number one issue. Casper notes that 82,000 would gain Medicaid coverage. Moeser notes that substantial funding will be lost that could help a lot of seniors with programs. Bechtel comments on the value of home and community-based services – particularly in helping to keep people in their homes.

Kneuppel takes a break from the agenda to introduce the members of the Commission.

V. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES (Information/Action)

- Federal Aging Policy Briefing
- State Legislative Issues
- 2019-21 Wisconsin State Budget
- Milwaukee County Legislative Issues

Idzikowski updates the Committee on matters that are not related to the state budget on which the Committee may wish to adopt a position.

- Requires the Social Security Administration to provide a 6-month period for public notice and comment prior to closure of SSA field offices.
- Mike Hebach from Senator Baldwin's office introduces himself. *Credit for Caring Act* – working non-refundable tax credit for expenses related to caregiving up to \$3000; *Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act* of 2019: allows full time caregivers to take a break from caregiving \$20m in 2020 to \$60m by 2024; \$3m in Alzheimer's research funding to NIH; Griffith asks about the proposed rule to remove protections from the ACA for people who identify as LGBTQ. Hebach responds Sen. Baldwin would oppose.
- *Older Americans Act* reauthorization. References 1-pager on OAA programs and encourages comments that would increase funding for these programs.
- Harrington notes *Younger Onset for Alzheimer's Act* – allows individuals with Alzheimer's who are younger than age 60 to qualify for OAA programming.
- *Mental Health Access Improvement Act* – allows Medicare to cover mental health counselors and marriage and family counselors;
- Proposed OMB rule to change the measure for inflation when adjusting various government programs eligibility, including the federal poverty measure; would likely reduce the number of individual's eligible for federal poverty measures;
- Proposed US DHHS rule to remove protections of people with LGBTQ under the Affordable Care Act and all other health programs. Griffith emphasizes that seniors who are LGBTQ who enter a care facility are likely to hide their status because they are 4x more likely to be abused.

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Kneuppel notes to the public that this is Committee meeting and public comments are limited.

Sup. Haas speaks to address Milwaukee County issues. Notes that a rumor has been spreading that the Milwaukee County Senior Centers are going to close. This is not the case, no Senior Center is going to close. The 2019 budget funded all senior centers. The 2020 County budget process is just beginning. We don't know yet what the administration is proposing, released usually in late September and hold hearings on the budget before the County Board in October. Welcomes people to attend the County Board meetings in the fall considering the budget. Every Department budget will be reduced, because County revenues are flat or shrinking and expenses continue to rise. Partnering with County Executive in "Fair Deal" initiative to lobby the state for additional resources. We will work hard to keep everything open, but right now, under the current budget, all the senior centers will remain open.

Idzikowski returns to discuss state legislative proposals:

- **2019 AB 217** Provides that an individual with a Medicare supplement policy could cancel the policy at any time. Only being considered in the Assembly.
- **2019 AB 247.** Absentee voting in special circumstances. Eliminates provisional ballot right for individuals who do not have proper ID at the time of voting. Technical correction to curbside voting; Makes it a felony not to deliver a marked ballot. Griffith notes that if you move to a residential care facility for more than 30 days, this may change your residency;
- **2019 SB 217** Diabetes care bill – asks DHS & DPI to study the incidence of diabetes and recommend a plan to address diabetes care in Wisconsin.
- **2019 SB 241** Voting registration. Allows use of certain ID receipts.
- **2019 SB 246** Allows an individual to be exempt from stating name & address to poll worker if unable to speak.
- **2019 SB 254** Bill allowing a nurse practitioner or Physician Assistant along with a physician to activate a POA or witness a DNR, rather than only two physicians.
- Wisconsin has drafted a FamilyCare waiver renewal application under Home and Community Based Services Medicaid for submission to CMS. Public comments open on Waiver App.

Frazier asks to be recognized to present a resolution under county legislation and distributes a paper copy of said resolution to the members of the Committee. Regarding senior centers, we are told that there is insufficient funding for aging programs and senior centers. Frazier states

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that senior centers are the backbone and cornerstone of aging programs in this community and should be more of a priority for our elected officials. Programming at the senior centers is high quality. Not the building, but the programs that are important. Despite the deferment of maintenance of the parks and buildings, programming has not been affected. Notes that the building assessment report states that the senior centers are in good condition and the best use is to continue to use them as senior centers. The Brewers stadium sales tax is coming to an end and could provide a source of funding dedicated to infrastructure in parks and senior centers.

Resolution asks the Commission on Aging to approve this "Resolution in Support of Increased Funding for Milwaukee County Parks, Including Senior Centers." Mikolajczyk moves. Seconded by Bechtel. Fred asks to table and move to Advisory Council. Discussion follows. Moeser notes that this resolution has been introduced without the Committee having time to analyze the resolution. Asks Frazier how to deal with the other counties included in the stadium tax. Frazier explains this would only affect the \$10 million that Milwaukee County pays. Mikolajczyk notes that Sen. Carpenter has already made a motion to end the tax because there is a \$22 million deferred maintenance fund accumulated.

Knueppel asks that this motion be moved to the Advisory Council because that Council is going to be considering the Young at Heart report and the future of senior centers.

Griffith states that this Committee can still consider this motion to support senior centers.

Moeser questions whether this is on the agenda. Notes this is a state issue, because a state sales tax applies to 5 counties including Milwaukee County. How are we going to deal with the other four counties? This is not contemplated. Usually a resolution is presented in a packet ahead of time for the members to consider, not at the last minute. The topic is a valid one for this Committee to consider, but this item isn't sufficiently vetted to consider at this meeting.

Frazier states that we can move forward because we are just making a recommendation to the Commission. The Advocacy Committee needs to state that there is money available if it is a priority for the County.

Haase states that it should be clarified that this only applies to Milwaukee County. Others agree that it should be specified. Consideration of the whereas clauses proceeds.

Kneuppel again states that this resolution should be presented to the Advisory Council.

Bechtel states that the whereas clauses identifies Milwaukee County sufficiently and states that there has been enough discussion and calls to close discussion and hold a vote on the motion.

Kneuppel denies cloture. Discussion will continue.

Knueppel asks if the Committee members have read the Young at Heart report.

Moeser states that the state of Wisconsin has not given Milwaukee County permission to raise its own funding. This is a state tax and was imposed on the five counties by the state legislature. Milwaukee County does not have the authority to continue the tax or require any other county to do so. Moeser states that the chair has the right to state that this is out of order and not be considered. It is not on the agenda.

Knueppel requests to amend the motion to send the resolution to the Advisory Council and the Milwaukee County Department on Aging. The amendment was not accepted as friendly.

Kneuppel calls the question.

MOTION: Urge the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the Milwaukee County Executive to take all necessary steps to obtain approval for continuing the Brewer Stadium tax in Milwaukee County and earmarking the revenues for maintenance of Milwaukee County parks and senior centers. Resolution attached.

ACTION: Motion carries, 10-2 (Mikolajczyk moves, Bechtel seconded).

Bechtel asks for clarification. The resolution will go directly to the Commission on Aging.

VI. RECRUITMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Idzikowski notes that the Committee does not have representatives from all of the Assembly Districts within Milwaukee County and asks members to think about recruiting members from all of these areas to increase the size and influence of the committee, so that there is a direct contact in each state assembly and senate district.

Griffith states that reapportionment is coming and may be premature to do this until that occurs, although it is always good to continue recruiting members.

Green notes that reapportionment is a year away.

VII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

- Seniorfest Day at Summerfest on July
- Senior Fest at the Italian Community Center on June 12th
- Let's Talk Medicare on June 27th at the West Allis Senior Center
- Advisory Council Forum MC SCs (June 10th - UWay
- PrideFest will be held June 7th-9th at SummerFest grounds

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VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & MEETING DATES

Mikolaczyk asks about a copy of the report on the condition of the senior centers. Idzikowski notes that both reports are posted on the Milwaukee County Department on Aging website: <https://county.milwaukee.gov/EN/Department-on-Aging/Senior-Centers-Dining/Envisioning-Our-Senior-Centers>

Bechtel notes that the dining program is very successful and the volunteer recognition dinner last Thursday at Davians was a very nice event. Commends MCDA for this program.

The next Committee meeting will be held August 5, 2019, at the Marcia Coggs Human Services Building, 1220 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Knueppel calls for motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:24 p.m.

MOTION: Adjourn the Meeting until August 5, 2019.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously. (Green moves, Mikolajczyk seconds).

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Idzikowski
Program & Policy Coordinator