



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes
August 5, 2019**

The Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, August 5, 2019, at the Marcia Cogs Center, 1220 W. Vliet Street, Milwaukee, WI 53205.

Attendance was taken and documented on a sign-in sheet.

Committee Members Present:

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

Advisory Council Members present:

Judith Troestler

Committee Members Absent

Casper Green

Staff Present:

Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Policy Coordinator
Andy Bethke, MCDA – Outreach

Attendees from the Public

Christie Carter, LGBT Center
Martha Collins, Hunger Task Force
Neidra North
Harold Oemig
Alyna Romain
Shirley Sharp

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Knueppel called this meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

II. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF JUNE 3, 2019 ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MOTION: Approve the June 3, 2019 committee minutes.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Neidre North – public comment, former outreach worker with Sherman Park Neighborhood Opportunity Program. Retired from ERAS in June. Concerned about frail and isolated elders not being served because of fallout from Unison bankruptcy. Wants to see programs for frail isolated elders who are not candidates for Senior Centers. Form gathering spaces for these individuals, need advocates. Local churches are trying to start these kinds of programs up again. Starting new small program targeted at frail isolated elders.

Fred comments that this is a very valuable service to reach the population that is hidden. Usually people that get to senior centers are pretty healthy, but those that don't really need the help.

Griffith says the Commissioners are interested in these issues and want to know about these issues to advocate for isolated folks and people with disabilities. Let the Commission know how we can help.

Hoffman asks about response to extreme heat commissions. Idzikowski responds that senior centers were designated cooling centers. Mikolajczyk asks if there were any reported deaths due to the heat. Idzikowski responds that he is unaware of any heat related deaths.

Oemig asks if the Service Delivery Committee was to be expanded to include representations from all local communities. Idzikowski responds that at the last Advocacy Committee meeting he encouraged members to recruit nominations from each state legislative district for the Advocacy Committee. This did not pertain to the Service Delivery Committee.

IV. COA / WAAN PRIORITIES & UPDATES

Idzikowski comments that stadium tax resolution passed by the Advocacy Committee at June meeting was presented to and passed by the Commission on Aging and will be sent on to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors with the request that this will be incorporated into the Fair Deal proposal that the County Executive and the County Board are working on to expand flexibility for raising county revenue and gaining on a better distribution of funding.

Yield to Haas for an explanation of the Fair Deal proposal.

Haase notes that he received a letter from the County Executive's office indicating that it is illegal to use the stadium tax for any other purpose and thus it cannot be done, so we should stick with other proposals under the Fair Deal. Idzikowski notes that it cannot be done under current law, but that we can still advocate for legislation allowing Milwaukee County additional flexibility to raise revenues, as well as a fairer distribution of existing state funding such as shared revenue.

The Committee asks for clarification from the County Executive office and County Board on the content of the Fair Deal initiative.

MOTION: MCDA staff to draft a position statement supporting Milwaukee County's Fair Deal initiative in concert with the legislative liaisons from the County Board and the County Executive's office and to express our appreciation for the County Board of Supervisors and County Executive working together cooperatively on this initiative.

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

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V. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES

o Older Americans Act

Idzikowski encourages advocacy regarding reauthorization and funding of programming under the Older Americans Act. U.S. House has passed a bill with significant funding increase and sent to Senate. This bill is now stalled in the U.S Senate over differences in formula distribution. NC4a has asked local AAA's to encourage advocacy with U.S. Senators to move OAA reauthorization forward.

Griffith asks about the Budget reconciliation Act that was approved. Thought that funding at increased level was approved. Idzikowski answers that it is true that a budget deal was reached to lift sequestration caps on both domestic discretionary and military spending. While broad increased levels of funding were agreed to, this does not reach down to specific programs, nor does this address the issue of reauthorizations. Haase has noted that in the past, the OAA has been underfunded and reauthorization delayed. Knueppel notes that the materials include a sample letter and that personal letters are preferred.

MOTION: That the Commission on Aging send a letter to both US Senators supporting reauthorization of the Older Americans Act

Action: Passes unanimously (Mikolajczyk moves; Bechtel seconds).

o Younger Alzheimer's Onset

Harrington explains that this bill would extend services under the Older Americans Act to people diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementia under the age of 60. Gaining bi-partisan traction.

MOTION: That the Commission on Aging send a letter to support both HR 1903 & SB 901 in favor of the Younger Alzheimer's Onset Act.

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

Griffith alerts that Committee about the aggressive and misleading marketing practices of Medicare Advantage / SMP like insurance products. Asks staff to look into use of the term Medicare in solicitations for insurance. Causing anxiety. Senior Medicare Patrol information will be sent by Idzikowski.

Idzikowski briefly discusses state legislative issues and final results of 2019-21 Wisconsin State Budget. Notes that Rep. Skowronski is putting a package of bills to address some remaining issues in the fall session, including issues regarding Alzheimer's. WAAN laying groundwork for legislative education regarding the Elderly Benefit Specialist program including funding increase.

Harrington notes that we are losing an aging advocate in the state legislature with the retirement of Rep. Mike Rohrkaste.

Idzikowski notes that WAAN has set the date of May for the 2020 Aging Advocacy Day. WAAN will focus on poverty among older adults in Wisconsin and look at ways to alleviate continuing poverty among older adults for the 2020 Aging Advocacy Day. Also considering special consideration of racial inequality, tribal disparities, and family farmers.

Griffith notes that poverty among the LGBT community is 30% higher.

Mikolajczyk asks about how proposals to cut back on federal school breakfast and Foodshare programs affect the elderly? Idzikowski responds that he has no information on this issue.

VI. RECRUITMENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Kneuppel notes that the final Envisioning Senior Centers community conversation will be held in conjunction with the Committee's September meeting. Kneuppel encourages attendance at Washington Park Senior Center. Envisioning session from 12-2pm, followed immediately by the Advocacy Committee meeting from 2-3:30 pm.

Idzikowski invites Committee members to join him in attending Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network and to forward any concerns through him to the network.

VII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

- WAAN (September 5th – Dane County AAA)
- Let's Talk Medicare (1:00 – 3:00 pm, Friday, Aug 16th – Wilson Park Sen Ctr)
- Envisioning Future of Senior Centers (attached)

Idzikowski notes that Milwaukee County Budget Information sessions are being held throughout the county and encourages attendance.

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & MEETING DATES

The next Committee meeting will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION: Adjourn the Meeting until September 3, 2019.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Idzikowski, Program & Policy Coordinator