



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

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

The Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet Street, Milwaukee, WI.

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**
Casper Green
Tim Harrington
David Hoffman
Gary Mikolajczyk
Elliot Moeser
Judith Troestler

Advisory Council Members present:

Ruth Bevenue

Committee Members Absent

Bob Haase

Staff Present:

Holly Davis, MCDA Executive Director
Jon Janowski, MCDA Administrative Director

Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Policy Coordinator
Andy Bethke, MCDA – Outreach
Matt Fortman – MCBHD Fiscal Manager

Attendees from the Public

Sally Callan
Christie Carter, LGBT Center
Martha Collins, Hunger Task Force
Hope DeVougas, Rep. Moore's Office
Michael Helbach, Sen. Baldwin's Office
Dain Maddox, Wauwatosa Sen. Commission
Neidra North
Harold Oemig
Alyna Romain
Mary Jane Sericati
Supervisor Steven Shea, 8th District
Shirley Sharp
Gary Sprong
Stephanie Sue Stein, League of Prog. Seniors
Patty Yunk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Knueppel called this meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

II. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF AUGUST 5, 2019 ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Mikolajczyk asks for clarification regarding the stadium tax resolution. Was this resolution provided to all Supervisors? Did MCDA receive a response from any Supervisors? Idzikowski replies that resolution was provided to all supervisors and MCDA had not received a response.

MOTION: Approve the August 5, 2019 Advocacy Committee minutes.

ACTION: Motion carried unanimously (Green moved, Moeser seconded).

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

IV. COA / WAAN PRIORITIES & UPDATES

Idzikowski comments that there are no updates on the Commission on Aging or Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network priority issues at this time.

Mikolajczyk asks for consideration by the Committee to amend the 2019 Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Advocacy Priorities to include the resolution on use of stadium tax as a source of funding for parks and senior centers. Moeser and Abston-Coleman object on procedural grounds. After some clarifying discussion, Chair Knueppel asks to hold motion until considering county legislative issues.

V. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES

- Older Americans Act

Idzikowski again 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 and materials to do so are in the distributed packet.

- SNAP Elder Eligibility Simplification

Idzikowski noted that in July, USDA's Food and Nutritional Service Agency proposed a rule that would limit the households that receive SNAP benefits to those "who receive substantial, ongoing assistance from TANF," meaning those that have received benefits, whether cash or non-cash – such as childcare – of at least \$50 per month for six months or more. The federal agency estimated 3.1 million people would lose their SNAP benefits if the rule was implemented, including 18% of SNAP households in Wisconsin. The USDA said elderly individuals would be the largest group impacted by the rule, with 26% of all SNAP households with elderly members losing benefits in Wisconsin. Moreover, special elderly SNAP application & verification programs in other states would be affected. Comment period is open until September 27, 2019.

Director Davis comments on Kaiser Foundation report “Starving Seniors: How America Fails to Feed its Aging” and notes that this advocacy action would help address this issue. One out of every 13 older Americans struggles to find enough food to eat while the federal program intended to help hasn’t kept pace with the graying population. Read in Kaiser Health News: <https://khn.org/news/starving-seniors-how-america-fails-to-feed-its-aging/>

MOTION: MC Commission on Aging to Oppose SNAP rule changes that affect older program participation.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously. (Green Moves, Griffith seconds).

Mike Helbach, Sen. Tammy Baldwin’s office. On July 31st comprehensive care caucus created. Caucus to focus on all things related to palliative care. Sen. Baldwin has reintroduced S.2080 - Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act.

Idzikowski notes that RAISE task force and the Grandparent Caregiver task forces have been convened by the Administration for Community Living and met for the first time.

- State Legislative updates

Idzikowski reports that no new action has been taken on the state level. WAAN has added a number of bills to track including proposals regarding elder abuse, insulin cost regulation, and dementia care. In addition, the Governor has announced new task forces on Reducing Prescription Drug Costs (EO 39) & Retirement Task Force (retirement savings education). The state Caregiver task force has now convened for the first time and urges Committee members to contact members of the task forces to provide ideas for the

Green asks about agenda item relating to potential veto challenge of certain mental health provisions. Idzikowski replies that the legislature did not in fact take up a veto override vote.

Abston-Coleman asks about agenda item relating to “attached chart regarding state legislative issues”. Idzikowski notes that no such chart was attached and there were no updates to report.

- Milwaukee County Legislative updates

Idzikowski notes that the Fair Deal remains the major local item of interest. Both Milwaukee County legislative liaisons were invited but unable to attend. Noted that the Fair Deal strategy has not yet been publicly released and both liaisons will be invited to attend the next meeting.

Recognized Supervisor Shea in the audience. Nothing to report at this time.

Mikolajczyk notes that the CoA approved the resolution regarding repurposing the stadium tax to fund parks and senior centers as part of the Fair Deal. Mikolajczyk asked the Committee to amend Section IV of its 2019 Advocacy Priorities to include language consistent with this resolution under support of the Fair Deal initiative. Green asked whether this would impede Fair Deal support. Discussion. Knueppel notes that there is no guarantee that this will be incorporated in the Fair Deal and the Committee might want to defer. Haas notes that the state legislature would have to pass a new sales tax, cannot convert the purpose of the stadium tax.

MOTION: Amend MC Commission on Aging 2019 Advocacy Priorities to include language in Section IV of those Priorities urging “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 by Milwaukee County residents and earmarking the revenues for maintenance of Milwaukee County Parks, including Senior Centers.”

ACTION: Motion passes, 10-1. (Mikolajczyk moves, Green seconds).

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

VI. MILWAUKEE COUNTY BUDGET 2020 (INFORMATION/DISCUSSION)

- **2020 MILWAUKEE COUNTY BUDGET PROCESS OVERVIEW (HAAS)**

Supervisor Haas provides brief timeline of the County budget process. County Executive presents budget to County Board on October 1st. After analysis, hearings are held in October. Final budget passed by County Board in November.

- **2020 DEPARTMENT ON AGING PROPOSED BUDGET**

Director Davis presents highlights of the 2020 proposed Milwaukee County Department on Aging budget. Anticipating an expansion of services.

3% total increase of expenditures, including \$300,000 increase in overall funding for contracted services, 2% increase in staff budget and step increases to help retain ARC staff.

3% increase in revenue, including increased drawn down of federal dollars.

County tax levy target: \$184,000 decrease. MCDA will meet target but don't anticipate reduction in services. Tax levy supplements meal programs, elder abuse, and senior center services. Senior Center programming most discretionary. \$20,000 decrease in senior center contract, but anticipate being able to recoup this decrease, including increased match requirement. SOA has established new fundraising position. All 5 centers will be funded & open.

Because of racial equity focus by the County Executive, believes any decrease in senior center funding will be restored, since the centers disproportionately serve minority populations.

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MCDA defunded 1 clerical position. Working on racial equity, staff retention, and strategic planning for senior programming in Milwaukee County. Some programs increase, some will decrease.

Green: any decrease in services. Davis: Anticipates all services will remain the same. Griffith: Any increase in anticipated services. Davis: Will get back to you with a per unit increase.

- **2020 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIVISION PROPOSED BUDGET**

Matt Fortman, Financial Manager of Behavior Health Division.

In 2020 BHD passed \$216 million budget, \$9million increase in total spending, but \$2.8m decrease in County tax levy. Pursuing external grants, insurance revenue, and federal funding. Comprehensive Community services programs will increase as will Community Based Residential Facilities by \$1m increase to meet ongoing needs. All BHD services available to all age groups. 211 is the direct access line to connect with Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Services.

BHD supports Fair Deal initiative. Difficult to continue services without base funding for core programs. Always need local funding to support draw down additional federal funding for Medicaid services.

Milwaukee County has a signed contract with United Health Services (UHS) to build a new acute mental healthcare facility in West Allis. Over next 3 years, Milwaukee County will reduce census at Watertown Plank campus by sending patients to new UHS facility. About 25% of BHD budget supports the existing mental health hospital and emergency room at the BHD complex.

Discussion about a new psychiatric emergency room operated in partnership between County and local healthcare providers has also been ongoing.

Moeser asks whether UHS is under investigation at the federal level. Hoffman notes that UHS is a for profit provider. Fortman notes that there was an extensive due diligence process of vetting and investigation of the selected provider. Confident that the County is contracting with a vendor that will provide a high level of care in Milwaukee County.

Griffith asks about services for homeless seniors. Fortman notes that the Housing Division is working hard to resolve this issue with Housing First plan before any cold weather hits.

Green asks whether other providers were contacted regarding the psychiatric hospital. Fortman notes that there was an RFP process and UHS was identified as the best partner.

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Knueppel notes that the Advocacy Committee encourages individual public support of the issues before the Committee.

VII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities

- WAAN (9:30 a.m. September 5th – Dane County AAA)
- Walk for Alzheimer's (Sunday, September 15th)
- Let's Talk Medicare (9:00–11:00 am, Tues, October 29th, Clinton Rose SC)
- Senior Centers Listening Session (Sept. 12, 1:00p.m. League of PS @ Wilson SC)

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

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & MEETING DATES

The next Committee meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, October 7, 2019, at the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, Vine Street, Milwaukee.

Griffith suggests information about robo calls – how to defend against? Any legislative initiatives? Idzikowski notes MCDA is involved in financial elder abuse initiatives.

Idzikowski notes that the Marcia Coggs center room 104 not available for October 7th Advocacy Committee meeting. Knueppel asks about other dates. Bechtel and Moeser asks that the date and time stay the same and that the Chair identify an alternative location.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Knueppel calls for motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

MOTION: Adjourn the Meeting until October 7th, 2019.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Idzikowski, Program & Policy Coordinator