



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2019**

The Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, October 7, 2019, at the United Way of Greater Milwaukee's JCI Volunteer Center, 225 W. Vine 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
Alice Pugh
Shirley Sharp
Judith Troestler

Committee Members absent:

Bob Haase (excused)

Staff Present:

Schinika Fitch, Milwaukee CEX
Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Policy Coordinator
Alec Knutson, Legislative Liaison, CEX
Nicole Stickler, Legislative Liaison, Cty Board
Pam Matthews, Milwaukee County, DAS

Attendees from the Public

Patricia Adams
Christie Carter, LGBT Center
Matthew Hayes, LAW
Alexia Knox, US Census Bureau
Rosemary Mueller
Harold Oemig
Alyna Romain
Rep. Ken Skowronski

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Knueppel called this meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. All members introduced themselves. The committee welcomed Shirley Sharpe and Alice Pugh as new members.

II. REVIEW & APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2019 ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MINUTES

MOTION: Approve the September 2, 2019 Advocacy Committee minutes.

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rep. Ken Skowronski – WI Vet & Military Affairs chair, WI-Assembly – talks about bringing back remains of WWII soldiers; if folks have comments can send to e-mail or visit me in 209 North Griffith asks about the Fair Deal, advocates to be able to raise tax on our own.

Public member asks about Fair Maps. Rep. Skowronski answers not sure about what is happening with these proposals. Will check with leadership.

Green comments that Milwaukee County has a \$28 million deficit and needs additional revenue. He asks Skowronski to support raising our own revenue by passing legislation that allows Milwaukee County residents to do so. Mikolajczyk concurs.

Knueppel – Notes that there are several matters of legislative interest coming forward that affect seniors and invites Rep. Skowronski back to join the Advocacy committee meetings.

Moeser asks about the Food Stamp issue regarding possible benefit reductions. Idzikowski notes that The Commission on Aging submitted comments to the federal Food and Nutrition Service opposing these changes.

Moeser comments that he did not get a good answer from the Milwaukee County BHD representative to his question at the last Committee meeting as to whether UHC, the health care entity selected to operate a new acute mental health hospital in Milwaukee County, had been investigated by BHD prior to awarding this contract. Casper asks whether there were other bidders for this contract? No clear answer regarding this issue. Would like a follow up.

Knueppel stated he will put on these on the agenda for next time. Hoffman piggybacks on this issue, because mental health is an area of concern under the OAA and doesn't believe that the Commission on Aging has taken enough leadership on this issue. Suggests asking for a response from the Mental Health Board.

Knueppel closes public comment.

IV. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES

- Federal Aging Policy Briefing

Idzikowski notes that comments were posted to FNS opposing changes to eligibility to the SNAP Program, a copy of which are included in your packets. A copy of the letter supporting the Younger Alzheimer's Onset Act and the Older Americans Act are included. While House proposed a substantial increase in funding for OAA programs, the Senate has not agreed to any

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increase. A continuing resolution is now in force that keeps funding levels the same until 2020 spending bills are passed. OAA reauthorization is moving forward in the House, but not in the Senate. There are a number of prescription drug cost reduction proposals introduced in Congress, but few are likely to move forward without support from the administration. AARP is working on a campaign to this effect and is holding a national town hall in Milwaukee on October 11th at the Italian Community Center. Encourages Committee attendance.

- **State Legislative Issues**

WAAN legislative tracking sheet included. A hearing has been scheduled for Executive Committee vote in the Wisconsin Senate on SB103, the bill lowering the standards for the training of CNAs is up for a vote in the Senate Health Committee and is likely to pass out onto the floor. Committee members could be contacted. It has already passed in the Assembly. Hearing will be held. If it passes in the Senate, the Governor will need to veto in order to prevent this reduction in training hours to pass into law.

MOTION: That the Commission on Aging provide a letter to the Senate opposing passage of SB103 and asking the Governor to veto SB103 if it passes in the Senate.

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

CARE Act –LRB 4369 – is a proposal based upon AARP model legislation that has been passed in about 43 other states that requires hospitals to recognize a caregiver designated by the patient and provide that caregiver with instruction on how to properly care for and administer any procedures or medications to be provided at home during discharge planning.

Harrington mentions that personal stories are needed to back up the reasons for this bill. If you have stories of caregivers who were not involved during discharge planning, or who did not receive instructions that they could understand, particularly if this resulted in re-hospitalization of the patient, please let Harrington or Idzikowski know. Spread the word. We need grass roots support or this bill is not going to advance in the state legislature.

Credit for Caring Act provides for a \$500 caregiver state income tax credit (AB126) to reimburse family caregivers for expenses not covered by insurance to care for a loved one. Harrington states that \$8000 is the average out of pocket cost to family caregivers. The fiscal note is still high on this bill, although it is significantly lower than the support families are now providing.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

Alec Knutson from the County Executive's office and Nicole Stickler from the Milwaukee County Board present updates on the Fair Deal initiative. Knutson notes that the County needs a new

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partnership with the State. The County now has a 28 million structural operating deficit. In order to address this issue, County leadership has worked with the state legislature to introduce legislation allowing Milwaukee County to raise additional tax revenue, which it is now prohibited from doing.

State Senators Johnson & Representative Goyke are the lead sponsors of 2019 SB 471 that provides for a referendum by Milwaukee County voters to add a 1% local sales tax in Milwaukee County. Revenue generated by this additional sales tax would provide property tax relief and funding for municipalities and the County. In order to be of assistance to Milwaukee County, this measure needs to be passed this session, but the remaining legislative opportunity is very short.

Stickler notes that it is important to remember that we need to advocate for this legislation with our state senators and representatives, including if you want any amendments. County wants a “clean” bill that does not mandate how the revenue is spent. Request to ask the voters of Milwaukee County to tax themselves and retain that funding.

Moeser notes that the Bill says 68% of the money is to be used for County operating and capital expenditures. Knutson states that this will be dedicated to non-mandated services, parks, transit, etc. The County cannot advocate at the time of the actual referendum. Stickler believes that deferred maintenance and parks investments will be high priorities so that we can make investments in our own county assets.

Griffith asks for information to share with neighbors regarding how much we pay in sales tax and what we get in return. Moeser states that local control is very important. We don’t want Madison stopping us from building our own quality of life. If not specific, voters want specificity in any referendum. Knutson & Stickler states that what referendum will be decided later, if legislation passes. Moeser notes that this legislation must be bipartisan if it is to pass and that at this point there are no Republican sponsors. Knutson replies that the bill is only a starting point and that they know there will be amendments, so asks to support the concept not necessarily the text of this particular bill, but we need to get SB 471 to a hearing in committee so it can be considered, negotiated and moved forward.

MOTION: That the Commission on Aging provide a letter asking the legislature to move forward SB471 and its companion in the Assembly to hearing so that state legislation can be considered that would enhance revenue options for Milwaukee County and allow Milwaukee County residents to increase their own taxes to support county institutions.

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

Griffith asks that we share any such letter with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

V. 2020 CENSUS

Alexia Knox from the Chicago Regional office of the United States Census Bureau provided an informational presentation regarding the timeline of activities leading up to the 2020 Census Day (April 1, 2020), encouraging groups to form Complete Count Committees, and explaining the manner in which the 2020 Census will be conducted.

The goal of the 2020 Census is to count ALL residents in the United State once and only once. All residents should be counted regardless of citizenship or immigration status. All information is held in complete confidence by the Census Bureau and the law prohibits the sharing of personally identifiable information with any other entity, including another government agency. Older adults are one group that has been historically undercounted. The Census Bureau encourages everyone to complete the census form online, by calling the Census Bureau's toll free number, or by completing and mailing a hard copy of the census form. Census workers will attempt to contact households in person who do not complete the census. The Census Bureau is hiring and anyone over the age of 18 is eligible to apply for these jobs.

Abston-Coleman asks about counting the prison population. Knox responds that these individuals will be counted through the group quarters initiatives by the State of Wisconsin.

Griffith asks if there is a date certain for the Census. States he is concerned about the LGBT population participating. Knox responds that Census Day is April 1, 2020 and reiterates that all responses are held in confidence.

Shinika Fitch, from the County Executive's office and the Milwaukee County government representative on the Milwaukee Complete Count Committee noted that it is important that we have representation on the Complete Count committee. If you are interested in representing the Older Adult voice, please let Dan know.

Harrington notes that fraud is always a concern. Knox replies that the Bureau will be sending out a postcard to all residents asking them to fill out the census form online, or to call in their information. No one from the Census Bureau will initiate a call asking for this information. All neighborhood census workers will wear official Census Bureau badges and identifying info. National Census contact: 1-800- 800-923-8282.

VI. FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS

- Proposed State Legislation
- *Milwaukee County Financial Exploitation Initiatives*

Idzikowski notes that information is in the packet and WAAN has taken a position on these bills. Knueppel states this item will be held over onto the November Advocacy Committee agenda.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS & ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- *WAAN (October 3rd – Dane County AAA)*
- *50 Plus or Better Expo (Oct 23rd – Oak Creek CC)*
- *Let's Talk Medicare (Oct 29th – Clinton Rose Sen Ctr)*

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 Advocacy Committee meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, November 4, 2019, at the Marcia Coggs Center, 1220 W. Vliet Street, Milwaukee.

Harrington asks for Senior Expo & Let's Talk Medicare flyer be provided to committee members.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION: Adjourn the Meeting until November 4th, 2019.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Idzikowski
Program & Policy Coordinator