



**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Advocacy Committee Meeting
January 6, 2020**

The Advocacy Committee held its regular meeting on Monday, January 6, 2020, at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee, WI 53208.

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

Members Present:

Commissioner Fred Knueppel, Chair
Commissioner Sharon Abston-Coleman
Commissioner John Griffith
Commissioner Shirley Sharp
Barbara Bechtel
Casper Green
Bob Haase
David Hoffman
Gary Mikolajczyk
Elliot Moeser
Alice Pugh
Judy Troestler

Commissioners Present:

Commissioner Richmond Izard
Commissioner Cesar Pabon

Staff Present:

Daniel Idzikowski, MCDA Program & Policy Coord.
Pam Matthews, MC DOA, Budget & Policy Analyst

Attendees from the Public

Martha Collins, Hunger Task Force
Christie Carter, MKE LGBT Center
Tom Garrett, Goodwill
Matthew Hayes, LAW
Kate Hayden, Serving Older Adults
Geraldyn Juettner, Senior Statesman
Patrick Linnane, Milwaukee County CCSB
Vanessa Llanas, US Sen. Tammy Baldwin
Harold Oemig, Senior Statesman
Dain Maddox, Wauwatosa Senior Commission
Brittany Schoenick, Legal Action of Wisconsin
Stephanie Sue Stein, LPS

MINUTES

I. Meeting called to order by Knueppel at 1:31 PM. Members introduced themselves.

II. Review/Approval of November 4, 2019 Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Approve minutes of the November 4, 2019 Advocacy Committee meeting as presented.

ACTION: Passes unanimously. (Griffith, Abston-Coleman).

III. Consideration of 2019 / 2020 Public Policy Priorities

Idzikowski walks through the 2020 Public Policy Priorities as drafted with the Committee. Discussion.

Griffith advocates for an Older Adult Ombudsman through the LGBT Center for the purpose of working with the LGBT community. Statewide issue because folks come from all over the state to Milwaukee. Discussion proceeds. Bechtel notes her disagreement because this would single out a specific group and the work of the Ombudsman is to serve all populations in residential care facilities.

MOTION: suspend rules to allow Christie Carter from the MKE LGBT Center to speak.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Griffith, Abston-Coleman).

MOTION: Add to 2020 policy priorities “Add an Older Adult Ombudsman designated to serve the LGBTQ community that is located at the MKE LGBT Community Center.”

ACTION: Motion passes. 5 yeas, 3 Nays (Abston-Coleman, Bechtel, Sharp). 1 Abstention: Haase

Mikolajczyk thanks Commissioner Haase for his support of the Wilson Park warming center.

Green indicates strong support for Protection of Voting Rights as indicated on p. 8.

MOTION: Amend position on Multipurpose Senior Centers to include the word “sufficient” before funding.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Hoffman, Griffith).

Hoffman mentions that WAAN was going to focus on poverty for older adults. Asks if we should add a priority regarding overcoming poverty and homelessness among older adults.

Griffith states that we should address poverty and homelessness in these priorities. Minority populations are particularly affected.

Knueppel suggests devoting a topic on elder poverty at a future Advocacy Committee meeting and invite experts from the County to speak to this issue.

Bechtel notes that poverty is very high on Indian reservations. Would this affect Milwaukee County?

MOTION: Add to the 2020 policy priorities: “Examine poverty as it affects older adults in Wisconsin and advocate for programs that provide economic and housing security.”

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Hoffman, Griffith).

Hoffman concerned that the Department on Aging does not have its own director now and hopes that the Department on Aging will not be folded into Milwaukee County DHHS.

MOTION: suspend rules to allow public input.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Hoffman, Mikolajczyk).

Stephanie Sue Stein speaks. She was second director of the Department on Aging after Robin Maryl. Reason that the MCDA was created was because all of the funding was in DHHS, but older adults had little input into how this funding was spent particularly for long term care. MCDA is the AAA, whose function is not to deliver social services, but to advocate and plan for coordination among aging services.

MOTION: Add to the 2020 local policy priorities: “Maintain an independent Milwaukee County Department on Aging not combined with DHHS or any other Milwaukee County agency.”

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Hoffman, Mikolajczyk).

Abston-Coleman asks Bechtel if she would still advocate to change language under the ombudsman local policy priority to add the word “all” before agencies to address concern regarding singling out the LGBTQ community. Bechtel replies that the motion has already passed and she does not wish further changes.

MOTION: Approve the 2020 public policy positions as amended.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Haase, Green).

IV. Public Comment

Knueppel calls for public comments. No member of the public comments.

V. Legislative & Policy Updates (Information/Action)

Federal Aging Policy Briefing

Idzikowski notes that while the Dignity in Aging Act, which provides for a 5-year OAA reauthorization passed the House unanimously, the Senate has instead taken up its own version including a 7-year reauthorization. We are awaiting action in the Senate so that a compromise can be reached.

Idzikowski points out that there are two competing versions of Medicare reform in the House and Senate. H.R. 3 passed the House and contains CMS authority to negotiate drug prices, as well as including dental, vision and hearing benefits and some additional rights regarding Medicare Supplement policies. The Senate is working on a bipartisan compromise which includes more moderate changes. A chart comparing these proposals was included in the packet.

A summary of the federal budget appropriations that affect older adults from n4a is included.

State Legislative Issues

A summary of state legislation being tracked by the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network is included. Knutson and Stickler provided a written update on the Fair Deal initiative. Two bills introduced – one in Senate and one in the Assembly. They have been meeting with the Milwaukee state legislative delegation as well as with the business community. Asks the Committee to support these bills and advocate with other business and community groups to raise awareness of the importance of these measures. Invites testimony if the bills are scheduled for a committee hearing. A one-page summary promoting the sales tax measure from Moving MKE Forward is included in the packet.

Idzikowski notes that while the Committee already acted by writing to the entire state legislative delegation from Milwaukee, it is equally important for members of the Committee as advocacy leaders to contact their legislators individually and encourage their friends and neighbors to do likewise.

Green notes that he did write a letter to his state Senator David Craig and received an unfavorable reply, namely that Milwaukee County already received a disproportionate share of shared revenue and, Green

posited, mainly because of Craig's position on immigration, which has nothing to do with this issue.

Craig's letter read in part:

Finally, Milwaukee County's self-declaration as a sanctuary county is concerning from a budgetary standpoint. Being a magnet for illegal aliens will likely, as seen in other cities, demand further resources. Increasing funding to a county which is not only willfully ignoring the law but also encumbering additional obligations is not a policy decision that state taxpayers should subsidize. – Letter of David Craig to Casper Green, December 3, 2019, p.2.

Idzikowski notes that 2019 SB 615 was introduced and referred to the Committee on Insurance. This bill provides that a person who has a Medigap policy may cancel it at any time and purchase a new policy without discrimination by the insurer as to health status, claims, health care, or medical condition.

Idzikowski notes that the CARE Act which has been introduced in both houses of the state legislature is facing stiff opposition from the Wisconsin Hospital Association. AARP is taking the lead on promoting this model legislation and continues to seek stories to support the need for the law to provide greater responsibility by health care institutions to recognize and instruct caregivers upon patient discharge. Please contact Idzikowski or AARP directly if you have stories you would like to share.

Milwaukee County Legislative Issues

Knueppel notes that the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force will be holding a forum for the County Executive candidates on issues of concern to older adults on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 3pm at Independent First, 501 S. 1st Street in Milwaukee and encourages attendance.

Stein announces that the League of Progressive Seniors will also be holding a forum at 12:00 noon, at Mitchell Street Library on Friday, January 10th.

VI. Mental Health for Older Adults (Information/Discussion)

Pass on this item until next time.

VII. Senior Center Envisioning Process (Info/Action)

Idzikowski provides a brief update indicating that the Advisory Council will be meeting in January to finalize a report to present to the full Commission on Aging at its January 24th meeting. The meeting date and location of the Advisory Council will be posted on CLIC when determined.

VIII. 2020 Census & Voting Access

Idzikowski reminds the Committee of the importance of older adult participation in both the upcoming 2020 elections and the 2020 U.S. Census. He calls on members of the Committee to consider volunteering as poll workers, Special Voting Deputies, and Census promoters. He notes that the Greater Milwaukee Complete Count Committee has NO representation of the older adult population and invites Committee members to consider joining the Complete Count Committee. A Census Training Session will be held this Thursday, January 9th at 8:30 a.m. at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Information on voting access and registration can be found on the Disability Vote Coalition site: <https://disabilityvote.org>

Green expresses his concern that there are groups actively working to suppress voter turnout. He specifically points out the litigation brought by the Wisconsin Institute on Law and Liberty to purge voters from the rolls. Mikolaczyk asks whether the Commission can intervene in this case and express its view to the court that voter names should not be immediately purged. He asks Idzikowski to check with the Corporation Counsel regarding intervention in *Zignego et al v. Wisconsin Election Commission et al.*

Idzikowski points Committee members to the request by the City of Milwaukee Election Commission to utilize the Clinton Rose Senior Center for purposes of early voting. Asks Committee members to discuss support for this proposal. Committee members discuss proposal.

Green supports establishment of early voting centers throughout Milwaukee County and not just at Senior Centers in the City of Milwaukee. Green asks that any resolution be written to reflect this and sent to all municipal clerks.

MOTION: Express support for the establishment of alternative absentee voting centers for the purpose of early voting in all Milwaukee County municipalities, particularly considering senior centers as early registration and voting locations to ensure access and convenience for older adults in Milwaukee County.

ACTION: passes unanimously (Mikolaczyk moves, Green seconds).

IX. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities (Inform.)

Next **WAAN meetings** will be held January 9th by teleconference, Feb 6th at Dane County ADRC.

Greater Milwaukee Census Training Session, 8:30 – 9:30 a.m., Thursday, January 9, 2020 at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, 101 W. Pleasant St., Ste. 210, Milwaukee.

County Executive Candidate Forum, League of Progressive Seniors, 11:30 a.m. (lunch) 12 noon – 1:30 p.m. Friday, January 10, 2020 at Mitchell Street Public Library, 906 W. Historic Mitchell St., Milwaukee.

County Executive Candidate Forum, Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force, Disability Vote Coalition, Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 3pm at Independent First, 501 S. 1st Street, Milwaukee.

Assisted Living Consumer Town Hall, Wisconsin DHS Division of Quality Assurance, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. January 28, 2020 at Wilson Park Senior Center, 2601 W. Howard Avenue, Milwaukee.

Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Day will be held on Tuesday, February 11th at Park Hotel in Madison.

Milwaukee County Senior Statesman program, 8a.m. Wednesday, March 25th – 1p.m. Friday, March 27th.

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Day, Tuesday, May 12, 2020, Park Hotel, 22 S. Carroll St., Madison.

X. Future agenda items & meeting dates (Discussion)

Kneuppel announces the Committee will reconvene on Monday, February 3, 2020 at the Coggs Center.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION: Adjourn this Committee until February 3, 2020.

ACTION: Motion passes unanimously (Green, Mikolaczyk).

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator