



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**Department on Aging**

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging  
Advocacy Committee Meeting  
March 2, 2020**

The Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on Monday, March 2, 2020, at the Marcia Coggs Human Services Building, Room 104, 1220 W. Vliet St., Milwaukee, WI 53205.

Attendance was taken verbally and documented in writing.

**Members Present:**

Commissioner Shirley Sharp, Chair  
Commissioner George Pumphrey, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Sharon Abston-Coleman  
Barbara Bechtel  
Maureen Conrad  
Sandra Dotson  
Maureen Fitzgerald  
Casper Green  
John Griffith  
Bob Haase  
David Hoffman  
Geraldyn Juettner  
Gary Mikolajczyk  
Elliott Moeser  
Harold Oemig  
Cesar Pabon  
Alice Pugh

Judith Troestler  
Cindy Van Vreede

**Commissioners Present:**

Richmond Izard, Chair

**Staff Present:**

Daniel Idzikowski, MCDA Program & Policy Coordinator  
Andy Bethke, MCDA Outreach Social Worker  
Dwight Ivory  
Alec Knutson, MCEX Legislative Liaison  
Rosemary Mueller

**Attendees from the Public**

Nick Janis, Office of State Senator Chris Larson  
Rosemary Mueller

**MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order & Introductions**

Chair Shirley Sharp called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and invited all members to introduce themselves. Attendance was recorded in writing.

**II. Review/Approval of February 3, 2020 Advocacy Committee minutes**

MOTION: Approve February 3, 2020 Advocacy Committee Minutes

ACTION: Approved Unanimously (Mikolajczyk, Green).

**III. Public Comment**

Nick Janis from State Senator Chris Larson's office introduced himself. No other public comment.

#### IV. Legislative & Policy Updates

- **Federal Aging Policy Briefing**
  - *OAA reauthorization & funding*

Supporting Older Americans Act (HR4344) passed the House and agreement has been reached in the Senate. Included in packet is a sample letter to urge passage in Senate.

Green asked about differences between Senate and House versions. Idzikowski believes that there was a slight reduction in authorization amounts from 7% increase to 5% increase.

- *Prescription drug cost reduction proposals*

Prescription drug cost proposals are not moving forward in Congress.

Idzikowski notes he reached out to both Senators Baldwin and Johnson to ask for an in-person meeting in local offices. Baldwin's office did not respond. Johnson's office responded that staff would be willing to meet in Milwaukee office. Discussion ensued regarding potential dates and who would meet. Suggestion was that at a minimum the chair and vice-chair of the Advocacy Committee. Idzikowski will follow-up with Senator Johnson's office.

Commission Chair IZard suggests that other members of the Committee make a direct contact with the Senate offices regarding this issue.

Griffith asks whether MCDA has received any information regarding the coronavirus with regard to older adults? Idzikowski replies that MCDA has not received such information at this time. Griffith asks that if MCDA does receive information, that it be forwarded on to the Committee.

- **State Legislative Issues**
  - *Legislation pending*

Hoffman provides information that a hearing has been scheduled on AB521 on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

Idzikowski gives update on efforts to bring both the CARES Act and Credit for Caring tax credit act to a vote in the state legislature, but despite valiant efforts by AARP and others, neither bill will advance.

Idzikowski notes that the guardianship training bills (AB786/SB734) did move forward, but funding was stripped out. Also some fear that the legislature will attempt another override of the Governor's veto of the CNA training legislation.

- **Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**
  - *Fair Deal & AB521/SB427*
  - *Aging items of interest*

Alec Knutson from the County Executive's office provides an update on the Milwaukee County sales tax proposal:

10 AM Thursday, March 5th, Room 412 in the Capitol hearing on AB521. This bill authorizes Milwaukee County to hold a referendum in the County raise the sales tax by 1%. Knutson notes the significance of holding this hearing, noting the chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

Moeser: Would CEX like the Commission to appear and present testimony? Knutson: If anyone wants to come and show support, that would be helpful.

Green: Is there a way to have a public hearing in Milwaukee? Notes the response he received from Senator Craig regarding Milwaukee County being a “sanctuary” county in regard to undocumented immigrants as a reason for opposing the sales tax referendum bill.

Idzikowski asks Knutson to send sample testimony to him to prepare Commission on Aging testimony.

Izard asks about the process. Knutson indicates that a number of individuals will speak in favor, including County Executive, County Board Chair, Wisconsin Policy Forum president Rob Henken, Mayor Barrett, Intergovernmental Council, MMAC, GMC, Wisconsin Counties Assn.

Hoffman: Important to point out that Milwaukee County is made up of 19 municipalities, not just City of Milwaukee.

Haase asks if it would be helpful to have a motion to support this legislation? Idzikowski notes that this motion was already passed some time ago.

Rosemary Mueller from public: Key message is that Milwaukee County is the economic engine of the State and this affects the entire state.

Idzikowski congratulates Knutson on the accomplishment of securing a hearing.

## **V. Promotion of the 2020 Census**

Idzikowski references the materials in the packet and notes its importance.

Commissioners Izard, Pumphrey, and Sharp appointed to Milwaukee Complete Count Committee. Pumphrey reports on Census training session. 2020 Census is primarily being conducted online. Recommends that Committee members view the [Census2020.gov](https://www.census.gov) site. Asked Census about how they are going to count individuals in group institutions but did not receive a satisfactory answer. Continue to stress that a full count is necessary for Milwaukee County to receive a fair share of federal resources.

Idzikowski notes the timeline: February: contacting group quarters. March: sending 4 letters with PIN number, 5<sup>th</sup> letter with a hard copy of the Census form; March 12<sup>th</sup>: Portal for responding opens. April: Begin canvassing.

Moeser: Is there a concern with hacking the online census system? Pumphrey believes that the Census has done its due diligence in this regard.

Pumphrey notes the Census is still hiring, starting at \$22/hr.

Fitzgerald notes that any wages earned through the Census will not count as income for purposes of FoodShare qualification. Discussion follows regarding promoting the 2020 Census through social media.

## **VI. Interaction with DNC Convention & Aging Issues**

Idzikowski notes that Democratic National Convention will be held in Milwaukee and included some information from the host committee, including online portal addresses for vendors,

volunteers, and venues. 50,000 people attending. Suggests this might be a good platform to raise older adult issues at the national level. Bechtel asks if the MCDA will have a display at the DNC? Idzikowski responds that there is not a plan at this time to do so.

Moeser: Could we help to influence the national platform regarding older adults' issues?

Van Vreede: Not sure that they take testimony on this issue.

Moeser: Doesn't know if they take testimony at the convention. Find out how policy is made?

Griffith: Reception for delegates in senior caucus?

Green: Reach out to Planning Committees.

Haase: Get the agenda for the convention.

Pumphrey: We have an opportunity; we can make an impact and gain some notoriety.

Hoffman: We should come up with an idea that is Milwaukee specific.

Conrad: Pull together a committee to help with this work.

Mikolajczyk: Promote Senior Centers and how do we help with services that are provided.

Sharp departs, Pumphrey assumes chair.

## **VII. Transportation Access**

Idzikowski noted that he is trying to contact other boards to generate interest in an interagency transportation council.

Public question regarding Transit NEXT – is this moving forward? Public concern regarding the bus shelters not being replaced in poorer neighborhoods. Griffith brings up transit access to senior centers. Table discussion until next meeting.

## **VIII. Announcements & Advocacy Opportunities**

- *WAAN (Thursday, March 5th – Dane County ADRC)*
- *Disability Advocacy Day (March 24<sup>th</sup> - Madison)*
- *2020 Senior Statesman Program (March 25-27<sup>th</sup>)*
- *Agging Advocacy Day (May 12<sup>th</sup> – Madison)*

## **IX. Future agenda items & meeting dates**

MOTION Investigate establishing an award to honor Tom Frazier.

ACTION: Passes unanimously (Haase, Bechtel).

Oemig: West Allis Senior center under attack by the West Allis Common Council (would like us to take action to support).

Idzikowski asks Committee members to contact him if they are interested in attending the hearing on the sales tax referendum bill at the state Capitol on Thursday.

## **X. 3:00 p.m. Adjourn**

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting.

ACTION: Unanimous (Griffith, Bechtel).

The Advocacy Committee meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m. The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held on April 6, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,  
Daniel Idzikowski  
Program and Policy Coordinator