



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
Department on Aging

**Commission on Aging**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 22, 2020**

**Commissioners**

Richmond Izard, *Chair*  
Sharon Abston-Coleman, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*  
John K. Griffith, *Secretary*  
Jason Haas, *Milwaukee County Supervisor*  
Ronald Byington  
Amber Miller  
Gloria Miller  
Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, Ph.D.  
Reverend George P. Pumphrey, Ph.D.  
Bettie A. Rodgers, J.D.

**Commissioners Absent**

César Pabón  
Charles Vang

**Commissioners Absent Continued...**

Shirley Sharp

**Milwaukee County Staff**

Shakita LaGrant, *Interim Executive Director*  
Schinika Fitch, *County Executive's Office*  
Jon Janowski, *Director of Administration*  
Vonda Nyang  
Andrew Bethke  
Dan Idzikowski

**Guests**

Laura Langer, *State of WI, DHS*

**I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

A quorum of Commission on Aging (COA) members convened virtually on Friday, May 22, 2020. Chair Richmond Izard welcomed everyone. The Chair called the virtual/audio teams meeting to order at 9: a.m.

**II. REFLECTION PROVIDED BY VICE-CHAIR SHARON ABSTON-COLEMAN**

Commissioner Abston-Coleman reflected on the excitement she and her family experienced in the preparation of celebrating a summer holiday, Memorial Day, on one of many childhood memories.

**III. COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE REPORT: SCHINIKA FITCH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

- Schinika Fitch presented a brief update on County Executive David Crowley's first few weeks in office and an update on Commission appointees. A few highlights were the County Executive's visit to one of Milwaukee County's Department on Aging's (MCDA) meal sites, where he assisted staff in passing out meals to seniors via curbside pickup and he reported on Milwaukee County's COVID-19 Crisis status via onsite news coverage. Ms. Fitch hopes to schedule the County Executive to attend a COA meeting as soon as his schedule permits sometime this year.
- Appointee Walt Wachos was unable to attend his hearing at the Health & Human Needs Committee this month. Ms. Fitch will follow-up with Mr. Wachos to see if he is

still interested in becoming a Commissioner, and if not, the Commission will need to identify a new candidate. Also, Commissioner Charles Vang has resigned from the Commission, so the Commission is in the process of identifying a replacement. A question arose if MCDA will have a new Executive Director appointed. Interim Director Shakita LaGrant stated that they don't have an answer at this time but hope to have an answer at the next COA meeting.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2020 AND APRIL 24, 2020, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the February 28, 2020 and April 24, 2020, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Pitchford-Nicholas Moved, Pumphrey Second)

#### **V. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AND PRESENTATION: RICHMOND IZARD, CHAIR**

**A. Select Committee** (Commissioners: Abston-Coleman and Rodgers): Sharon Abston-Coleman, Interim Chair for the Select Committee on Senior Centers – *Planning Committee*, provided a status update on their first meeting, held May 21, 2020. The Planning Committee reviewed the "Envisioning the Future" senior centers report and decided to utilize recommendation number six in the report to formulate a composite figure of whom should serve on the Select Committee. The next Planning Select Committee will meet May 28, 2020, at 3 p.m.

##### **B. COA Compliance:**

- i. **COA Dashboard:** Commissioner Izard explained the concept of the COA Dashboard, which he and Vonda Nyang designed for the Commission to monitor compliance with county ordinance, and track metrics essential to administering effective and efficient governance.
- ii. **Attendance/Policy Discussion** (Pumphrey, Legislative Officer): Chairman Izard discussed the draft of the Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Policy and Procedure Manual "Meeting Attendance Guidelines for Commissioners." The Executive Committee is seeking advice from Corporation Counsel concerning content, authority and procedure. Izard also explained research he conducted concerning how other commissions operate; SDC has a clause that expressly allows for removal of members according to its bylaws. As Legislative Officer, Commissioner Pumphrey briefly discussed a memo the Executive Committee shared with Supervisor Haas regarding Commission on Aging (COA) policies as they relate to potential legislative action, reiterating that the Executive Board is now waiting for Corporation Counsel's advisement.

## **VI. COUNTY SUPERVISOR REPORT: JASON HAAS, COUNTY SUPERVISOR**

- Supervisor Haas was appointed Chair of the Milwaukee County's Board Finance Committee.
- County Executive David Crowley, Supervisor Ryan Clancy, and Supervisor Haas visited and distributed meals to seniors at MCDA's Wilson Park Senior Center curbside meals program.
- Supervisor Haas discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the County's pre-existing budget crisis. There is an additional 20-million-dollar impact due to declining revenues, which has placed the County in a situation where they will face a 50 to a 100-million-dollar deficit. All County departments are planning for a substantial budget reduction due to the pandemic. Considering the Cares Act funding, the Department on Aging has sustained operations without much interruption or having to furlough staff.

## **VII. STATE UPDATES AND REPORT: LAURA LANGER**

- There are two state programs in effect due to the COVID-19 Crisis: The "Families First Corona Virus Relief Act" and the "Economic Security Cares Act." The Care's Act has given MCDA's three-fourths of its annual budget back to assist the Department during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis through 2021.
- Since congregate meal sites are closed due to COVID-19, congregate meal funding has transitioned over to the home delivered and curbside meal programs.
- All participants of the Senior Community Employment program are now at home receiving temporary paid sick leave until June 30, 2020. Everyone will slowly return to work when the site is safe for them to do so.

## **VIII. PRESENTATION ON WELLNESS CALLS TO OLDER ADULTS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS, SERVING OLDER ADULTS**

- Morgan Morgan, Director of Senior Centers, manages Milwaukee County's five owned senior centers and associated in-housed dining sites. Mrs. Morgan gave a presentation on Wellness call statistics, seniors filling out their Census, how the COVID-19 Crisis has impacted Milwaukee County's Senior Centers and program participants, and SOA's next steps to assist seniors during the pandemic. A few suggestions from meeting attendees were for SOA to have teleconferencing options for seniors to stay in contact with their program groups. Mrs. Morgan stated the Advisory Council would soon convene their meetings via teleconferencing.

- During questions and answers, a conversation on face masks for seniors ensued. SOA's sewing and quilters groups has donated 500 face masks to seniors. SOA also shared information about the creation and care of masks, including available CDC guidelines for those who requested the information. Additional highlights from this discussion were to have facemasks designed with a see-through covering over the mouth area to allow death persons to read lips (Contact "Hear Wisconsin" for info.) Finally, there was a request to have organizations mail face masks to seniors who are unable to travel.

**IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: SHAKITA LAGRANT, INTERM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND JON JANOWSKI, DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION**

- Interim Director Shakita LaGrant thanked the Commissioners for their Advocacy and Jon Janowski and his staff for their work during the COVID-19 Crisis. Ms. LaGrant briefly discussed the "No Wrong Door" initiative and collaboration among DHS and Aging. Both departments share the same commitment to serving older adults and the disabled. Both Aging and DHHS have social media posts and collaborate with communications, outreach, and contracts.
- The Department has not missed a day of servicing seniors during the COVID-19 Crisis. MCDA had to create new models of operation, especially with the senior meal programming, and the nutrition program has seen higher numbers of meal participants since the COVID-19 crisis. MCDA doesn't know when the Senior Centers will reopen; however, staff are working closely with officials to make that decision. MCDA received close to \$3 million in federal relief act funding, which has allowed the Department to sustain operations without our furloughing staff. The Department is challenged with the new normal of the COVID-19 impact and implementing best practices for connect with seniors while the centers are closed (phone calls, internet, small group programming.) For daily updates on the COVID-19 Crisis, please check MCDA's website. Mr. Janowski reported that the County Executive, COA Chair and a few Supervisors had visited and distributed curbside meals at Hart Park Senior Center; MCDA plans to transition from Coggs to a new facility by the end of 2021. He also shared a video that MCDA created to acknowledge May as the month of Aging and Disability Resources Centers, and Older American's month.

**X. CONSENT AGENDA COMMITTEE OR COUNCIL REPORTS**

- A. The Executive Committee meeting minutes April 17, 2020, the Advocacy Committee meeting minutes for February 3, 2020 and March 2, 2020, and the Advisory Council meeting minutes for February 13, 2020, all were mailed and distributed for a comprehensive explanation of topic discussions.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Abston-Coleman Moved, Pumphrey Second.)

**XI. COMMISSION ON AGING ANNOUNCEMENTS REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENIORS**

Department and public comment regarding upcoming events, activities, and opportunities for older adults:

- Chairman Izard reviewed June's Committees/Councils meeting schedule. An addition to the program was the Planning Select Committee, scheduled to meet on May 28, 2020, at 3 p.m.
- Serving Older Adults has a Facebook Page that shows SOA's senior virtual programming.
- United Way has a program called "Mask-up MKE." Seniors interested in obtaining faces masks should Contact United Way to see how they can receive free disposable face masks.
- The Wellness Committee will meet sometime in June 2020. Contact Bekki Schmidt for more information at 289-5973.

**XII. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

The next Commission on Aging meeting is at 9 a.m. on Friday, June 26, 2020, as a Google Meets virtual meeting.