



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**Department on Aging**

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging  
Executive Committee Meeting  
August 17, 2020**

A quorum of Executive Committee members convened virtually on Monday, August 17, 2020. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting, which was hosted on Google Meets by connecting via the videoconference or conference call option (computer or telephone).

**Members Present:**

Richmond Izard, *Chairman*  
Sharon Abston-Coleman, Ph.D., *Vice-Chair*  
John Griffith, *Secretary*  
Rev. George Pumphrey, *Legislative Officer*  
Barbara Wyatt Sibley

**MCDA Staff Present:**

Jon Janowski, *Director of Administration*  
Vonda Nyang, *Executive Assistant*

**Attendees from the Public**

Pat Bruce, *ADRC Governing Board, Chair*  
Debra Jupka, *ADRC Governing Board*

**MINUTES**

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Izard called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. with Secretary John Griffith calling the roll. (Attendance noted above)
- II. **Review and approval of the June 1, 2020, Executive Committee meeting minutes**
- III. **Discussion and Action Items:**

**A. Discussion Items:**

**1. Update on Commission on Aging vacancies**

Last month the County Board approved Dr. Elliot Moeser's appointment. Dr. Moeser is to take his oath before the August COA meeting to participate at the August meeting. There are no updates on Commissioner Byington's and Rodgers's reappointments. Commissioners Abston-Coleman, Griffith and Supervisor Haas need reappointment letters submitted as their appointments will expire in November, and Commissioner Amber Miller's in December. There are currently three Commission vacancies in which the composition focus is on the Asian and Hispanic communities. The Chair suggested that MCDA post Commission vacancies on MCDA's website and send them through MCDA email communications. Commissioner Pumphrey will contact the Hispanic and Asian Chamber of Commerce for recommendations, and Barbara Wyatt Sibley will look for Muslim representation.

Mrs. Wyatt Sibley also plans to contact Ricardo Diaz to see if he can provide Hispanic recommendations. Commission candidates Pat Dunn and Cole Knueppel are on hold until they fill the Asian and Hispanic vacancies. Commissioner Griffith would like to add Dain Maddox as a possible candidate as well. There was a suggestion to reach out to the Muslim community.

**2. Feedback Regarding COA June 26 Meeting**

The Executive Committee expressed concerns about MCDA and DHHS's breach in communications concerning the Elder Abuse (EA) and Adult Protective Services (APS) pilot program and rolled out under the auspices of "No Wrong Door." MCDA commenced the pilot without the Commission and other governing bodies' knowledge and input. The Committee questioned the Commission's role and degree of authority mandated by state statute and county ordinance. The Committee reiterated how the Commission and Advisory Council had made it clear to MCDA of the desire and statutory requirement for having a full-time director. The Chair further emphasized the federal mandate to have senior input throughout program planning, which is germane to embracing the "aging difference" rooted in the Wisconsin Elders Act and federal Older Americans Act. The main issue centers around the voice of older adults being circumvented and the authority of the governing bodies being curtailed.

The Committee also expressed concern about false and misleading statements in the Racial Equity Budget Tool. For example, "Strategic Objective Category 2: People-Focused Design" gives the false appearance that MCDA is in regular communication with governing bodies regarding budget development, when in reality MCDA has provided no communications at all. The Committee acknowledged the Commission's desire to work collaboratively with the County Executive, MCDA, DHHS, and the County Supervisors to benefit the senior community. However, the Commission is concerned that MCDA may be usurping authority and expecting governing bodies to "rubber stamp" instead of administering good principals of governance. The Committee decided to seek further clarity concerning the Commission's role and authority to assure members spend their time on issues that they have the power to champion and influence.

**3. Commission on Aging Governance**

Chairman Izard highlighted the Commission's authority to review all plans that impact the elderly population of Milwaukee County, pursuant to Milwaukee County General Code of Ordinances 53.09(9). Authority evolves from Wis. Stat. 46.82(1)(a), 46.82(3) and 46.82(4)(d), as well as the full scope of county ordinance 53.09 and the Older Americans Act. Izard advised the Department that the spirit of the Older American Act necessitates communication, input from older adults and oversight by

governing bodies (COA, Advisory Council, and ADRC Governing Board) early and throughout the planning phases, as well as throughout the program lifecycles. Wis. Stat. 46.82(1)(a) clearly prescribes within the definition of the "Aging Unit" and in 46.82(3) that the commission directs (oversees and presides over) the director.

The Committee then discussed how to move forward with exercising authority, even if MCDA might not have recognized such authority in the past. Chair Izard voiced his concern about the County Executive being briefed about statutes and ordinances that the Commission brought forth at their meetings concerning Commission on Aging governance and statutory requirements. Commission issues and concerns may not be getting to the County Executive. A Committee member suggested that the Commission should start communicating concerns and issues directly with the County Supervisors and the County Executive.

Jon Janowski, Director of Administration, suggested that at the next COA meeting, the department would provide a budget presentation with more detail and an organizational chart. He also agreed to ask David Farwell from Corporation Counsel to attend the full COA meeting to provide an interpretation of the statutes and ordinances discussed at today's meeting. The Committee noted the importance of the said org chart including placement of the governing bodies.

Chair Izard advised Committee members that good governance necessitates concerted focus on COA strategic planning essential to garnering, orchestrating, and achieving operational plans and championing interests voiced by committees and councils. The Chair asked the Executive Committee about their thoughts on what should be the Commission's focus and their highest priorities for the rest of this year and leading into 2021. The Chair also brought up the importance of knowing all Commissioner's backgrounds to tap into their knowledge base and resources that they bring to the Commission.

The Executive Committee's feedback was mainly surrounding advocacy. The Commission should be advocating for the development of new programs, funding for the senior population, Service Delivery (ensuring that seniors are receiving needed services.) They should advocate by informing our senior community of the Commission's role, elections, and voting. The Commission should build a sounding relationship with legislators, the County Executive, MCDA, and County board. They need strategies to mobilize the senior community.

One other major component of the discussion involved formulating and executing administrative strategy for the commission, as opposed to only focusing on operational strategy. It is paramount to ensuring that there is

leadership at the top. The Commission needs to know and embrace its authority. The Executive Committee will invite David Farwell from Corporation Counsel and the Interim Executive Director Shakita LaGrant to the next Executive Committee meeting to discuss its findings.

The Executive Committee charged Commissioner Pumphrey, the Commission's Legislative Officer, to research the Commission's authority and role. Also, he has asked to investigate the Department's authority for eliminating the Executive Director's position in the Department on Aging by examining Chapter 53 of the Milwaukee County General Code of Ordinances, Wis. Stat. 46.82, the Older Americans Act, and any other federal, state or local legislation that outlines the Commission's role, responsibilities, and authority. Commissioner Pumphrey is to report his findings at the August 28, 2020, COA meeting.

The Commission asked Jon Janowski, the Director of Administration, to provide an org chart that displays where the Commission and other governing bodies sit. Additionally, the Commission requested to have a budget presentation and pie chart to provide more information on the funding process, where the money comes in and where it goes.

#### **B. Action Items:**

- a) **Setting the August 28, 2020, Commission on aging meeting agenda**  
The Executive Committee set the June COA agenda.

#### **Announcements**

- There is a Senior Counsel meeting tomorrow from 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. at the DNC. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
- Commissioner Griffith would like to organize a “Senior Lives Matter Rally” to connect to the current public. This will be discussed later.

#### **IV. Adjournment:** A motion was made by Commissioner Abston-Coleman and seconded by Commissioner Griffith to adjourn the meeting.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for September 14, 2020 at 11:45 a.m. live streamed (virtual and audio) in Google Meets and via teleconference.