



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

Advisory Council Meeting Minutes August 12, 2020

Members Present

Commissioner Bettie Rodgers, Chair
Judy Troestler, Vice Chair
Commission Chair Richmond Izard
Commissioner Sharon Abston-Coleman
Barbara Bechtel
Pat Dunn
Commissioner John Griffith
Gene Guskowski
Vi Hawkins
David Hoffman
Debra Jupka
Nia Norris
Patti Pagel
Barbara Wyatt Sibley

Members Not Present

County Supervisor Jason Haas
Ruth Bevenue
James Kimble
Krystina Kohler
Rick Lewandowski
Sally Linder

County Staff Present

Shakita LaGrant, MCDA Interim Director
Dan Idzikowski, MCDA Program and Policy Coordinator
Andrew Bethke, MCDA Outreach Social Worker
Pam Matthews, Budget Analyst, Dept. of Adm. Svcs.
Vonda Nyang, MCDA, Executive Assistant
Mary Proctor Brown, MCDA Budget Director

Commissioners Present

Commissioner George Pumphrey
Commissioner Shirley Sharp

Attendees

Kathy Gale, ERAS Senior Network
Denise Koenig
Elida Elizondo, Social Security
Ginger Rogers, Disability Rights Wisconsin
Sharon Roy
Cathy Wood, SOA
Angela and Jessica – Interpreters

I. Call to Order

A quorum of Advisory Council members convened virtually on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Chair Bettie Rodgers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

II. Review and Approval of the May 13, 2020, Advisory Council meeting minutes

In the attendance section on page 1, Alice Pugh is listed as a member but should show as an attendee. Also, Commissioner Izard is listed as an attendee but should show as a member. Lastly, on page 4, agenda item 8, the fourth paragraph, "Jon Janowski and Barbara Wyatt Sibley offered to join the Commission on Aging, "the Commission on Aging" is incorrect; it should state "the Planning Committee." Approval of the minutes upon corrections.

MOTION: To approve the May 13, 2020, Advisory Council meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Jupka Moved, Bechtel Second).

III. Progress on MCDA Area Plan and Updates on COVID-19 Response: MCDA and Vendors

- **Update on Senior Statesman Program:** Idzikowski posted the 6th quarter update on the 2019-2021 3-year Area Aging Plan review. Idzikowski highlighted that the Senior Statesman Program was very successful in 2019; however, this year the Senior Statesman Program was cancelled due to COVID-19. MCDA is reviewing training modules to see if they can transition the majority of the in-person training into a virtual platform to offer the program yet this year, with more information to come later.

- **Update on Increasing Senior Knowledge of Policies that affect them and the Importance of policies and the Senior Community Building relationships with their Elected officials:** Last year, Idzikowski conducted information sessions on the State Budget and supported the Advisory Council's Senior Center envisioning sessions. This year, the Advisory Council did not conduct any separate meetings because of COVID-19. Idzikowski provides regular advocacy updates to the Advisory Council, the community and its partners in an email. The Advisory Council plans to hold a community breakfast next year if the Public Health Emergency passes.
 - **Update on MCDA Nutrition Programs: Dining Sites, Home Delivered Meal Programs, and Promoting Health Aging:** The Advisory Council topped its goal of opening two new dining sites; they opened five. Due to COVID-19, most dining sites had to convert to a drive-up take-out option meal site. However, there was revenue loss due to the COVID-19 crisis. The Eight Dimensions of Wellness project is on hold until next year because of the senior centers' closures. There were a few dining sites that MCDA didn't convert to pick-up/delivery. MCDA made calls, emailed, and sent out flyers to communicate to the public about meal sites and services that are available to them during COVID-19.
 - **Update on Services in Support of Caregivers:** Currently, there are no updates on caregiver support services. The COVID-19 crisis had impacted the Alzheimer's Association's planning for this service and continues to be a challenge with finding caregivers to assist those with needing respite care. The support workers are not comfortable with visiting homes, and patient's fear exposure to the virus from outsiders. This is a considerable problem statewide.
 - **Update on Services to People with Dementia:** MCDA exceeded expectations in this area as well. MCDA has two Dementia Care Specialists, one who is fluent in Spanish. Both specialists have attended various outreach events, except for in the LGBT community. DCS's are working on a plan to reach out to this community. MCDA continues to provide cognitive testing during COVID-19 via phone and through virtual meetings and is training businesses and bus drivers on dementia friendly practices.
 - **Updates on Healthy Aging/ Healthy Aging Evidence Based Programming:** A few of the in-person evidence-based programs were modified to a virtual platform. MCDA will be the first in the state to pilot and launch a virtual Evidence Based program "Stepping-On" in the next few months.
 - **Updates on Elder Justice:** The Elder Abuse team conducted several successful training events before COVID-19. The Elder Justice goal to have the Coordinated Community Response Team work on a new resource and referral guide for healthcare clinics is on hold during COVID-19.
 - **Senior Centers & Local Programs:** The Senior Center planning committee is meeting regularly; the Senior Hall of Fame and Recognition Dinner is on hold until further notice. The Advisory Council Chair recommended in addition to Goal #3 that the Senior Center Committee be listed as reporting its findings to the Advisory Council to ensure compliance with the Older American's Act.
- IV. 2021 County and Wisconsin State Budget-Update / MCDA's 2021 budget:** Shakita LaGrant, Interim Director for MCDA, provided a brief PowerPoint overview of MCDA's budget for 2021. MCDA had a \$305,000 tax levy reduction for 2021. To sustain senior services requested by the community, MCDA had to cut \$170,000 from SOA's senior centers socialization program funding and defund three positions: MCDA Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, and a Program Coordinator; and eliminate a Support Specialist and Secretarial Assistant.

MCDA created three new positions to assist with direct services to seniors. The Department also received additional funding and expanded services for the Elder Abuse Unit, transportation, Alzheimer's and Dementia Care, meal delivery, LGBT outreach services, and established a new Elder Benefits Specialist position. Through expanded meal delivery we expect to increase participants in the congregate meal program in 2021. Lastly, the department applied for a new grant that would assist seniors transitioning from nursing homes to back into the community. LaGrant is meeting with Corporation Counsel and the state to ensure MCDA's budget decisions are compliant with state laws.

- Chairwoman Rodgers asked why the department is moving forward with defunding the Executive Director's position when the Commission made it clear that MCDA must have an Executive Director. The Commission voiced why they disagreed with eliminating the Executive Director's position to the department some time ago; however, the Commission was not aware of these discussions and decisions; This concerns the Commission that the County Executive does not hear their concerns. MCDA told the Commission that they would have a new Executive Director after the new County Executive came on board. During this crisis in dealing with COVID-19 and seniors coping with underlying co-morbidities, they need help now more than ever. The Chair wanted to know how the Executive director's position is funded and where the money came from to support this position.
- There were several concerns discussed by Advisory Council members including that budget information shared wasn't detailed enough to show where the expenditures come from and how the department allocates its revenue. More detail is needed for the Advisory Council and Commission to review so they can provide the department with sound advice. There were also concerns about the Coggs building's location and accessibility. A meeting attendee suggested that the Advisory Council invite DHHS Deputy Director David Mohamad to provide a presentation on the County's facility plan for the Coggs location as he did with the ADRC Governing Board.
- LaGrant reiterated that MCDA only has a small portion of its budget dedicated to tax levy. So, to retain filled positions and maintain services, the Department decided to defund the Executive Director's position. MCDA has been fully operational without an Executive Director since Autumn.
- A member voiced concerns about MCDA's word use of the word "un-funding", of positions in the department, as this verbiage could confuse the department's intentions. LaGrant mentions that the State has been consulted regarding the defunding of the Executive Director's position. A member suggested reviewing the Executive Director and the Director of Administration's job descriptions and compare them to each other to see the differences in their activities and the needs of each position to be successful in each role. The meeting attendees discussed the importance of MCDA's need to stay in compliance with state and federal laws.
- Commissioner Izard mentioned that the most significant issue MCDA is facing is compliance with the Wisconsin statutory requirement to appoint a full-time aging unit director. In MCDA's current situation, the Interim Director serves both DHHS and MCDA, which is not full-time in Aging. Izard questioned whether the Department is compliant with the state law when operating in this fashion. The Commission and Advisory Council would like to have direct communications with the State because the Commission has not been in the front line of communications with MCDA. Because of this communication issue, much information the Commission has received was secondhand. The COA and the Advisory Council should have a meeting with the State.

Dunn notes that the State Aging Advisory Council is meeting tomorrow and all are welcome to attend. The information would be forwarded to those who are interested in attending.

- Director LaGrant reiterated that she is meeting with County Corporation Counsel and the State to ensure MCDA's budget decisions are in line with state laws. She welcomed members of the CoA and Advisory Council to set up one-on-one meetings with her to discuss budget concerns. LaGrant emphasized that she does not want the Committees, Councils, and or the Department divided in any way. Now is a critical time for everyone to work collaboratively together. Our seniors need their services more than ever during this pandemic.

A member requested the department to provide an organizational chart that would illustrate the Executive Director's job reassignments and show which staff would receive those assigned duties to demonstrate how a streamlined MCDA would work and how it would affect MCDA. Currently, the Advisory Council is focusing on the Department's mandated requirement to have an Executive Director.

V. 2022-2024 Area Aging Plan Timeline

- Idzikowski informed the Advisory Council of the need to come up with a process to collect data for the 3-year Area Aging Area Plan for 2022-2024. Last year the Advisory Council scheduling listening sessions, public hearings and conducted various surveys to collect data for the Senior Center Envisioning process. Due to COVID-19, the Advisory Council is tasked with collecting data virtually, which must be completed by the end of 2021. The new Area Plan will be effective as of January 2022.
- The Advisory Council discussed the effectiveness of last-year processes and brainstormed on what they should do for this year. They would like to consider bringing in someone with expertise with the matter to assist with the planning. Discussion followed about their audience and the access and knowledge they have with technology. Which media and platforms would be the easiest for seniors to utilize? Do they already have technology in their possession?
- There was a suggestion to reach out to specific cultural communities, Sikh, Muslim Jewish, Native American, and Hmong communities were left out last year. Someone from the ADRC Governing Board could collaborate on collecting data as both boards are likely seeking similar information. Involve the Senior Center Committee once established.

VI. Transportation Coordination and Mobility Management grant application

One of the Area Plan's goals was to address transportation gaps. Idzikowski notes that most of the surrounding counties have transportation coordinators called mobility managers. Mobility Managers provide overall coordination of transportation services and assist people with disabilities and older adults with accessing transportation options. MCDA is preparing a 2-year 5310 federal grant for \$150,000 through the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Council to establish a Mobility Manager/Transportation Coordinator position in Milwaukee County in the A/DRC. A suggestion was made to include Parks and Recreation to connect seniors accessing trails and parks.

MOTION: To affirm support for applying for the 5310 federal grant to create a Mobility Manager/Transportation Coordinator position within MCDA

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith moved, Abston-Coleman seconded).

VII. Senior Centers Committee Update

The planning group for the Senior Center Committee met on July 9, 2020. They are seeking members for the Committee. The Committee sent an invitation letter to 450 emails and posted the message on MCDA's website. The planning committee is meeting again on August 26, 2020. The planning committee will set a plan and goals for the new Committee, including electing officers, operations, etc. Abston-Coleman will work with Chair Iazard to select members and notify everyone at the next meeting. They currently have sixteen applications for 12 open positions. If you know of someone that should be on this Committee, please contact Idzikowski. Bechtel suggested advertising in the 50 Plus magazine to find more people to serve on this Committee.

VIII. Announcements and Member Recruitment

It is time to think about members to serve on all of MCDA's Committees and Councils and inform the Chairs of those you know who would like to serve on a Committee or Council in 2021. An interest form can be found on MCDA's website.

MOTION: To adjourn and reconvene the Aging Advisory Council in 2020 to consider remaining issues.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith moved, Abston-Coleman second).

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

The next Advisory Council meeting is at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 as a Microsoft Teams virtual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
Executive Assistant