



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**Department on Aging  
Advocacy Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 7, 2020**

**Members Present**

Shirley Sharp, Chair  
Sharon Abston-Coleman, Vice Chair  
Maureen Conrad  
Sandra Dotson  
Commissioner John Griffith  
Matthew V. Hayes  
Commissioner Richmond Izard  
Debra Jupka  
Sally Linder  
Gary Mikolajczyk  
Commissioner Elliot Moeser  
Cindy Van Vreede

**Members Excused**

Jason Haas, *Milwaukee County Supervisor*  
Barbara Bechtel  
Casper Green  
Maureen Fitzgerald  
Bob Haase  
David Hoffman  
Harold Oemig  
Alice Pugh  
Gary Sprong  
Judith Troestler

**Milwaukee County Staff**

Shakita LaGrant, Executive Director DHHS  
Andrew Bethke  
Daniel Idzikowski  
Jon Janowski, *MCDA Interim Executive Director*  
Alec Knutson, *County Executive's Office*  
Pam Mathews  
M. Kent Mayfield  
Vonda Nyang  
Mary Proctor Brown  
Kayla Steinke

**Guests**

Cheryl E. Adams  
Christine Carter  
Lula Chambers  
Sandra Dotson  
Pat Dunn  
Elida Elizondo, *SSA Office*  
Nick Janis, *Office of State Senate*  
Gloria  
Nancy Rodriguez  
Eilene Washington  
Commissioner Janice Wilberg  
Cathy Woods

**I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL - 44 in attendance**

A quorum of Advocacy Committee members convened virtually on Monday, December 7, 2020. Chairman Sharp welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. Dan Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator took roll call. Chairman Sharp informed the Advocacy Committee that George Pumphrey, the Advocacy Committee's former Vice-Chair had resigned from the Commission. The Chair wants the members to think about whom they would like to nominate to select a new Vice-Chair at the end of today's meeting.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2020, ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

One correction cited is on page 4, under the item "County Budget, the second paragraph, sentence two, the date displayed at the end of the sentence for the Area Plans submission to the State should be December 1, 2020, not December 21, 2020. Minutes approved upon the correction noted above.

**MOTION:** To approve the November 2, 2020, Advocacy Committee meeting minutes.

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

### III. **DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEM: RACIAL EQUITY AND ADVOCACY**

Idzikowski introduced the "Racial Equity and Advocacy Discussion/ Action item on the Committee's agenda, as a reflection of the County's strategic direction to address racial equities and make Milwaukee County the state's healthiest county. Idzikowski encouraged the Committee to think about how they can address racial equities and policy biases. Idzikowski asked if the "Racial Equity and Advocacy Discussion/Action" item should be a standing agenda item. There were two suggestions given; one was for the Advocacy Committee to bring in a health expert to talk about racial equity when it comes to the healthcare system. The second was that it would be beneficial for the Advocacy Committee to review the current public policies federal, state, and local to see if they can frame them from a racial equity perspective or any racial aspects to them for 2021. Idzikowski echoed that it would be an excellent idea for the Advocacy Committee to review their public policies and priorities through a racial which they haven't done in the past, and bring in a professional to discuss health policy and how racial equities progress in Milwaukee County. Idzikowski will explore inviting a health professional to present at their January Advocacy Committee meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion on the Advocacy Committee's Public Policies and Priorities. The Advocacy Committee should have the Strategic Governance Select Committee, an ad hoc committee, assist the Advocacy Committee in helping determine how the Advocacy Committee can partner with Milwaukee County's Department on Aging (MCDA) to embrace the Public Priorities and Policies. The Select Committee would collaborate with the department on the Public Policies that the committee drafts and provide ideas to the Advocacy Committee.

### IV. **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATES:**

The Advocacy Committee invited elected Federal and County representatives to today's meeting to provide updates. Idzikowski provided a few federal updates.

#### **A. Federal Aging Policy Briefing**

1. COVID-19 Response Bills: No new federal COVID-19 relief package has passed. However, US House of Representatives Speaker Pelosi agreed to provide a smaller COVID-19 relief package, but it is contingent upon the Senate to concur with the bipartisan framework before a relief package can be passed before the end of this year. The Advocacy Committee advocated for this relief to include additional funding for the Older American's Act programs and state and county relief for operational support and COVID-19 response. The CARES Act funds MCDA received this year must be spent down in the current year. If the County doesn't receive an extension on CARES Act funding, it will run out of resources for a number of COVID-19 programs. Idzikowski is sending out a recent email Advocacy briefing later today that will include our representative's contact information to forward correspondence.

2. **Caregiver Task Force:** The Caregiver's task force at the federal level has continued to meet as well as the Grandparent's Council. They have put together a series of recommendations which still need to be considered.
3. **Social Security Office Update:** All workers are still working from home. They are reaching out to the vulnerable community (elderly, homebound, and disabled), and agencies to provide them information on how to contact them locally during COVID. If you know of any organization who is interested in having a presentation to learn about Social Security, retirement, etc., feel free to contact Ms. Elida Elizondo at (866) 504-5014, Ext. 35026.
4. **Medicare Enrollment:** Today is the last day for open Medicare enrollment, including your prescription drug plan. If you have not had a chance to review your plans, please do so before the end of today to ensure you are receiving the coverage you need. MCDA has a video posted on the website for those who are interested in viewing information about Medicare.

#### **B. State Legislative Issues:**

1. **Legislation pending:** The legislature has not met or acted on legislation for most of this year. The Governor has proposed a relief package to address the COVID-19 pandemic, but the legislature has refused to consider it. Both parties met this past Friday to try to reach a compromise. The Assembly also created a series of proposals that the state Senate didn't agree to and this has placed negotiations at a halt. Idzikowski encouraged members to contact their state representatives and legislators to encourage them to reach an agreement for a unified plan.
2. **State Disaster Medical Taskforce/ The SDMAC Vaccine Subcommittee:** Two additional recommendations were posed for review regarding how the COVID-19 vaccinations will be distributed. Idzikowski provided a brief overview.

#### **C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues:**

1. **Milwaukee County Board:** There were a few amendments made to the County Executive's budget. Senior Center programming received an increase and thus Serving Older Adults will not experience a cut next year. There was \$50,000 set aside for general use for the department. The integration plan with DHSS will be effective as of January 1, 2021.
2. **Aging items of interest/Alec Knutson**  
Milwaukee County is spearheading a collaboration with coalitions across the state to encourage action at the federal level to implore congress to provide bipartisan legislation to provide critical assistance to communities throughout the state to address the ongoing public health crisis and its economic impacts. Milwaukee County would like to include the Commission on Aging to the letter.

**MOTION:** To authorize the Commission on Aging as a signatory on the coalition letter to support COVID-19 relief.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Conrad Second).

## **V. WISCONSIN STATE BUDGET**

Idzikowski reminded the Committee that the Governor was putting together his proposed state biennial budget. The Committee has already recommended communicating priorities regarding the Fair Deal initiative and Medicaid expansion. The Wisconsin Aging Action Network and the Wisconsin Counties Association are also asking to prioritize increased funding for the Aging and Disability Resource Centers. The Milwaukee County ARC is also underfunded from an equitable standpoint and this proposal would address this disparity. The ask is for the Commission to prioritize this ask of 51 million for full ADRC funding.

Milwaukee County Department on Aging is requesting a funding increase from the State for MCDA's ARC Resource Center and for specific programming (Elder Benefit Program). The Department is asking for 51 Million dollars.

**MOTION:** The Advocacy's policy position letter to add full funding for ADRCs to Medicaid expansion, sales tax, and other fair deal legislative options as Wisconsin State Budget priorities for the Commission on Aging.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, Moeser Second)

## **VI. VOTING and ELECTIONS**

Idzikowski noted the outcome of the November elections and encouraged the Advocacy Committee members to engage their newly elected representatives. A question was posed whether we could gauge if MCDA's efforts were successful in getting more seniors to vote? Idzikowski noted that once the final tallies have come in, MCDA can report on the data numbers of how many seniors came out to vote this year. The Committee would like to send a letter to all elected officials congratulating them on their elections or reelections.

**MOTION:** Send an electronic letter to all new elected officials congratulating them on their elections and or reelections and stating we look forward to working with them in the future. Idzikowski to draft the letter.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, Conrad Second).

## **VII. NOMINATING A NEW CHAIR FOR THE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE**

The Advocacy Committee had nominated Commissioner Griffith to be the Vice Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

**MOTION:** Nominate John Griffith to be the Vice Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

**ACTION:** prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Sharp Second)

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.**

The next Advocacy Committee meeting is at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Submitted by, Vonda Nyang