



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
Department on Aging

## Aging Advisory Council Meeting Minutes October 26, 2020

### **Members Present**

Bettie Rodgers, J.D., *Chair*  
Judy Troestler, *Vice Chair*  
Sharon Abston-Coleman, Ph.D.  
Barbara Bechtel  
Ruth Bevenue  
Pat Dunn  
John K. Griffith  
Gene Guskowski  
David Hoffman  
Vi Hawkins  
Richmond Izard  
Debra Jupka  
Sally Linder  
Nia Norris  
Patti Pagel

### **Members Excused**

Jason Haas, *Milwaukee County Supervisor*  
Barbara Wyatt Sibley  
James Kimble  
Krystina Kohler  
Rick Lewandowski

### **Milwaukee County Staff**

County Executive David Crowley  
Shakita LaGrant, *DHHS*  
Jon Janowski, *MCDA*  
Marietta Luster  
Dan Idzikowski

### **Guests**

Neal Minogue, *WI-DHS Office on Aging*  
Stephanie Sue Stein, *LPS*  
Commissioner Shirley Sharp  
Alice Steuck Ko

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

A quorum of Advisory Council members convened virtually on Monday, October 26, 2020. After the roll call, Chair Rodgers welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

### **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 12, 2020, ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**MOTION:** To approve the August 12, 2020, Aging Advisory Council meeting minutes.

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

### **III. 2019-2021 MILWAUKEE COUNTY AREA AGING PLAN – PROPOSED AMENDMENT PRESENTATION**

Dan Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator, reported that the Milwaukee County Department on Aging is in the second year of their three-year (2019-2021) Milwaukee County Area Aging Plan. This plan is up for consideration for amendment at today's meeting. COVID-19 has impacted most of the work regarding the Area Plan goals; however, the department has delivered a few services virtually. There are not many

updates for the sixth and seventh quarter of the plan. Idzikowski briefly highlights updates on goals from the current Area Plan.

- **Senior Statesman Program:** Due to COVID-19, MCDA canceled the 2020 Senior Statesman program. MCDA made attempts to create a regional training with the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network, which has not come to fruition.
- **Nutrition Programs:** The Nutrition program continues to distribute meals through curb site dining. There were a few sites that had closed due to facility and staff unavailability. MCDA continues to experience larger demand for meals than before the pandemic, as well as the need for home delivery. MCDA was able to expand nutrition services during COVID-19 through the Cares Act funding. If MCDA doesn't receive additional funding through a new COVID-19 relief bill, there will be cutbacks on delivered meals. MCDA's Nutrition Coordinator, Gaylyn Reske, is contacting Minority Business Enterprises for potential meal sites to diversify MCDA's meal production, distribution and provide more locations throughout the community.
- **Caregiver Support Programs:** The Caregiver support programs have experienced setbacks in executing their programs due to the pandemic. The Governor's Taskforce on Caregiving published their final report. The Advocacy Committee, Advisory Council, and the Commission on Aging have received a copy of this report. MCDA's Committees and Councils forwarded their comments to the Governor's Taskforce before completing their final report. Mr. Idzikowski had encouraged meeting participants interested in advocating for increased caregiver support services to contact the Governor's task force.
- **Dementia Care:** MCDA's Dementia training, screenings, and events have not experienced any interruption and they are provided through an online virtual platform. There are no new reports available.
- **Evidence-Based Programs:** The Wellness programs through the Wisconsin Institute on Healthy Aging experienced setbacks from not enough participants signing up to take online courses, so they have not been successful with virtual programming. There is a new Chronic Pain course coming this Tuesday. If you know of anyone who might be interested in participating, please contact Jennifer Lefeber.
- **Elder Justice:** The integration pilot program with Elder Abuse and Adult Protective Services units is still underway. MCDA has some staff conducting home visits with clients if needed.
- **Transportation Services:** MCDA submitted a grant for federal Sec. 5310 funding to establish a Transportation Coordinator within MCDA in cooperation with the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), Disability Services, and the Department on Transportation to meet the needs addressed by the Commission on Aging (COA), Combined Community Services Board and ADRC Governing Board regarding transportation. The goal is to coordinate and expand available and affordable services for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans. The department expects an

answer **by November 2020**. Also included in the grant was a proposal to create an Interagency Transportation Coordination Council for the County.

- **Milwaukee County Senior Centers:** Milwaukee County's Senior Centers will continue to remain closed until at least the first quarter of next year. However, they are providing virtual programming and some outdoor classes for seniors.

#### **IV. 2019-2021 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE AREA AGING PLAN**

Chairwoman Rodgers informed the Advisory Council of the main purpose of today's meeting. The Department asked the Advisory Council to review MCDA's integration plan with the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Service and recommend whether the Department should amend MCDA's current Area Aging Plan to include the County Executive's integration plan. Chairwoman Rodgers reminded the Advisory Council that one of their primary functions is to develop and administer the Area Plan for MCDA.

County Executive Crowley provided a brief overview of his vision that Milwaukee County become the healthiest County in the state by addressing racial equity and eliminate health disparities, and his concept of the "No Wrong Door." Also discussed was the integration plan of the Department on Aging, Veteran Services, and DHHS.

Milwaukee County was the first local government in the US to declare racism a public health crisis. In April 2020, the County Board approved an ordinance that committed Milwaukee County to advance in racial equity by eliminating health disparities.

Executive Crowley and his team have been presenting and advancing his own vision for Milwaukee County. The "No Wrong Door" customer service approach as it relates to human services for people with disabilities, older adults, those with mental health issues, veterans young and old, homelessness, and housing insecurities. Any person, regardless of age or status, will receive the help that they need when they need it. Providing these specialized services will require an integrated delivery system that will allow people to get what they need as quickly as possible, through social services integration across the lifespan.

Executive Crowley explained how the departments would benefit from the integration and what would happen if the integration plan didn't occur. A few of the highlights were:

##### **Benefits**

- DHHS is establishing a new coordinated IT System
- Applying a person-centric practice model
- Conducting a relocation plan for DHHS
- Implementing quality assurance in contracting
- Tax Levy fully supports senior Centers. The integration would free up those tax levy dollars to be given back to the Aging Division to support senior centers.

### Risks

- Elder Benefits Specialist position would not exist
- Two new Human Social Worker positions would not be possible
- Older adults would be left behind
- Tax Levy Target – would affect funding and services

### Comments and Feedback

- Neal Minogue, Older American's Act Supervisor for the State Office on Aging reported that 65% of Aging Units are connected to Aging and Disability Resource Centers in the state of WI; Most of them have integrated. The State Office on Aging has been working for many years asking Aging Units and ADRC's to combine, and it is something they wholly support. Based on the feedback from customers that this is what they feel works best for them. The majority are glad that they integrated and wouldn't want to go back to the way things were.
- MCDA can accomplish the integration goal by integrating the Aging Unit and the Aging Resource Center without integrating departments.
- The feedback from Committee members and seniors today were they do not believe the County Executive or DHHS will listen to them. Nor do not think they will be included in the decision-making process with the County Executive's Office and DHHS, given the history that has already taken place with not being included in the planning and execution of the integration plan. They are concerned that County Executive Crowley is not going to listen to seniors as that is what his structure has shown. The County Executive and DHHS left seniors out of the planning process and it had continued this way throughout the months of planning and executing plans even though at meetings they were told they would be informed and included in the discussions.
- The County Executive's Office and DHHS created the integration plan outside of partnership with the Advisory Council, and the Area Plan is in the process of being changed without the Advisory Council's collaboration. The Older Americans Act allows Seniors to voice and make decisions for senior services, not the County. The Advisory Council was not involved in planning and decision-making but is now asked after the fact.
- Both the County Executive and DHHS Director have stated throughout the meeting that they want to have a collaboration with the Commission on Aging and its Advisory Council. The integration of the Departments will take a lot of work over the course of the year and the Departments will need your support and involvement. The goal is to make all services easier to access for our seniors.

**MOTION:** To delay for one-year the approval of any amendment to the existing 2019-2021 Area Agency on Aging Plan for Milwaukee County Area on Aging to integrate the Milwaukee County Department on Aging into the Department of Health and Human Services subject to evaluation of this decision with the County Executive's Office.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by vote of 6 Yes, 5 No, and 2 Abstained (Dunn Moved, Hoffman Second.)

Bechtel – Yes, Bevenue – No, Dunn – Yes, Griffith – Abstain, Guskowski – Yes, Hoffman – Yes, Jupka – No, Norris – Abstain, Pagel – Yes, Rodgers – No, Troestler – No, Izard - Yes  
Hawkins – No

**V. 2022-2024 AREA AGING PLAN TIMELINE** – No Discussion

**VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MEMBER RECRUITMENT** – No Announcements

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 3 p.m.

The next Advisory Council meeting is at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 10, 2021, as a MS Teams virtual meeting.

Respectfully,

Vonda Nyang  
Executive Assistant