



**Advocacy Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021**

Members Present

Commissioner Shirley Sharp, Chair
Commissioner John Griffith, Vice Chair
Barbara Bechtel
Maureen Conrad
Sandra Dotson
Commissioner Jason Haas
Sally Lindner
Gary Mikolajczyk
Harold Oemig
Cindy Van Vreede

Members Excused

Bob Haase
David Hoffman
Commissioner Richmond Izard
Debra Jupka
Sally Lindner
Alice Pugh
Gary Sprong
Sherie Tustler

Milwaukee County Staff

Andrew Bethke
Daniel Idzikowski
Pam Mathews
Vonda Nyang
Carrie Vallejo

Guests

Christine Carter
Melva Darrough
Pat Dunn
Kate Hudson
Matthew Hayes
Commissioner Gloria Miller
Stephanie Sue Stein
Commissioner Janice Wilberg
Cathy Woods

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Commissioner Sharp called the Advocacy Committee to order on Monday, March 1, 2021 at 1:30 p.m. Vonda Nyang, Division on Aging Executive Assistant, took a roll call. There were not sufficient members to present to constitute a quorum, so the meeting proceeded without votes.

II. APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2021 ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Due to lack of quorum, the February minutes were held over to the April meeting.

III. UPDATE ON ACTION ITEMS

Idzikowski reported out on updates. First, a letter was sent to the Milwaukee County federal delegation advocating for OAA and County relief in the newest COVID-19 relief bill. Second, a letter opposing AB1 limitation on Governor's powers was not sent because the legislative action mooted this item. Third, Wisconsin Budget Priorities were updated.

IV. DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEM: RACIAL EQUITY AND ADVOCACY

Gary Mikolajczyk provided a reflection on his experience with the civil rights movement.

V. LEGISLATIVE & POLICY UPDATES (DISCUSSION & ACTION)

A. Federal Aging Policy Briefing

COVID-19 Response Bills: The new COVID-19 response bill, the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) passed the House, was amended in the Senate and is now back in the the House for final consideration. Increased funding for Title IIIC Older American Act programs as well as direct funding for counties and additional support for vaccination of older adults is included in this bill. Amounts will be substantial.

B. State Legislative Issues:

Legislation pending: The Assembly and Senate has chosen not to implement a mask wearing rule and are holding hearings in person, some without masked. WAAN and the Disability Vote Coalition have sent a letter requesting that all hearings have a virtual option so that older adults and individuals with disabilities can safely participate.

SB92 requires standard training for potential adult guardians, but without funding.

Elder Abuse bills as noted on the agenda. GWAAR testified in favor of increasing penalties for financial exploitation, but others had concerning provisions regarding the power that would be delegated to bank clerks to put a freeze on older adults' accounts.

A series of bills restricting absentee voting or changing the process for voting have been proposed, including changing the process of declaring oneself "indefinitely confined". Summary of these bills is included in the packet. WAAN finds these bills problematic. Griffith encourages members to contact and build relationships with their state legislators at 800-362-9472.

C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues:

Aging Items of Interest: Supervisor Haas notes there is not much happening at the County level. Encourages advocacy with state legislators regarding voting rights.

VI. WISCONSIN STATE BUDGET PRIORITIES

Idzikowski reviewed the additional provisions the Advocacy Committee agreed upon at the last Advocacy Committee meeting to include in its final version of the Commission's State Budget Priorities.

Included WAAN document outlining the provisions most directly impacting older adults in the Governor's Executive Budget for 2022-23. Idzikowski walks through these provisions: Dementia Care Specialist expansion statewide, increase caregiver support, no additional funding for ADRC core funding, expands FMLA to small employers, increases unemployment compensation, funds housing navigators and homelessness prevention, expands Medicaid under the ACA, mental health provisions for Milwaukee County

including crisis stabilization, BOALTC ombudsman funding, health equity grants, prescription drug cost reduction, transportation aid increase by 2%, automatic voter registration through the DMV.

Idzikowski notes talking points on the ADRC core funding increase are included in the packet and encourages members to review these and advocate with their legislators.

Senator Tim Carpenter introduces himself and notes that he will be sure to address our priorities and work with Senators Johnson and Kooyenga on the Joint Finance Committee.

VII. COMMISSION ON AGING PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Idzikowski shares ideas for broad priorities at the federal, state, and local level.

Federal: 1) OAA funding; 2) Fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines; 3) Improve access and engagement in community through transportation, age friendly infrastructure and transportation

State: 1) Expand Medicaid to cover all Wisconsin residents at or below 135% FPL; 2) Advance Fair Deal Initiative; 3) Maintain voting access and ensure fair re-districting;

Local: 1) Preserve County Levy funder for older adult services; 2) Improve Senior Centers/ Senior Center programming; 3) Improve advocacy opportunities in County programming.

VIII. ADVOCACY GOALS FOR 2022-2024 Area Plan (Discussion)

Dan Idzikowski informed the Advocacy Committee that the Division on Aging must develop their 2022-2024 Area Plan including a goal regarding advocacy. Idzikowski reviews the 2019-21 Area Plan Advocacy Goals. He asks the Advocacy Committee to think about goals for promoting advocacy in the 2022-2024 Area plan, particularly in light of the ongoing pandemic. Dotson suggests better inform senior center participants. Conrad suggests public broadcasting to promote programs offered through the Division on Aging. Griffith suggests using local newspapers, developing a podcast, and developing technology training for older adults.

IX. ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES:

Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Days, will be virtual this year March 22nd & 24th. You can register today by visiting: <http://bit.ly/Advocacy2021>. WAAN is working on a virtual Advocacy Day as well. Extensive list of Advocacy Opportunities included as an attachment. Griffith encourages all members to vote in the upcoming Spring election.

X. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be held virtually at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, April 5, 2021.