



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
Department on Aging

**Commission on Aging  
Meeting Minutes  
November 13, 2020**

**Commissioners**

Richmond Izard, *Chair*  
Sharon Abston-Coleman, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*  
John Griffith, *Secretary*  
Jason Haas, *Milwaukee County Supervisor*  
Ronald Byington  
Amber Miller  
Elliot Moeser, Ph.D.  
Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, Ph.D.  
Bettie Rodgers, J.D.  
Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

**Commissioners Excused**

Gloria Miller  
Shirley Sharp

**Milwaukee County Staff**

Mary Jo Meyers, *County Executive's Office*  
Shakita LaGrant, *DHHS*  
David Muhammad, *DHHS*  
Jon Janowski, *MCDA*

**Milwaukee County Staff Continued...**

Schinika Fitch, *County Executive's Office*  
Isaac Rowlett, *County Executive's Office*  
Margaret Daun, *Office of Corporation Counsel*  
David Farwell, *Office of Corporation Counsel*  
Samta Bhatnagar, *DHHS*  
Jill Lintonen, *DHHS*  
Marietta Luster, *DHHS*  
Pam Mathews, *DAS Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget*  
Vonda Nyang, *MCDA*  
Carrie Vallejo, *MCDA*  
Rachel Kaehny-Frank, *MCDA*

**Guests**

Neal Minogue, *State of WI, DHS*  
Barbara Wyatt Sibley  
Amy Simonsen, *Interpreter*  
Maria Kielma, *Interpreter*

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

A quorum of Commission on Aging (COA) members convened virtually on Friday, November 13, 2020. Chairman Richmond Izard welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Secretary Griffith took roll call.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 23, 2020, AND NOVEMBER 2, 2020, COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the October 23, 2020, Commission on Aging meeting minutes.

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

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Advocacy Committee meeting minutes for October 5, 2020, Advisory Council meeting minutes for August 12, 2020, and the Service Delivery Committee meeting minutes for July 23, 2020 and July 30, 2020.

MOTION: To accept the November 13, 2020 consent agenda

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

**IV. COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE REPORT: SCHINIKA FITCH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Yesterday, County Executive David Crowley and County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Marcellia Nicholson signed the adopted 2021 Milwaukee County Budget, which included the integration plan of three County Departments: The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Milwaukee County Department on Aging (MCDA), and the Veterans Services. The vision of the "No Wrong Door," achieving racial equity, and becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin is now officially underway.

On January 1, 2021, MCDA and Veterans Services will officially become a unit under DHHS's integration plan, and if DHHS's and MCDA's ADRC's pilot is successful, the integration of the Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center will be effective as of January 1, 2022.

The County Executive Office continues their search for Asian and Latinx representation to fill positions on the Commission on Aging. If Commissioners have someone, they think would be interested in serving on the Commission, please provide their contact information to Ms. Fitch. Three Commissioners are now up for reappointment: Commissioners John Griffith, Supervisor Haas, and Abston-Coleman. If Commissioners have questions, please contact her. She can be reached at (414)

Commissioner Moeser asked Ms. Fitch if the Legislator's Equity Task Force had invited Milwaukee County to present information on their racial equity initiative. Commission Moeser suggested that the County Executive's Office contact the State Equity Task Force to inform them of the work the County is doing with working to achieve racial equity throughout the County.

Chairman Izard thanked the County Executive and his staff for their attendance at the past few COA meetings and Advisory Council meetings. Chairman Izard informed the Commission that Isaac Rowlett, Director of Strategic Planning, had invited interested Commissioners to participate in the County's strategic planning process at the last Executive Committee meeting. Commissioners Moeser, Pumphrey, and himself had accepted the invitation. However, Commissioner Pumphrey is no longer a Commissioner, and the Executive Committee had decided there should be female representation in the planning process.

The Chair asked if there were any other Commissioners interested in participating on the Strategic Governance Committee to work on the strategic planning process. Commissioners Miller, Griffith, and Wilberg have accepted to participate.

Motion: To confirm Commissioners Izard, Moeser, Miller, Griffith, and Wilberg will work with Isaac Rowlett in working on the County's strategic planning.

Action: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Abston-Coleman Second.)

**V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: JON JANOWSKI, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

MCDA is working on the next step in the integration plan process. MCDA must complete an application for the ADRC and submit it to the state sometime in August 2021. The Aging and Disability Resource Center will start their public planning process in February 2021 and continue the process thru June or July 2021. If the pilot is successful and approved by the state DHS, the new ADRC will be effective as of January 2022.

The Service Delivery Committee is in the last stages of working on the Department's contracts, which must be finished by the end of December 2020. Mr. Janowski thanked the entire committee for their hard work and dedication and informed the Commission on one of the Department's contract issues; namely, their transportation provider decided not to renew their contract for 2021. MCDA currently has not identified a new transportation vendor but hopes to have one by next week.

There are state and federal funding and policy issues that need to be addressed and resolved. The COVID-19 funding that the department was receiving for this year will no longer be available **after December 31, 2020**. Therefore, some senior services may not be available next year due to a lack of funding.

A Commissioner asked if it would be helpful if the Commission were to plan a meeting with the state delegation in March. There should be a collaborative effort with the County Board in communications and meetings as both entities will be working on the same issues, and everyone should be active advocates for these issues. Mr. Janowski suggested that MCDA's Advocacy Committee should take up these issues at one of their meetings.

At the November 3, 2020 COA meeting, the Commission passed a motion which consisted of three components: Support for the integration plan, a partnership between the Commission and the County Executive's Office, and an evaluation and report process of the integration plan.

The partnership component would consist of public meetings that DHHS will invite the Commission and the Aging network to assist in designing the new ADRC. There will be a discussion on the organizational chart, business operations, and many other issues. One of the County Board amendments in the 2021 County Budget requires DHHS/MCDA to provide a regular monthly report to the Health and Human Needs Committee (HHN). The first report is due in January 2021. Mr. Janowski stated he would provide an informational report to the Commission as well as other updates.

Chairman Izard asked Mr. Janowski to provide a preliminary report to the Executive Committee for their review before submitting the final information to the County Board. Mr. Janowski agreed to provide a copy of the report.

## **VI. STATE REPORT: NEAL MINOGUE, STATE OFFICE ON AGING**

Mr. Minogue reported that the entire network of support for older adults and those with disabilities is under significant stress due to the pandemic. The change in weather has impacted delivery systems, with snow impacting services in the northern parts of Wisconsin. The state has noticed a decrease in staffing that is secondary to COVID-19. Volunteers and paid drivers are unable to drive either from being ill or afraid of becoming ill. Organizations need to double their efforts with reaching out to older adults and those with disabilities to ensure they are safe as they are experiencing social isolation.

Some organizations are reaching out to non-conventional vendors (School systems, restaurants) and developing partnerships to keep businesses and services going.

It is unknown when a vaccine will be available to the community, and it will take time to disburse to everyone. The State Office on Aging and the entire DHS department are not expecting their staff to return to work sites **until August 2021**.

Mr. Minogue thanked Milwaukee County departments for their hard work in meeting the needs of the Community. MCDA will be working on their Aging three-year Area Plan in 2021. Mr. Minogue encouraged the Department to have a robust public input to achieve its goals in providing health and racial equity. A Commissioner asked Mr. Minogue to forward information on social isolation to the Commission. This information will be submitted to the Commission by MCDA's Executive Assistant.

## **VII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS:**

- A. 2021 CONTRACT RECOMMENDATIONS: AMBER MILLER, CHAIR, SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE: Commissioner A. Miller provided a report on the November 3, 2020 Service Delivery Committee meeting and reviewed the RFP Memo on the 2021 contract recommendations. There were two new RFP's this year: Alzheimer's Association and Jewish Family Services. Able Transportation and Asian American Community Center (AACC) have decided not to renew their contracts next year due to COVID-19 challenges.

There was only one contract submission (Serving Older Adults of Southeast Wisconsin) that the Committee had concerns with approving funding. Since COVID-19 caused all five County Senior Center closings, MCDA needs to know what services SOA is offering to its senior customers. Jill Knight, MCDA Program Coordinator, had requested a time study. The time study's purpose was to see how the organization had improvised to provide needed contract services for seniors. Ms. Knight didn't receive the time study from SOA until November 5, 2020. She still has unanswered questions about the virtual programming component (seniors not having the technology or knowledge of technology to participate in this type of programming, and the number of participants are significantly low), and she has also asked about whether staff duties have changed since the closings as she needs justification for the contract amount requested.

The Commission discussed how are they are supposed to renew a contract with specific terms under a familiar environment and then move into a COVID-19 climate, which requires that services are completely modified to meet seniors' needs. Is there a way to update the verbiage in all our contracts? All service providers are providing unconventional services. How does staff deal with this type of issue?

Mr. Janowski stated that the Department did not change the contracts' language; instead, staff track performance measures, expenditures, and vendor reports for making decisions on payments. After a lengthy discussion, the Commission decided to make a motion.

Motion: To accept the Service Delivery Committee's 2021 contract recommendations and approve full funding for SOA contingent upon providing a quarterly report on their virtual programming and time study report requested by Jill Knight.

Action: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Moeser Moved, Griffith Second.)

#### **VIII. THE YEAR IN REVIEW / THE ROAD AHEAD:**

A. Advisory Council: Bettie Rodgers, Chair: **No Report**

B. Advocacy Committee update: Shirley Sharp, Chair – **No Report**

Senior Centers Select Workgroup: Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, Former Chair Sharon Abston-Coleman: Commissioner Pitchford-Nicholas had provided a brief synopsis on the formation of the committee and the selection of the first Chair. She asked Commissioner Abston-Coleman to give the report. Commissioner Abston-Coleman summarized an executive summary that she created on the Senior Center Select Workgroup, which provided the committees' charge, size, and how many times they have met for the year 2020. Chairwoman Pitchford-Nicholas announced that the members would receive their appointment letters soon.

C. **Strategic Governance: Elliott Moeser, Chair:** Commissioner Moeser reiterated the names of the Strategic Governance Committee members: Commissioners Izard, Moeser, Miller, Griffith, Wilberg, and Isaac Rowlett. There will be an MCDA staff person joining the Committee; this will complete the member list. The Committee is responsible for following through with the strategic planning and monitoring the contracts and integration plan. Chairman Moeser will call a meeting sometime in the future.

D. Service Delivery: Amber Miller, Chair: This was her first year being a Commissioner, and she has enjoyed working with and being the Service Delivery Chair. It was a pleasure working with everyone, and she looks forward to a very fruitful 2021.

E. Wellness Committee: Gloria Miller, Chair- **No Report**

## **IX. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:**

Chairman Izard reported that the Commission had a challenging year. A Commissioner's responsibility is to ensure that the Administration hears seniors' voices, and the responsibility as a leader and Commissioner isn't easy as sometimes you have to go against the grain and maintain order. The COA agenda represents the Commission, which is a governing body and not the Department. The Legislative Officer's purpose was to make Commissioners more informed on state statutes, County ordinances, and federal legislation. As the Commission moves forward into 2021, he hopes that all Commissioners, both new and existing, embrace this process to be well informed.

## **X. COUNTY SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:**

There is a Budget amendment to the 2021 County Budget that came from Supervisor Taylor requesting that DHHS submit a report to the County Board once per quarter on the integration status. The report will include community and Commission feedback on the integration. Supervisor Haas encourages feedback from his constituents and the Commission. He also encouraged everyone to inform the County Board if they think it's not working or if there are problems with the integration plan.

Supervisor Haas briefly discussed budget statistics on next year's senior programming. Chairman Izard thanked Supervisor Haas for his leadership and role on the Commission and the opportunity to speak before the Finance Committee to express seniors' voices.

The COA Chair asked Mr. Janowski if the Department could provide a preliminary status report on integration to the Executive Committee at their January meeting before the Department submits their final report to the County Board. Mr. Janowski agreed.

Motion: To have a preliminary report provided to the Commission for review before submitting it to the County Board.

Action: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, A. Miller Second.)

A Commissioner asked if Mr. Janowski could do preliminary work regarding Vaccine distribution, a massive item for next year.

## **XI. COMMISSION ON AGING ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

There were two announcements provided in today's COA packet. Also, the Governor's Office has released a schedule of the upcoming public hearings to discuss healthcare and social service priorities in the next State Budget. The first meeting is **on November 17, 2020, at 6 p.m.** Mr. Idzikowski sent a notice out to Committee members. Commissioners were strongly encouraged to attend.

Chairman Izard reminded the Commission that they will conduct COA Officer elections at the January COA meeting for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. During the winter recess,



Commissioners should use this time to think about becoming an officer or thinking about who they would like to elect as an officer.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

The next Commission on Aging meeting is at 9 a.m. on Friday, January 22, 2021, as a Google Meets virtual meeting.

Respectfully,

Vonda Nyang  
Executive Assistant