



Milwaukee County

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The Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Advocacy Committee held its monthly meeting on January 7, 2019 at the Marcia Cogg Building, 1220 West Vliet Street, Room 104, Milwaukee, WI 53212 in Room 104.

Commissioners Present

Fred Knueppel
Barbara Wyatt Sibley

Committee Members Present

Bob Haase
Casper Green

Elliott Moeser
David Hoffman
John Griffith
Barbara Bechtel
Tim Harrington
David Hoffman

Committee Members Excused

Gary Mikolajczyk
Judy Troestler

Committee Members Not Present

Tom Frazier
Sharon Abston-Coleman

Milwaukee County Staff Present

Jon Janowski, MCDA Director of Administration
Andy Bethke, MCDA Human Service Worker - Outreach
Jill Knight, MCDA Program Coordinator

Guests Present

Gary Sprong
Dain Maddox
Stephanie Stein
Mike Helbick, Office of U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Fred Knueppel called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

II. Action Item: Election of Committee Vice-Chair

John Griffith and Bob Haase were nominated by Committee members. A voice vote was taken and Bob Haase was elected Vice-Chair.

III. Discussion and Action Item: Review and adoption of 2019 policy priorities

Some questions were asked from Committee members about the senior center management situation and Chairman Knueppel said that those issues would be addressed at the January Commission on Aging meeting. Mr. Hoffman asked that at future meetings at senior centers there should be agenda items for seniors and other members of the public to provide comments. Commissioner Wyatt Sibley said that those meetings would provide that opportunity. Mr. Moeser emphasized that comments should be taken but that Committee members should not immediately respond to those comments; rather, the purpose of those meetings is to collect information and comments from the public. Mr. Hoffman emphasized that these meetings are also a good opportunity to meet potentially new Committee members.

The Committee began discussing the draft public policy priorities document. Mr. Moeser said the Evers Administration will be more receptive to older adult issues and that the Committee and other advocates should take advantage of this opportunity. Ms. Bechtel said ties to the County Board also need to be strengthened.

Mr. Griffith said that all Commission committees need to be more diverse. Committee members discussed attendance requirements for Committees. Commissioner Wyatt Sibley said that diversifying Commission committees is a priority of hers.

Mr. Hoffman asked, and Committee members agreed, that the Affordable Care Act section of the policy priorities document should be updated. Members asked that the SeniorCare section also needs to be updated. Mr. Haase asked that farm bill language, focusing on the SNAP Program, also be added to the document and Committee members agreed.

Commissioner Wyatt Sibley asked about the local priorities section of the document. She emphasized that voter rights be a priority for the Committee, and asked what the Committee will do about this issue. Mr. Maddox said that voting rights should be a top priority for Committee members. Mr. Moeser said that efforts need to be made to restore voting rights and encourage people why it's in their interest to vote. Committee members agreed that a detailed voting rights plan should be part of the policy priorities document. Mr. Griffith said members should encourage seniors to participate in the spring legislative advocacy day in Madison.

Mr. Knueppel said that caregiver issues should also be addressed. Mr. Griffith said that LGBT caregiving issues were a big issue.

Commissioner Wyatt Sibley asked that the Wisconsin Policy Forum research should be added to the senior centers local priorities section. She also said that the Fair Deal Workgroup issues should be added to this section. She stressed that specific plans should be laid out in the document for how these issues will be addressed in 2019. She asked that relationships with the Governor and other public officials need to be developed further so that seniors' interests are represented.

Mr. Griffith said that transit services need to be added to the "livable communities" section. He mentioned that many seniors are upset with the increase in the Go Pass rate and want to take action on this issue.

The Committee agreed that MCDA staff should revise the public policy priorities document should be revised and brought back before the Committee at the February meeting.

IV. Informational Item: Update from Invited Legislative Offices

Mike Helbick updated Committee members on the partial government shutdown. Discussion ensued. Mr. Maddox asked how the shutdown was impacting seniors. He suggested that a letter be sent to Sen. Ron Johnson asking for him to work to end the shutdown. Commissioner Wyatt Sibley said that this letter should go to the Commission for approval, and that members make phone calls to his office as well.

Mr. Helbick said that he would work with their legislative staff to put a summary together on the impact of the shutdown and get that summary to Mr. Janowski to send to the Committee.

Mr. Griffith asked that the Commission letters on this topic be sent to local media.

Motion: To send a letter to Sen. Johnson asking him to end the government shutdown due to its negative impact on seniors and share this letter with local media

Action: Motion carried unanimously (Hoffman moved, Haase seconded)

Motion: To send a letter of commendation to Sen. Baldwin's office thanking her for standing up for seniors during the government shutdown debate

Action: Motion carried unanimously (Hoffman moved, Haase seconded)

V. Informational Item: Update on recent Advocacy Committee actions

Mr. Janowski summarized recent Advocacy Committee actions that were approved by the Commission on Aging, including 1) a letter to the County Executive and County Board Chair asking that an Advocacy Committee member be represented on the County's Fair Deal Workgroup, 2) a letter to state legislators asking that a family caregiving tax credit letter be approved, 3) a letter to local state legislators asking that legislators are invited to all upcoming Advocacy Committee and Commission on Aging meetings, and 4) a letter to state legislators asking that deputy registrars be reinstated statewide.

Mr. Janowski noted that Commissioner Wyatt Sibley was appointed to the Fair Deal workgroup. He noted that the family caregiving tax credit letter was approved by the Commission and sent out. He said that the letters relating to invitations to state legislators and deputy registrar reinstatement would be going out soon.

VI. Informational Item: Advocacy Committee meeting locations in 2019

Chairman Knueppel said that the Committee would be looking to meet at a local senior center, such as Clinton Rose Senior Center, in March or April and that he would work with Commissioner Jupka and Mr. Janowski to secure that location and meeting date and time. Mr. Moeser emphasized that publicizing this meeting well in advance to Committee members and the public is important. Committee members agreed that this meeting notice should be widely distributed so they can participate in this meeting.

VII. Informational Item: Update on Milwaukee Fair Deal Workgroup

Commissioner Wyatt Sibley updated the Committee members on recent workgroup meetings. She said

the workgroup has 23 members. She noted that the workgroup is unified in terms of advocating for Milwaukee County's fair share of state revenue. She said County staff have helped the workgroup understand the legislative process as well as the county's fiscal situation. She said county freeways, the courts, and juvenile justice are all examples of programs and services that are mandated but not sufficiently funded by the state. She said a presentation was also given on different county revenue options as well as transit services. She said that there will be efforts to partner with other counties on these issues. She noted that all meeting information was available on CLIC.

Mr. Griffith asked how out-state legislators will be educated and persuaded to help Milwaukee County. He said that a strategy is needed to bring people together to advocate with one voice. Mr. Moeser said local governments are severely limited in Wisconsin in terms of how they can raise revenue because of the erosion of local control.

VIII. Discussion Item: Potential agenda items for February meeting

Chairman Knueppel asked that members send potential agenda items to him for review and consideration. Discussion ensued about how the Advocacy Committee can act on its own in an emergency situation. Commissioner Wyatt Sibley emphasized that most Advocacy Committee actions should go through the Commission on Aging. Mr. Griffith suggested that Pedro Colon would be willing to do a presentation on judicial issues before the Committee. Commissioner Wyatt Sibley suggested that the Fair Deal workgroup final report should be presented to the Commission on Aging.

IX. Informational Item: Advocacy Committee Announcements regarding upcoming events, activities, and opportunities for seniors

Mr. Janowski noted that Dan Idzikowski will be the new Program and Policy Coordinator and that he would be starting in his new role on Monday.

Tim Harrington said that Alzheimers Association Advocacy Day flyers are now available and will be shared with the Committee. The advocacy day will be held on February 19th.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM. **The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 4 at 1:30pm at 1220 W. Vliet Street, Room 104.**

Respectfully submitted,



Jon Janowski
Director of Administration