AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE
OF THE
COMMISSION ON AGING

Date: June 14, 2022
9:30am-11:30 am

"Business Meeting – Preparing AIC Budget and Advocacy Statements"

In Attendance: Mary Sweeney (co-chair, AIC), Wayne Berman (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Marsha Weber, Kendell Matthews, Joyce Dubow, Betsy Carrier, Eddie Rivas, Nanine Meiklejohn, Monica Schaeffer.

Staff: Shawn Brennan, MC AAA, Pazit Aviv, MC AAA

Guests: Marcia Pruzan, Age Friendly Montgomery; Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Wayne and Mary welcomed everyone and asked that they introduce themselves. Wayne then reviewed the agenda with the featured topic on "Preparing AIC Budget and Advocacy Statements"

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the May 10, 2022 meeting were approved.

BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS: The budget priority discussions concentrated around the areas that the AIC Committee devoted so much attention to over the last 6 months. These areas include: Food Insecurity, Design for Life / Universal Design, Technology, Transportation, and Housing. The discussions also included Villages as the Committee felt that this would be an important budget item moving forward. An outline of the primary proposed budget topics discussed are presented below:

Topic 1: Food Insecurity
Discussion Points:
Main Issue: Communication for general awareness of the SNAP program as well as other programs in the county.
- Full time staff person for food and other senior related issues. Will need to know about different audiences.
- Who is the audience for this? Need to identify. Eligible population, caregivers, etc.
- Communicate the availability and resources of the SNAP program and Food Insecurity
- Full time position within ANDS dedicated to senior services
- Working with H & W and Communications
- Outreach for different needs regarding food insecurity.
- Training for better nutrition
- Update SNAP Policies: Advocate for overhaul of the process

PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)
- Campaigns to encourage more participation
- Reach out to MoCo Food Council to ask for ideas
- Awareness of Food Delivery services

Topic 2: Design for Life (DFL) / Universal Design
Discussion Points regarding what is needed:
- Promote County and State programs-- Programs are very underutilized- could be featured in a 50+ program, materials that health and wellness is putting together
- Address emotional issue of people being uncomfortable thinking ahead of possible need- could be done by Villages or PR.
- Advocacy at the County for the $300,000 Habitat for Humanity pilot project that is stalled.
- Research why new construction does not have universal design requirements-Point raised by Nadine
- Advocate for simplifying DFL application process, specifically how can the process be used if someone is not tech savvy, explore the fee structure for the application, and relax the one year requirement for submitting. Gail said she would follow-up on these ideas.
- Compare the State program to the DFL program. The State Program is easier to apply for-- are there any changes that can be made to DFL so it would mirror the state program? Problem—the State Program is a budgeted program, the County program is a tax credit.
- Get data on how many low income senior home owners there are in the county.
- Publicize the new Medicare Advantage benefit of some handy man services being covered.
- Understand how PG County is addressing design issues for low income population-- they seem more forward thinking-- but different economics- check with Sarah Reddinger
- Project with hospitals for people who on an emergency basis need grab bars etc on discharge.

PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)
- Need Universal Design Advocacy or $'s
- Design for life for new construction
- More money for tax incentive program

Topic 3: Making Technology Work to Improve the Lives of Older Adults
The AIC affirmed that continued dialogue and work with Mitsuko Herrera and Dr. Reitz, would be beneficial and could include a number of possible actions as follows:
- Work with Ms. Herrera to identify dates and locations for events that would help to promote the ACP Federal Connectivity program and address computer literacy concerns with different demographics and in different locations.
- Work with Ms Herrera to compile available data on technology use in the County, based upon factors like demographics and location (e.g. urban and rural).
- Work with 50+ Montgomery to air PSA's on the ACP Federal Connectivity program.
- Work with Dr. Reitz to provide senior's perspective on design of software
- Help Ms Herrera get out the word about County programs: Using 50+, PSA, Fact Sheet, Newsletter, website
- Advocacy for County budget for technology and training.
- Provide people for focus groups or training.
- Possible future public forum on using technology for aging in place
- COA should set some goals and try to achieve them around x number of seniors trained, X number of seniors getting devices, etc.
- COA to encourage Dr. Reitz to have training program for CNAs.
- COA could help with surveys conducted either by County or Dr. Reitz
- COA can coordinate activities with Age Friendly Montgomery on uses of technology for aging in place.
- Expand Main Street program for young adults and people with disabilities
- Need more training under Senior Planet

PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)

- Communications Position to promote tech – see above
- Fund temporary positions for Mitsuko to help promote broadband and computers access to older adults. Need this in current FY. This would be supplemental funding for FY 23.
- For 2024: Recommend funding of a special research project on technology – need to be very specific.
- Work towards a practical application with an eye to a pilot project in the future.

Topic 4: Improved Transportation Services for Older Adults

The discussion focused on one item that addressed training for drivers of wheel chair accessible vehicles.
PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)

- Advocate for a $190,000 for training and complaint process for all taxi drivers who drive wheel chair accessible vehicles.   Needs more meat on what it. Follow up with Shawn and Sam on Buses.

Topic 5: Housing

The discussion focused on this items that address key aspects of the housing issue.
PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)

- More funding for the Rental Assistance Program (RAT)
- Zoning Challenges – long range advocacy issue.
- Universal design into affordable housing advocacy.
- How does COA feel about zoning issues and what is the COA's position?
- AARP Event for innovations and universal design
- Need information on zoning challenges and opportunities
- Home Sharing is still an issue.
- Look at past budget requests regarding housing to determine what we are going to support in 2024.

Topic 6: Villages

The discussion focused key aspects of advancing Villages.
PROPOSED BUDGET ITEMS (1 OR 2)

- Intern to document challenges of Villages
- Meet with Villages to better understand Villages at present
- Request a consultant to prepare a business model for Villages for administrative processes. Develop a full business plan.

OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Wayne mentioned that the COA Budget meeting will be held July 28th. All committees need to be prepared to present their recommendation for FY 2024 budget and advocacy priorities.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 9:30 am. The focus of the meeting will be on Villages and the outcome of the Budget Priorities discussions and voting. This meeting will be facilitated by Wayne Berman and Mary Sweeney.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:35 am