

**Commission on Aging  
Meeting Minutes  
July 9, 2020**

**Location:** Zoom Call  
**Time:** 9:30a – 12:30p

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Jean Dinwiddie, Chair	Ruby Moone
Amoke Alakoye, Vice-Chair	Ann M. Serafenas
Beverly Rollins, Secretary	Hillery Tsumba
Ryan Wilson, Budget Officer	
Wayne Berman	<b>Alumni Members</b>
Neal Brown	Austin Heyman
Joyce Dubow	Charles Kaufman
Stephanie Edelstein	Isabelle Schoenfeld
Mort Faller	
Richard Jourdenais	<b>Guests</b>
Miriam Kelty	David Engle, GROWS
Morris Klein	
Karen Maricheau	<b>Liaisons</b>
Nanine Meiklejohn	Elisse Barnes, African American Health Program
Karon Phillips	Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly Montgomery
Edgar Rivas	Arlee Wallace, African American Health Program
Maritza Rivera	
Deborah Royster	<b>Staff</b>
Monica Schaeffer	Odile Brunetto, Chief, Aging and Disability Services
Barbara Selter	Shawn Brennan, Department of Health and Human Services
Katie Smith	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health and Human Services
Mary Sweeney	
Marsha Weber	
Arthur Williams	
Janice Zalen	

## **Welcome–Jean Dinwiddie, Chair**

Chair Jean Dinwiddie welcomed and took roll of all participants.

Commission member, Deborah Royster, announced that she has taken a new job and, unfortunately, must resign from the CoA by the end of July.

## **AAA Director Updates**

Chief Odile Brunetto stated that because of the pandemic all County departments were asked for a 6 percent budget cut. However, the Department of Aging and Disability Services will only see a total reduction of \$466,223. Budget cuts in the different departments within Aging and Disability Services were:

- Respite Care has been cut \$123,937. The Department, however, has seen respite care services decline because of COVID. Staff are hoping to get more money from the State Department of Aging to help replenish the budget and hopefully requests for respite care will increase to pre-COVID levels.
- Adult Evaluation Review Services was cut \$20,000. This is a service where nurses go into homes and provide health care. The position of one part-time nurse was eliminated.
- The Escorted Transportation budget was cut \$43,286. This is a service coordinated with the Jewish Council on Aging and provides transportation for individuals who cannot go to appointments on their own. The budget cut means less money for vendors who provide transportation. Staff have also seen a decline in requests for this service because of COVID.
- The Home Care budget was cut by \$120,000. Home care services have also declined because of COVID. That budget will be revisited in FY22.
- The Assisted Living budget was cut by \$159,000. This money is used for emergency placement.

The CoA members engaged Chief Brunetto in a discussion regarding the budget cuts and unused FY20 funding. Chief Brunetto reminded the Commissioners that the new fiscal year started July 1 and that the County Council will discuss the budget mid-month. The money for services that was not used in the last fiscal year cannot be carried over to this new fiscal year; however, DHHS staff and the CoA can ask and advocate for that.

## **Commission on Aging Business**

### ***Approval of June CoA minutes***

The CoA members approved the minutes of its June meeting.

### ***Budget Report***

Commissioner Ryan Wilson reported that the CoA has a bank balance of \$4,945.11.

### ***Police Involvement in Silver Alerts***

Chair Dinwiddie asked whether the CoA wants police involvement to continue when Silver Alerts are activated. This involvement includes GPS tracking for individuals with dementia and autism. In this capacity, the police can look for individuals who are lost. There are three trained officers assigned to this detail. Chair Dinwiddie noted that the Executive Committee voted to send a letter of support to the Policing Advisory Commission (once it is in place) for keeping the police involved.

CoA members discussed the issue at length. There were objections to police involvement, and suggestions that the responsibility be given to County social workers. It was decided that the CoA would appoint a Task Force to research the issue and to develop a position to present to the County Executive and to the County Council.

### ***Ideas for CE's Recovery Work Group***

Chair Dinwiddie stated that she has been invited to participate on one of the County's COVID recovery workgroups. She solicited input from commissioners and stated that she intends to discuss evictions, food security, social isolation, and what is being done for the predicted Fall COVID surge. The CoA's budget priorities could drive her input on the workgroup. Suggestions were made to obtain statistics on Montgomery County's nursing home COVID cases, and also to advocate that older adults in all settings – private homes, assisted living, group homes, nursing homes – receive personal protective equipment.

### ***Hearing Impairment Fact Sheet***

The CoA voted to approve a Fact Sheet regarding hearing impairments that the Health and Wellness Committee prepared. Committee members are now working on a distribution strategy.

### ***Vision Zero Plan***

Montgomery County's Vision Zero kickoff meeting was held in June. Vision Zero is an extension of Complete Streets and its goal is to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030. That group would like CoA comments on its draft plan. Commissioners Wayne Berman, Eddie Rivas, and Dick Jourdenais volunteered to be on a Task Force to review the plan and develop comments. Commissioner Janice Zalen requested to join the Task Force.

## **Discussion of FY22 Budget Priorities**

Commission members held a lengthy discussion regarding a list of priorities for which the CoA could advocate be included in the County's FY22 budget. They arrived at the following list:

### **Public Guardianship/Adult Protection Services**

- 2 New Social Worker Positions

### **Affordable Housing**

- Maintain funding for HIF (Housing Initiative Fund)

- Funding for legal assistance with evictions

#### Recreation Budget

- Early Stage Memory Loss/Senior Center Plus
- Senior Adult Programs (Amoke to reach out to Robin Riley)

#### Health & Wellness

- Expand Senior Nutrition Programs
- Increase Payment Rates for Adult Foster Care Program
- Funding for Consumer Education on Hearing Loss and Hearing Tests

#### Senior Fellows

- Senior Fellow Position for Diversity
- Restore 2 positions eliminated in FY 20 budget

#### Other

- Employment/Training & Retraining of Older Adults; Issue of Unemployment
- Campaign to advertise services available for Older Adults
- Formation of County Task Force/Work Group to assess community alternatives for congregate and institutional living arrangements

It was agreed that the items on the list be prioritized and placed in two categories: on-going concerns and more urgent concerns.

Chair Dinwiddie stated that she would send out a Survey Monkey to the CoA members to allow them to vote on their preference of priority. Once the vote is taken, the final list will be distributed to all Commissioners.

#### **Invited Speakers for Upcoming Meetings**

September 24: Tiffany Ward, Chief Equity Officer  
Betty Lam, Chief of the DHHS Office of Community Affairs

October 22: Councilmember Will Jawando

November 19: Jack VanDerhei, Social Security Trust Funds

Chair Dinwiddie closed the meeting by noting that Fall meetings will be held on September 24, October 22, and November 19.

#### **Adjourn**