

Commission on Aging
Executive Committee
December 13, 2021
Virtual via Zoom

Attendees

CoA Members

Barbara Selter, Chair
Jean Dinwiddie, Past Chair and Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Edgar Rivas, Vice Chair
Janice Zalen, Secretary
Richard Jourdenais, Budget Officer
Wayne Berman, Co-Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Monica Schaeffer, Co-Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Neal Brown, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Marsha Weber, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Beverly Rollins, Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Morris Klein, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee
Ryan Wilson, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee

Staff

Patrice McGhee, HHS
Shawn Brennan, HHS

Welcome—Barbara Selter, Chair

Chair Barbara Selter opened the meeting with a roll call of meeting attendees and a welcome.

AAA Report—Dr. Patrice McGhee

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) appropriates money to the Older Americans Act and other vehicles to assist older Americans. Montgomery County (MC) will receive about \$3.5 million for the AAA. The County assembled teams and work groups to develop spending proposals for two major focus areas—social isolation and meal expansion. Two large challenges for the County are: (1) ARPA funds are for a limited time so the County would have to hire contractors and will not be able to hire new staff; and (2) procurement backlogs. Dr. McGhee noted that one possibility under social isolation is to expand the tablet program. Additional funds will come from the Family First Vaccine Response Act. The State will receive \$50 million and MC may receive \$128,000.

Commissioners made strong requests to add Access HEARS under social isolation and to consider broad band expansion. Patrice said she hopes to share ARPA spending ideas/plans with COA if possible prior to submission to MD Department on Aging on January 10th.

The County's Telehealth Study recommendations is complete, but has not yet been shared with the County. This study looks at older adults' use of telehealth and much of the information came directly from consumers through surveys and focus groups. Dr. McGhee agreed to share the Executive Summary with the Commission.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of November EC Meeting Minutes

Committee members approved the November meeting minutes, with a correction to Neal Brown's name.

Approval of Agenda for December CoA Meeting

The December draft agenda was approved with minor changes.

Budget Report

Budget Officer Richard Jourdenais reported that there is \$4,795.11 in the account.

Update on Assisted Living Regulations

Janice Zalen, who has reviewed draft regulations that the MD Department of Health will be considering at its December 16 Zoom meeting, discussed the CoA's comments, as approved by the Public Policy Committee as follows:

- The Montgomery County CoA strongly recommends that all assisted living facilities with Level 2 or Level 3 residents must have awake overnight staff.
- Currently, there is no right of appeal for involuntary discharges. The Commission urges that there be opportunities for appeal and for mediation.
- Requirements regarding the MOLST form should be included in the assisted living section of the regulations

Other comments will be included, as discussed and approved in previous EC meetings.

Update on Legislative Breakfast Agenda and Package

Ryan Wilson and Morris Klein reviewed the contents of the package. It was agreed that two additional items, 1) CoA letter to the Secretary of Health; and 2) MC Department of Health letter to the Office of Health Care Quality, will be added to the package when the meeting reminder is sent out.

The agenda was reviewed and there was confidence expressed that CoA speakers were prepared.

To date, there only have been 7 RSVPs. EC members were asked to contact their representatives to urge their attendance. Shawn Brennan will send the list of RSVPs to the EC. Barbara Selter will send the invitation with a note to all Commission members

reminding them of the importance of attending this meeting to Tremayne Jones who will forward packet to all Commissioners.

Length of CoA Meetings

After a lengthy discussion, it was agreed that future CoA meetings will be shortened as follows:

- Ms. Selter will no longer state the speakers for future meetings.
- Liaisons would be called upon only every other month.
- The number of outside guest speakers will be limited to two individuals per meeting.
- The budget officer will no longer give a budget report unless there is a change in the account balance.
- All members need to be to-the-point in their comments.
- Possibly, the agenda could be better structured by dividing CoA business into new and old business.

EC meetings will be shortened as follows:

- There no longer will be committee reports. However, committee chairs should let Ms. Selter know if there is an issue that needs discussing so it is added to the agenda.
- Ms. Selter would no longer state the speakers for future meetings.

The goal is a two-hour EC meeting and a three-hour Commission meeting.

Public Forum Committee –Next Steps

Marsha Weber and Jean Dinwiddie agreed to co-chair the Public Forum Committee. Barbara Selter will ask David Engle to join the Committee. The first meeting will be an organizing meeting with Marsha, Jean, Barbara, Tina, Shawn, and Charlyn to get organized. Jean and Marsha will send out a meeting notice. All Public Forum Committee members will be invited to the future meetings.

Response to Council Member Alborno on Thrive 2050

The EC voted 8 to 2 in favor of creating a task force on Thrive 2050. Wayne Berman agreed to chair this new task force. Barbara Selter will send a note to Gabe Alborno requesting that he explain in writing what he is asking of the CoA and his deadlines.

Discussion of Input for ARPA funding discussions

ARPA requests are due January 10 so there is very little time for input. Shawn Brennan already has requested to various County work groups that they consider the CoA's priorities. Shawn Brennan will ask if the CoA can be represented on any of the work groups. It should be noted that Shawn will make the work groups aware of the Commission's budget priorities and strong feelings that Access HEARS be included. In addition, Barbara Selter will put a memo together and asks for ideas be sent to her by the EC.

Approval of Letter to Secretary of Health on the Nursing Facility Surveyor Issue

The letter was approved and Janice Zalen was thanked for writing it. The committee decided to copy the same individuals copied on the DHHS letter.

In Lieu of Committee Reports

- Jean Dinwiddie stressed the importance of all EC members watching 50+.
- Monica Schaeffer, who is leaving the EC and the Commission, stated that she enjoyed working with the EC very much, but knows she is leaving it in good hands. She noted that the County Council and Department Heads listen to the CoA and the COA should remain proactive, particularly in considering the assets that elders bring to the County.
- Dick Jourdenais, who is leaving the EC and the Commission, talked about how he enjoyed working on the EC and Commission.
- Janice Zalen, who is leaving the EC but remaining on the Commission, stated that she will miss the EC, but promises to remain active on the Public Policy Committee and the Commission.

New Business

- Wayne Berman was thanked for planning the holiday get-together, which was lovely.
- The last MC Senior Summit was six years ago and it may be time to advocate for another one. It was agreed that this should wait until after the primary election for County Executive before any action is taken.

Adjourn

Action Items

- Dr. McGhee will share the Telehealth Study Executive Summary with the Commission.
- Barbara Selter will ask David Engel to join the Public Forum Committee.
- Jean Dinwiddie and Marsha Weber will send out a notice for the organizational meeting of the Public Forum Committee.
- Shawn Brennan will ask the ARPA work groups if the CoA can be represented on any of the work groups.
- Shawn Brennan will make the ARPA work groups aware of the Commission's budget priorities and strong feelings that Access HEARS be included.
- Barbara Selter will write a memo with ARPA funding suggestions
- All EC members should send ideas for ARPA fund projects to Ms. Selter.