

**COMMISSION ON AGING
FEBRUARY 22, 2024
9:33a.m.-12:01p.m.**

Attending the meeting:

CoA Members:

**Kathleen McGuinness
Linda Bergofsky
Marie Sloan
Laurie Pross
Katie Smith
Beverly Rollins
David Engel
Virginia Cain
Barbara Selter
Jean Dinwiddie
Kate Stein
Bob Levey
Mary Sweeney
Sibo Ncube
Anna Maria Izquierdo-Porrera
Morris Klein
Mona Grieser
Yvette Monroe
Nkiru (Nikki) Ezeani
Ric Ricciardi
Arunima Ghosh (via phone)**

Guests:

**Peter Flandrau, HHS
Marcia Pruzan, Alumna
Kuo-Hwa Wang, public
Kimberly Johnson, HHS
Nordea Lewis, speaker
Barry Hudson, speaker
Phoebe Shih, HHS
Stacy Sigler, Rec
Shawn Brennan, HHS
Gerard Ettienne, JCA
Denise Israel, DOT
Ama Lee, HHS
Sara Swarr, Rec
Monique Gardner, HHS
Austin Heyman
Paul Moss
Tremayne Jones, HHS
Ruby Moon, Alumna
Kristin Cummings**

David Engel called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting.

DIVISION UPDATE:

Dr. Kimberly Johnson - AAA Director's Report

There are the following remaining vacancies yet to be filled:

- LTC Ombudsman- 1 Vacancy (1 Prog. Mngr. to start 2/26)
- Support Planning Agency- 1 Supervisor
- Assessment, Evaluation and Review Services - New Unit
(1) AERS Nurse Manager
(5) AERS Community Health Nurses (CHNII)

MDOA budget hearing highlights were the following:

- \$4 million appropriation towards the Senior Care Program
- Implementing programming for LGBTQIA Senior population
- Development of MDOA Data Platform
- Implementation of the Long-term Care and Dementia Care Navigation Program

FY24 Status Report for Maryland Department of Aging Briefing

- Discussed Accomplishments, Program Challenges, and Looking Ahead AAA Priorities
- Provided Budget spending and surplus updates

Dr. Johnson revealed that during the Governor's State of the Union address, it became clear that Montgomery County continues to be a model in many respects for other counties in the state.

Older Americans Month

- Theme – Powered by Connection- which recognizes the profound impact that meaningful relationships and social connections have on our health and well-being. We will explore the vital role that connectedness plays in supporting independence and aging in place by combatting isolation, loneliness, and other issues.
- Developing Proclamation in recognition of Older American Month

- Formed workgroup to plan activities in recognition of Older American Month

Dr. Johnson gave a description of Senior Care and stated she would provide further information on the program to the Commission.

LIAISON REPORTS:

Asian American Health Initiative:

Phoebe Shih described a program which involved Community-based organizations and Faith-based organizations giving tablets to older adults in their community and having students help. It was during the process of teaching the older adults that the connections between the students and the older learners occurred. Ms. Shih corrected our meeting minutes to reflect the presence of a “ Friendly Corner “ at their site rather than a “French Corner”.

Department of Transportation:

Denise Israel reported the following:

- 87 Million was allotted for FLASH, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to operate on Veirs Mill and Rte. 355
- Ride On ridership was up 37% in December 2023 vs 2022
- A limited number of SMART trip cards are still available for distribution; they will be made available at 4 community centers throughout the county during early voting;
- She will investigate the trip planner app.

Department of Recreation:

Stacy Sigler announced that on February 25th the new Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center would be having a ribbon-cutting grand opening. It will be a full service center and on the day of the opening there will be tours where some of its virtual reality equipment can be seen and a tour of the nearby Leggett Apartments will also be possible.

African American Health Initiative:

Monique Gardner described the Fire and Safety programs presented on Alzheimer's at several Recreation Centers during Black History month. Ama Lee suggested using Montgomery County buses for advertising services for older adults.

Age Friendly:

Shawn Brennan reported that one of the ways in which Age Friendly in Montgomery County is evolving is by combining some of the domain meetings of the past into Network meetings and including more individuals in the newly-created group. The next meeting of the new Network group will be on April 10, 2024 from 2-3:30p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER ON PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE IN THE COUNTY:

Barry Hudson presented an overview of the Public Information Office's function and indicated that now that it is better staffed (6-7 PIOs), this office can offer more support with graphics, press conferences, meetings and design work. Mary Anderson was introduced as part of the management staff. Nordea Lewis was introduced and is able to support the CoA. Barry Hudson further explained that, although the PIO does not have money for paid advertising, it does manage to send out materials in multiple languages.

OLD BUSINESS:

Updates:

- Secretary Roques responded with enthusiasm and warm appreciation to David Engel's letter in support of the *Longevity Ready Maryland* initiative.
- Linda Bergofsky wrote Ms. Herrera Scott, the Secretary of Health and we have a meeting regarding Nursing Home inspections.
- David urged the CoA to follow SEPH funding in the Inter-Agency on Homelessness since Christine Hong is concerned about losing 28 ARPA funded positions.

-We have invited County Executive Marc Elrich to share his proposed Operating Budget with the CoA in March and Betty Romero has also been invited to present the Multi Sector Plan as it relates to the Longevity Ready Maryland Initiative.

- May 16th is the tentative date for the Public Forum; the venue is still unclear. A discussion ensued regarding the target audience. There are apparently other housing-related conferences occurring at roughly the same time as the proposed Public Forum, but they are apparently not aimed at older adults.

-David reminded us that the 29 CoA members will be asked to approach the 11 Councilmembers with the goal of getting across our 2 principal priorities: Communications Manager and the Implementation manager for the direct care workforce.

COMMITTEES:

Communications:

The Ambassador and Library Liaison programs are doing well. Please watch 50+.

Public Policy:

Bills being watched pertain to the following:

-Mail fraud, family caregivers, CCRC's, LTC insurance, End of Life, Miriam Kelty - Aging and Senior Social Connection Hub and Spoke Pilot Program for Villages

Aging in Community:

There was a presentation on the 30 existing Villages and the 5 in development in the county. There was an update on the Consortium which has just received an MDOA grant to support its hub and spoke activities which in turn support 7 Villages in Montgomery County by centralizing certain administrative functions. In March, the topic will be transportation.

Health and Wellness:

- The overarching topic being considered for further exploration is behavioral/mental health.**
- There had been a presentation by Avital Graves from Mobile Integrated Services and another on in-home services by Affiliated Sante.**
- PEARLS- a program in the Chinese community was described as being open to all.**
- Barbara Selter encouraged us all to help the Committee focus and zero in on what exactly is most important to delve into.**

ACTIONABLE ITEMS:

- Prepare to meet with Councilmembers.**
- Update Meds Management Fact Sheet.**
- Include Polypharmacy as Behavioral/Mental Health topic.**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:01p.m.