

Commission on Aging
Executive Committee
January 20, 2022
Virtual via Zoom

Attendees

Barbara Selter, Chair
Jean Dinwiddie, Past Chair and Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Edgar Rivas, Vice Chair
Kendell Matthews, Secretary
David Engel, Budget Officer
Wayne Berman, Co- Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Mary Sweeny, 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 Mc Ghee, HHS
Shawn Brennan, HHS

Welcome- Barbara Selter, Chair

Chair Barbara Selter welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Roll Call

Kendell Matthews, Secretary roll call of meeting attendees.

Area Agency on Aging Report (AAA) Update- Patrice Mc Ghee, HHS)

Information from Governor Hogan's FY 2023 budget that will impact older adults:

- 75 million to local health departments to continue the Covid response.
- 6.6 million to increase SNAP benefits to approximately 27,00 seniors
- 17.8 million to reduce wait list for home health care programs
- 2.3 million for Senior Care
- 5.3 million for senior assisted living subsidy
- 2.2 million congregate housing service programs
- 187 million to fund provider rate increases in the fields of behavioral health and developmental disabilities, Medicaid, and other services. Not sure about medical adult daycare providers. When more information becomes available, she will share the details. (These figures are total amount above the previous year's budget.)

County Executive proposed capital budget, which is a six-year plan: some sections that may impact seniors

- Support expansion and improvement of subsidized income-restricted housing units
- Prevent homelessness and provide stable housing for our lowest income residents
- 152 million to begin transitioning the Ride On fleet to all electric buses
- Expanding broadband in affordable housing so it is readily available and reliable for low-income residents. Funding provided to the state will allow expansion to approximately 8000 units.

COVID update Montgomery County

- Montgomery County will distribute rapid testing kits beginning on January 10th. The citizens of the county can pick-up the kits from nineteen designated county libraries.
- The CDC updated recommendations on best masks to wear, which offer good protection against COVID along with getting vaccinated and a booster.
- Starting on January 21st, Montgomery County will provide four free adult size KN95 masks at nineteen county libraries. The mask can be worn up to five times.
- The federal government has launched rapid testing kit distribution website where each household can request four free at home rapid testing COVID-19 kits.

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant Application

Ms. McGhee thanked COA for our thoughtful input and feedback to the plan. She highlighted that these funds are one-time. The proposal was submitted on January 10th. The AAA is now awaiting approval from MD Dept on Aging.

The Office of Public Information- unclear about this

The VAX 5 Grant funds (approx. 128 million) provided by the State will be used to market and promote vaccines. The AAA is working with the Office of Public Information on this.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of December 2021 EC minutes

Eddie made a motion to approve the minutes and Neal seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Approval of January 2022 COA Agenda

Jean made a motion to approve the amended January 2022 COA Agenda and Kendell seconded the motion. The agenda was approved.

ARPA Priorities-Comments from Shawn

The COA's input was taken seriously. Some projects are unfortunately complicated by bureaucratic details. Staff was careful about not proposing to start programs that would be difficult or painful to stop when funding ends.

Medical Adult Day Care (MADC) Advocacy

Members wondered if the Commission needs more information to decide whether it should advocate for more funding for MADC. Some expressed concern that increased funding go to workers, not to increasing profit. Some non-profit MADC are still operating. When MADC centers close, families can struggle to find/afford alternatives.

The group decided Barbara would write a letter asking for more information of Liz Barnes, including what exactly is needed from the COA.

Public Forum Planning Committee-Jean and Marsha

A small group has met a few times, working on the event's goals and format. The focus is in-home health care. Discussion will include general information as well as policy perspectives. Hoping for an in-person event but keeping virtual as an option. Either way, it will hopefully be recorded.

Thrive2050-Wayne

Thrive 2050 is an update to the County's General Plan. COA has a working group studying it and providing recommendations to the County Council. Each work group member took a separate issue. The workgroup will forward a draft letter with recommendations for the Public Policy Committee to review, and then the EC and full Commission to endorse.

Legislative Tracking and Advocacy-Morris

Morris is tracking legislation during the General Assembly, looking for bills of interest to older adults. Participation in drafting letters on bills is welcome. Eddie offered to draft a template of a letter so Commissioners have an idea of how to craft an effective letter.

Additional Contacts with the County Council (beyond yearly visits in the Spring)

Discussion postponed until next month.

Community for a Lifetime

Discussion postponed until next month

Protocol for Commissioners moving forward on ideas or actions after consulting with the EC for approval

If a commissioner is planning to organize any group meetings or anything that are COA-related, make sure that the idea goes through the Executive Committee and is approved by the Executive Committee.

Approval of TSIF Memo

EC voted to approve the amended TSIF memo.

New Business

Shawn- Discussed home and community services waiver issue during a meeting with Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network (a coalition of different groups around the state including AARP, Catholic Charities, m4a) A member plans to speak to the bill's sponsor about including language targeting the backlog of care plan approvals

Not all Commissioners are aware of aging services. Staff suggested that everyone automatically be subscribed to the Senior News that comes out once a month and the more frequent Age Friendly newsletters, which tend to be more policy oriented. The EC recommended signing up commissioners.

Adjourn

Next Steps

Eddie: PP template letter send to Morris and Ryan

Barbara: Condolences Letter to Tremayne Jones on the Death of her mother and donation

Barbara: contact Tho Tran to check if she would prefer to serve as a liaison to the Commission on aging

Ryan: template and link to Maryland Legislative body send to Co- Chairs

Beverly: 2021 list of absent commissioners

Shawn: check to see which commissioners have missed three meetings to inform them to write a letter to the County Executive requesting continuance

Co-Chairs- identify members of your committee