

Commission on Aging
Executive Committee
April 15, 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
Neal Brown, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Marsha Weber, Co-Chair, Health and Wellness Committee
Wayne Berman, Co-Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Monica Schaeffer, Co-Chair, Aging in Community Committee
Beverly Rollins, Co-Chair, Communications Committee
Ryan Wilson, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee
Morris Klein, Co-Chair, Public Policy Committee

Staff

Odile Brunetto, HHS
Shawn Brennan, HHS

Welcome–Barbara Selter, Chair

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

Discussion about AAA Report

A discussion was held on the pros and cons of receiving the AAA report at both the Executive Committee (EC) meeting and the full Commission meeting. While it was agreed that it is somewhat redundant, it was also agreed that it is important to have the AAA report at the EC meeting because that is a time to delve deeper and ask more questions.

AAA Report – Odile Brunetto, HHS

- Robin Riley, Director of the MC Recreation Department, asked that Dr. Brunetto share information with the Commission on Aging (CoA) regarding the Holiday Senior Center, which receives about \$200,000 from the non-profit Holiday Park Seniors, Inc. (HPSI) that is set up to support the Center. MC is updating its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HPSI and Ms. Riley is concerned that the HPSI Board will not agree to the new MoU, which requires more compliance with modern accounting principles and takes away some authority. If the HPSI does not agree to the new MoU, the Recreation Department may look for a different non-profit to take

over. If one is not found, they will likely ask the County Executive for a supplemental appropriation. If there is a need to ask for a supplemental appropriation, the Recreation Department hopes that the CoA will support this request. Odile recommended that the COA consider researching how programming is funded in other counties' senior centers

- The County HHS Committee will be holding meetings on three upcoming Thursday mornings. The issue regarding nursing home inspections by State surveyors instead of County surveyors likely will be a topic at one of these meeting. Linda MacMillan is creating questions and an analysis of this issue and it is also being examined by County attorneys, specifically whether existing regulations would allow for local oversight. Dr. Brunetto will alert us when it is to be the topic at a Thursday meeting. Telehealth is another big issue for these meetings.
- Odile is appreciative of the new CoA Communications Committee and the county will work closely with it and provide liaison support.
- Odile clarified that Patrice McGhee is the AAA Director; Shawn is providing staff support to the full COA and the Public Policy Committee; Tina, Pazit and Jennifer provide staff support to other committees: and that Patrice, Shawn and Pazit all report directly to Odile.
- Effective July 1, 2021, the County will be increasing its Adult Foster Care Rates to providers to match the State rate. An increase is something that the Commission has advocated for in the past. This program serves adults ages 18 – 90+.

Commission on Aging Business

Approval of March EC Meeting Minutes

Committee members approved the March meeting minutes.

Approval of Agenda for March CoA Meeting

Committee members approved the draft agenda.

Budget Report

Budget Officer Richard Jourdenais reported that there is \$4,895.11 in the account today. There were no expenditures this month.

Discussion of CoA Funds – Report from Subcommittee

Dick Jourdenais provided a history of funding to the CoA that was based on bank records. A large donation to the checking account, \$4,601.52, came from Charles Kauffman in June 2016 for the express purpose of promoting the newly developed Age Friendly program. Most COA disbursements over the years have been in the \$50-\$60 range. Wayne Berman explained that the CoA needs to set parameters for expenditures. He suggested that after setting parameters, it would be helpful to talk with Charles Kauffman. The EC determined that there is no need to run the parameters by Mr. Kauffman. Monica Schaeffer pointed out that the checks cannot say CoA and that the treasurer being the authorized signer is a problem because that person changes every year. The Subcommittee (Wayne, Monica and Dick) will continue to meet to come up with recommendations on how these issues should be handled.

Commission Member Recruitment, Reappointment Letter Reminder and Process for Replacement of Retiring Commissioners.

- Several EC members were reminded that they need to submit applications to re-apply for their position on the Commission. The application, with cover letter and resume, can be completed on-line and the deadline is April 28.
- Barbara Selter will talk with the CoA recruitment committee (Miriam, Joyce and Karon) about the importance of clarifying to applicants that the Commission needs members who are willing to work hard between meetings to help accomplish Commission goals.
- Ms. Selter stated that the by-laws say that retiring Commission members should remain on the Commission until they are replaced, but our current practice is that Commissioners leave in January even though they are not replaced until new commissioners are appointed. In the future, retiring commissioners will be educated on the by-laws and graciously asked to remain on the CoA until they are replaced. Ms. Selter and the Communications Committee will work on a process whereby the retiring commissioners can help with a secession plan.

Report on Budget Hearings

Ms. Selter reported that at the budget hearing she attended, most people were in agreement with the budget priorities. The CoA did not testify, but submitted its budget priorities to the County Council.

Reports on County Council Visits to Date

- Hans Reimer was supportive and interested in the nursing facility survey issue, and our budget priorities. Mr. Reimer talked about new loan funds for affordable housing, which is one of his priorities.
- Jill Ortman-Fouse and Sarah Wolf, of Tom Hucker's staff, were supportive and interested in the nursing facility survey issue and followed up by forwarding three Commission letters to Linda McMillan, Legislative Analyst, who then sent an email to many county officials and staff about the issue. Jill Ortman-Fouse said that restructuring the police to ensure that mental health workers deal with mental health issues is a top priority for Mr. Hucker. Ms. Selter told Mr. Hucker's staff about the CoA Task Force on Dementia, Policing, and Racial Equity and assured them we would send the report once finalized.
- Andrew Friedson was aware of the nursing facility survey issue. He noted that his district has the highest proportion of older adults and that there is a lot of food insecurity in his District. He was very supportive and interested in Commission issues.
- Two staff from Will Jawando's office were supportive. They stated that Mr. Jawando recently introduced a housing bill and that he views the pandemic as a re-set enabling the County to establish equity. The staff members suggested that the CoA review former County Executive Leggett's Senior Agenda and provide a briefing to Council members on the status of the items on that agenda.
- Craig Rice, who was supportive, talked about transportation issues. He occasionally rides buses and has noted that there are many senior citizens on busses. Mr. Rice supports programs for older adults and would like to see more information disseminated to the public regarding what programs the County makes available to them.
- Hillery followed up with Gabe Alborno following the COA meeting with him.

Two suggestions were made as follows:

- The CoA should consider holding meetings with Council members more often, possibly quarterly or three times a year.
- Marcia Pruzan should give a briefing on how far the Commission has come on its priorities.

Schedule and Agendas for Strategic Planning and Budget Priority Sessions in July.

- The budget priority session is usually held the last Thursday of July.
- Barbara Selter asked for assistance in planning the Strategic Planning Session and the following individuals volunteered: Wayne Berman, Jean Dinwiddie, Edgar Rivas, Janice Zalen, and Shawn Brennan also will attend meetings.

“Find the Good and Praise It” COA Award and Recognition Program

Wayne Berman briefly described this potential new program and directed the EC to his paper on the issue for more information. He explained that the criteria for the recognition can be simple and that it is not a competition. The CoA would recognize an entity, possibly via a letter from the County Executive and a certificate from the CoA. It is a way to publicize both the CoA and the good work that an entity is performing. The EC approved of this recognition program and named it “The Austin Heyman Find the Good and Praise It Recognition Program.” A subcommittee was established to work out the mechanics of this new program. The following individuals volunteered for this subcommittee: Wayne Berman, Jean Dinwiddie, Monica Schaefer and Marsha Weber. They will report back to the EC and after EC approval, this new program will be presented to the CoA for its approval.

ACCESS Hears Project and Next Steps

This item was tabled to the May EC meeting.

Reminder to Sign Up for Public Forum

Everyone was reminded to sign up for the Public Forum. Shawn Brennan will re-send the registration information to all.

Response to Request to Support HCBS Legislation

The deadline to respond is April 26. Edgar Rivas will draft a letter of support to Senator Casey. Mr. Rivas will forward his draft to Morris Klein for review and editing, and then to the EC.

Update on Task Forces

- **Task Force on Dementia, Policing and Racial Equity:** This task force has met regularly and continues to revise the final report. They are close to finishing their work and, upon its completions, will send the final report to the Public Policy Committee.
- **Social Isolation (SILOS) Task Force:** SILOS has made great progress planning the Public Forum.

Committee Reports

Health and Wellness Committee (HWC)

Co-Chair Neal Brown reported that the HWC continues to concentrate on helping people age at home. The problem they are noting is that there is a limited number of programs. Co-Chair Marsha Weber added that they heard from two speakers, Hirsch Isen from In-home Aide Service (IHAS); and Marla Lahat, Home Care Partners.

Aging in Community (AIC)

Co-Chair Monica Schaeffer reported that the AIC is developing action steps on affordable rental housing. They divided the issue into 1) regulatory and funding issues, and 2) access. As far as access, they noted that the operators at 311 and 7-3000 when asked, responded that there is no affordable housing. The AIC will work towards operators providing a more helpful response. Regarding, regulatory and funding, the AIC may write letters supporting County Executive Elrich's new housing opportunity funds. Also, the AIC is tracking Will Jawando's bills relating to eviction. Co-Chair Wayne Berman added that the AIC will bring up transportation at the full Commission's budget priority discussion.

Public Policy Committee (PPC)

Co-Chair Morris Klein reported that the PPC monitored budget hearings, the nursing facility surveyor issue, and the Medicaid Long Term Care Waiver slots. Four hundred more slots have been added to the Waiver program with money from the COVID Bill.

Communications Committee (CC)

The first new episode of *Seniors Today* aired. About 8-10 CC members signed up for the Seniors Today planning group which Jean leads. The CC also is working on an Adult Ambassador Program and an orientation book for new commissioners, the latter under Beverly's leadership.

Invited Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

April 22, 2021

Speakers on social isolation – Aditi from Big and Mini, and Leah Bradley from Empowering the Ages.

May 27, 2021

Rethinking Care for Older Adults – Stuart Butler, Brookings Institute, will speak on the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution and Hartford Foundation paper.

June 24, 2021

Affordable Housing – to be determined.

July, 2021

Strategic Planning Session and Budget Priority Session

Adjourn at 11:30 am.

Action Items

1. The finance subcommittee will continue to meet and to develop recommendations.
2. Several EC members need to submit applications to re-apply for their position on the Commission by April 28.
3. Barbara Selter will talk with the recruitment committee about the importance of selecting Commissioners who will work diligently.
4. Ms. Selter and the Communications Committee will work on a process whereby the retiring commissioners can help with a secession plan.
5. Barbara Selter , Wayne Berman, Jean Dinwiddie, Edgar Rivas, Janice Zalen and Shawn Brennan will meet together to plan the strategic planning meeting. .
6. Wayne Berman, Jean Dinwiddie, Monica Schaefer and Marsha Weber will meet together to work out the mechanics of The Austin Heyman Find the Good and Praise It Recognition Program.
7. Edgar Rivas will draft a letter supporting HCBS and forward it to Morris Klein.
8. All should sign up for the Public Forum.