

Commission on Aging
Executive Committee
March 18, 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

Shawn Brennan, HHS
Dr. Patrice McGhee, 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 and Shawn Brennan

- State Budget
 - MD Department of Aging Secretary Kramer testified in support of Communities for Life and the Durable Medical Equipment program. The subcommittee recommended level funding of these programs.
- County Executive's Budget Proposal:
 - Adds one social worker position to Adult Protective Services.
 - 1.5% inflation increase to all County contracts.
- Since March 1, nursing facilities are open to visitors if the facility has been COVID-free for 14 days. Long-term-care ombudsman may return to nursing facilities effective April 1, but may only visit one nursing facility a day. One Committee member noted that visiting hours frequently are only during the day when families who work are not able to visit. Dr. McGhee will look into this.
- Legislators have asked the Department of Aging for updates on programs with waiting lists.
- The Recreation Department plans to conduct virtual and outdoor activities this summer.

In a discussion on the County Executive's proposed budget, the following points were made:

- There is unexpected revenue that has not been allocated yet.
- An additional social worker for Adult Protective Services, which the CoA advocated for, is included.
- The proposed budget also contains increased housing initiatives and funding, which the CoA has long advocated.
- There is a cut to the escorted transportation program.
- The County appears to be investing, where it can, in connectivity.

Commission on Aging Business

February Meeting Minutes

Committee members moved to approve the February meeting minutes.

Draft Agenda for March CoA Meeting

After noting that the meeting agenda was quite lengthy, suggestions to save time included shortening Committee reports by focusing only on action items and upcoming activities. Also, *Topics for Future Meetings* was eliminated.

Committee members moved to approve the draft agenda, as amended.

Budget Report

Budget Officer Richard Jourdenais reported that there is \$4,895.11 in the account today.

Beth Gochroch, Staff of Boards, Committees and Commissions, responded to the CoA inquiry regarding the CoA account as follows: Since the funds are private funds, the CoA can maintain and use the funds. However, there must be a direct relationship to our mission. Also, we need to take the CoA's name off of the account.

Committee members approved the following motion: The CoA will establish a short-term subcommittee to address the issue of the funds and fundraising.

The following individuals volunteered for the subcommittee: Wayne Berman, Monica Schaffer, Richard Jourdenais and Ryan Wilson. Barbara Selter will forward Chuck Kaufman's letter regarding what to do with the funds to the new group.

COA Letters

- Letter to the Office of Health Care Quality regarding nursing facility surveys and inspections: The Committee moved to approve the letter as drafted. After a lengthy discussion on who the letter should be copied to, it was agreed that Ryan Wilson and Morris Klein will make that determination. It was also agreed that Janice Zalen will draft a letter to the County Council inquiring about the County's plans for the ten nurses who may no longer be surveyors and the County's plans to keep nursing

facility residents safe under the potential new system.

- The letter in support of HB 910, \$750 benefit for hearing aids, drafted by David Engel, was submitted.
- A letter in support of HB 416 (Companion bill to SB 204, Health Care Facilities –Assisted Living Programs) was submitted.
- Letter regarding changes to Medicaid funded transportation: This letter was approved by motion and will be sent to the entire Commission with a one-day turnaround for review and approval. Once approved, Wayne Berman will send the letter to Tremayne Jones and Shawn Brennan who will format it and send it out.

Neal Potter Awards Status

There are eight nominees. The judges are meeting tomorrow to evaluate the candidates.

Status of Planning for Visits with County Council Members

Seven of the nine council member visits are scheduled.

Discussion of List of Topics for Upcoming Meetings

Barbara Selter received a good response to her request to the Commission for topic suggestions. Committee members suggested choosing a few key themes under which the different responses would fit. The following motion was approved:

Motion: The Executive Committee will hold an extra Committee meeting in the summer in order to determine future themes of activity that will be based, to the extent possible, on the suggestions sent by Commission members, but will also consider the County's "Age Friendly" strategic plans, as well as individuals' visions for the future.

Barbara Selter, Shawn Brennan and Patrice McGhee will work together to compile materials for this extra meeting and will also determine a date for the meeting, which will include both staff.

It was noted that some topics that are not included in the themes could be seen on "Seniors Today instead.

Announcement of new Seniors Today Host

Katie Smith is the new host.

Update on Task Forces

- **Social Isolation (SILOS) Task Force:** SILOS is making good progress planning the Public Forum. Two speakers have accepted invitations and the task force is seeking two more speakers.
- **Task Force on Dementia, Policing and Racial Equity:** Jean Dinwiddie, Katie Smith and Arlee Wallace will be meeting in the afternoon of March 18. Arthur Williams is aware of the meeting.

Committee Reports

Health and Wellness Committee (HWC)

Co-Chair Marsha Weber reported that the HWC continues to work on the need for more home-based care. Last week, they heard from Tom Najjar who owns Care Plus Agency. He has a Flex Care program in three independent senior resident buildings in MC, which allow residents to use services at a lower cost because the aides can provide service in one place. The cost can be reduced as well as the time for services. Residents can arrange for 15 minute visit minimums.

Aging in Community (AIC)

Co-Chair Wayne Berman reported that AIC's discussion on transportation led to action items as follows: Thrive 2050 has public hearings in May; there is a Transportation Training Video that the Commission should be made aware of, and possibly, transportation should have a higher priority in the Commission's budget priorities.

Public Policy Committee (PPC)

Co-Chair Ryan Wilson reported that several letters were submitted or are in the works, as noted above. Also, the PPC monitored the General Assembly and now that the County Executive's proposed budget has been released, the Committee will work on bullet points for visits with County Council.

Communications Committee (CC)

About 15 Commission members attended the first meeting. The CC established a smaller subcommittee for Seniors Today. The CC's first project will be a new orientation handbook. The CC also is working on advocacy training for Commission members. The CC meets the third Monday of the month in the afternoon.

In discussion, it was suggested that Seniors Today needs a name change and all agreed.

Invited Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

March 26, 2021

Josiah Yiu, Carrie Nieman, and Khoi Le from Access HEARS, and potential expansion of project in Montgomery County.

April 22, 2021

Speakers on social isolation – not discussed.

May 27, 2021

Centered on a report by the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution entitled *Rethinking Care for Older Adults* and a Hartford Foundation Paper, this session is being worked on by Edgar Rivas who is trying to obtain speakers.

June 24, 2021

Affordable Housing – this can be postponed if needed.

Proposed New Initiatives

New Business

- ***Budget Hearings:*** The CoA testifies twice a year, in the Spring and the Fall. Ryan Wilson explained that there are a series of listening sessions that should be made available to the Commission members, but these sessions are for listening and not for testifying. It would be good for Commission members to listen at their convenience. Shawn Brennan pointed out that there are lots of options for testifying, e.g., by video and telephone. Ms. Brennan will send that information to the Committee, along with a breakdown of the County Executive’s proposed budget as it relates to aging, and the schedule of listening sessions.
- ***Intergenerational Workforce and Combatting Age Discrimination:*** A meeting is scheduled for May 21. There is a strong effort to engage employers in this issue.
- Wayne Berman suggested that there be some kind of recognition by the CoA for employers or groups that have excelled in this area. This idea of “finding good and praising it” will be discussed at the next EC meeting.
- ***New Commissioners:*** A vacancy announcement has not yet been posted. Shawn will check into this and, hopefully, will have more information for the full Commission meeting.

Adjourn at 11:30 am.

Action Items

1. Patrice McGhee will look into the issue of nursing facility visits allowed only during the day.
2. Wayne Berman, Monica Schaffer, Richard Jourdenais and Ryan Wilson, as members of the new finance subcommittee, will determine what to do with the CoA’s bank account.
3. Barbara Selter will forward Chuck Kaufman’s letter regarding how to spend the funds to the new finance subcommittee members.
4. Ryan Wilson and Morris Klein will determine who should receive copies of the letter regarding reduction of nursing facility surveyors.
5. Janice Zalen will draft a letter to the County Council inquiring about the County’s plans for the ten nurses who may no longer be surveyors and the County’s plans to keep nursing facility residents safe under the potential new system.
6. Barbara Selter will email the letter on changes to Medicaid-funded transportation to the Commission with a one-day turnaround for review and approval.
7. Wayne Berman will send the letter, once approved, to Tremayne Jones and Shawn Brennan who will format it and send it out.
8. Barbara Selter, Shawn Brennan and Patrice McGhee will work together to compile materials for an extra Committee meeting and will select a date for the meeting.
9. Edgar Rivas will find speakers for the May 27 Commission meeting.
10. Shawn Brennan will send to the Commission a breakdown of the County Executive’s

proposed budget as it relates to aging, the schedule of listening sessions and ways to testify.

11. Barbara Selter will add an item to next month's EC meeting agenda on recognizing employers or groups that have excelled in including older persons.

12. Shawn Brennan will look into when the Commission vacancies will be posted.