

July 27, 2023
Commission on Aging Meeting
Held by zoom

In attendance:

Commissioners: David Engel, Virginia Cain, Mona Greiser, Wayne Berman, Betsy Carrier, Mary Sweeney, Kendell Mathews, Barbara Selter, Nikiru Ezeani, Marsha Weber, Marcia Pruzan, Art Williams, Ryan Wilson. Laurie Pross, Jean Dinwiddie, Morris Klein, Janice Zalen, Beverly Rollins, Yvette Monroe, Ric Ricciardi, Katie Smith, Siboncube, Arunima Ghosh

Austin Heyman, CoA Alumni

Guests: Shane Rock, Gerard Etienne, and Hal Bordy, Jewish Council for the Aging. Denise Isreal and Walton Harris, MC DOT, Jim Resnick, MCFR

Montgomery County Government: Sara Swar, MC Dept of Recreation. Gemena Murchison and Peter Flandrau, MC Aging and Disability

Meeting was called to order by Chair, David Engel at 9:30. The purpose of the meeting was to review the proposed budget priorities.

Approval of June 22 Commission minutes: Jean moved for approval, Kendell seconded, and unanimously approved.

Announcements:

1. May 2, 2024, is the date for the 2024 CoA Forum. It will be held in conjunction with Senior Expo at the Bohrer Center.
2. Applications for Commissioners were sent to the nominating committee. There are 26 applications. Any Commissioner who is re-applying to the CoA does not need to be interviewed. Laurie had a question about her term, she will contact Peter outside of the meeting to discuss.
3. On July 26 a report was released about the nursing home review process in Montgomery County. Peter has not reviewed the document yet; however, he will email the document to Commissioners. The document is also on the County Council website.
4. The Commission made a \$300 donation to the senior nutrition program for the meal served at the June 22 CoA meeting.

Process for voting for budget priorities described by David and Peter:

Survey Monkey ballots will be used to record votes. An email will be sent to the Commissioners listing all 15 priorities. Commissioners will vote for their top five priorities and they will be weighted in rank order from the top priority (#1) to the bottom (#5).

Based on the voting the top five priorities will be selected. If something is not in the top five it doesn't mean that we won't advocate for it; however, from a budgetary standpoint, the CoA is going to present proposals to the County Council and the County Executive for the top five proposals.

Questions & clarification about the voting process:

Art asked whether you could give all your votes to a single proposal. David said that you had to select and rank order five different proposals.

David said when you get the ballot if anyone needs help or has questions they should contact him. David wants 100% voting participation by the Commissioners so there is an accurate reflection of what the Commission wants to promote.

Chairs will have the opportunity to make "tweaks" or add additional details to their proposals based on questions and comments raised at the meeting about the proposals. All revisions should be submitted to David by August 2.

Q: Will the ballot include proposals that don't have a dollar value connected to them or is it going to be a mixture of things with and without dollar items? A: The ballot will include both, some of the items are advocacy items, and some will have budgets developed at a later date. Peter stated that regarding the efforts of the Commission they should select priorities regardless of where they fall on the budget spectrum. So whether it's \$10,000 for the public forum or \$1,500,000 for senior nutrition program, it's where the Commission feels that it should put the most effort.

Presentation of 15 proposals, insert or attach description of proposals.

The goal was to have committee chairpersons present the 15 proposals without interruption. Following the presentations, Commissioners asked questions or made comments about the proposals.

Janice asked if the committee chairs would indicate their number 1 priority proposal. Two chairs did so and then Art indicated that it was inappropriate as this could bias the voting. David agreed and the request was withdrawn.

Questions about the proposals:

Q: With Connector Ride is there an income limit? A: There is no income limit.

Q: Should the two meals programs (#11 and #15) be combined. A: no

Q: Has or will the technology training as suggested in #10 be coordinated with Senior Planet. A: Proposal #10 is a train the trainer program and is different than the training offered by Senior Planet.

Q: Will the hub and spoke (#7) model serve just underserved communities or all communities? A: The hub and spoke proposal will serve all communities, but the emphasis will be on underserved communities.

Q: The Smarter Care Technology project (#6), who is doing the pilot? What is the design? Who's going to create it? Who's going to follow up on it? A: This proposal includes a conceptual and an administrative component. The concept is that we would be trying to supplement home and community based services by remote monitoring and that could provide more opportunities for caregivers to do more things. We (Barbara) have discussed this program being administered by the county, some kind of contract or mechanism between the county and one or two public or private care providers. It could be outsourced to either a for profit or not-for-profit entity. It was my vision that the County would administer it but it would most likely be one of the vendors who is already providing services. They would just be using this additional technology and modifying the program. The services would likely be paid for by Medicare or Medicaid. This pilot would likely be administered through an RFP.

Q: Gap Filling (#8): is there an aspect of this proposal that will look at the frequent users of this service? A: It is likely the county would monitor for frequent users.

Q: On selecting priorities some of the ones listed are not budget priorities, as they are not specific to a budget item vs. an advocacy item. A: There is a fine line between a budget priority and advocacy. Everything is advocacy. Every budget priority is something for which CoA advocates for and the particular thing that we are asked to do as a Commission is to list our budget priorities. So these budget items are the things in particular the CoA is focused on. That doesn't mean that the CoA is not going to advocate on other things for which they may or may not have an idea as to how much it costs.

Q: Regarding the safety program (#9). If that program already exists can't the Transportation Department take the money out of their own budget? A: It is a certified national program that Montgomery County has not used. Around two years ago the Department of Transportation provided a list of suggested changes to the Transportation Services Improvement Fund to both the County Executive and to the County Council. As part of those changes there was a recommendation that the PASS training program be used for taxi drivers in Montgomery County. The funding would cover the cost of the class and provide a stipend as an incentive to drivers to participate in the program. This program was met with some hesitancy from the Council as well as individuals who represent those who are disabled. The idea was that the money would be coming from the Transportation Services Improvement Fund, which was a specific fund that goes directly to taxi cab drivers to provide services for individuals who are disabled, seniors and those with limited income. The fact that this money would come from that fund caused the proposal to be dropped. To date, each taxi cab company is responsible for having some level of customer service training in house, that's been the general approach that you have in-house training especially with transporting individuals who are disabled. So this program would program would provide a uniform model of training.

Comments about the proposals:

Comment: Regarding #5, the print materials on aging done by the County would benefit from more coordination.

Comment: Regarding #16, the Board of Education has no funding for the intergenerational activities that may be proposed by the intergenerational committee of the school board.

Comment: Regarding #12, even though there are no dollars attached to inspection of nursing homes, it should remain a top advocacy issue.

Comment: If ARPA funded projects are to become permanently funded do we need to consider these projects as budget proposals, specifically Access Hears?

Comment: On the marketing and outreach proposal (#3) has consideration been given to using a contractor rather than an employee?

Comment: Can we frame the implementation manager in item #2 as something positive rather than framing it as a crisis issue; possibly frame it as an opportunity?

Comment: #6, Cluster care needs to be defined.

Other business:

The topic for the September CoA meeting will be Medicare. There also will be an update on Access Hears.

In lieu of the October CoA meeting, Commissioners should attend the October 26th Summit on Aging. You should have received an email with instructions on how to register. Speakers include: Maryland Secretary on Aging, County Executive and the County Council President.

Meeting adjourned at 11:38.