

Montgomery County Commission on Aging Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2016

Attendees: Rudy Oswald, co-chair, Doug Newton, co-chair, Noelle Heyman, COA Chair, COA Members Chuck Kauffman, John Honig, Mort Faller, Karen Maricheau, Stephanie Edelstein, Barbara Multz (by phone) Paul Del Ponte, Liaison, Sarah Gotbaum, Director Area Agency on Aging, Dr. Odile Brunetto.

Attendees reviewed the 2016 Maryland legislative schedule. There are nine primary budget-related dates between the opening session (January 13) and adjournment (April 11). Primary dates include submission of the budget bill by the Governor (January 20), budget hearings for Maryland Department of Aging (February 18 and 24 for the Senate and House respectively), and the scheduled date for budget passage by both the House and Senate (April 4).

1. A brief announcement and discussion was held concerning the United Seniors of Maryland Legislative Forum scheduled for February 3 in Annapolis. Co-chairs Rudy Oswald and Doug Newton will attend as well as Karen Maricheau, John Honig, & Sarah Gotbaum. All are urged to attend. Car pools can be arranged.
2. A discussion of was held on the priorities and developments of bills of interest to COA including:
 - Care Act. Noelle Heyman reported that the hospital associations are not ready to support the bill because of concerns over costs and additional regulations. Discussions with the hospital associations continue.
 - Financial Abuse. Bills to further protect seniors' assets and provide for "claw back" of funds by giving the AG the ability to bring civil suits. Barbara Multz is working with Del Kramer. Mort Faller is working the issue and commented on the role of the State Securities Administration and the Uniform Civil Code.
 - Paid Sick Leave. Montgomery County has passed its own version of the bill requiring paid sick leave for caregivers. The Chamber of Commerce is opposed due to costs, regulations and possible loss of jobs. Support is highest for the measure in urban areas, while rural areas are generally opposed. Any bill may will be vetoed depending on compromises on final wording. A bill would probably not go forward w/o a 2/3rds majority vote. Paul DelPonte is again following the bill for the committee.
 - State 401K Plan. Plan would be similar to 529 plans, however, no bill introduced yet. Chuck Kauffman will follow up.
3. Question was raised about SB 108, Nurse Support Program Assistance Fund. This is a new issue. Noelle Heyman will follow up. Another question was raised about SB 5 and a similar bill, HB 0033. Both deal with providing a subtraction modification for qualified retirees' income for Maryland income tax. Doug Newton will follow.

4. As of January 10, there were 67 bills introduced in the House and 113 in the Senate. Best source of information is website: mgaleg.maryland.gov.
5. There was a long discussion on Long-Term Care Insurance. Issues discussed included the State Insurance Commission allowing a 15% rate increase, the effect of advances in medical technology on annuity calculations, the lack of an effective business model for insurance companies, poor marketing of products, and the inability of companies to establish reserve funds. Stephanie Edelstein will follow up at a hearing of the Insurance commission on Jan. 22.
6. Montgomery County Issues. Leggett Town Hall meetings. Very few seniors attended the January 11 meeting per Sarah Gotbaum. The majority of attendees were parents concerned about elementary education. Karen Maricheau will attend the January 21 meeting in Silver Spring. Doug Newton will attend the January 25 meeting in Germantown.
7. There is a need for additional legal services for low-income Montgomery County seniors. Mort Faller led a discussion on the Baltimore City legal services program which is substantially greater than Montgomery County's. Baltimore City's program has a legal hotline for issues such as powers of attorney, landlord disputes and bankruptcy situations. The District of Columbia has a \$5M program.
8. Montgomery County budget hearing will be conducted in February. Noelle Heyman will review the proposed budget for possible concerns. Mr. Leggett will meet with the Chair of the COA to discuss the budget. Odile will resend a list of open liaison positions. Additionally, she will resend the COA talking points drafted in November for use by those attending the USM Legislative Forum caucuses on February 3.