

**CoA Executive Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2016**  
**9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**In attendance**

**Committee members:** Noelle Heyman, Isabelle Schoenfeld, Rudy Oswald, Revathi Vikram, Stephanie Edelstein, Doug Newton, Charles Kauffman, Miriam Kelty.

**CoA members:** n/a

**Guests:** n/a

**Liaisons:** n/a

**Staff:** Odile Brunetto, Director, Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

The minutes from the March, 2015 meeting were approved with edits.

Given the recent release of the County Executive's budget proposal, the focus of this meeting was primarily on budget-related issues and activities.

**Report from the Chair**

Noelle reported that speakers are lined up for upcoming CoA meetings. In March, Isabelle and Judy Levy will discuss the Summit on Aging Strategic Planning Workgroup's goal of aligning the summit recommendations, survey and focus group results, Senior Subcabinet workgroups, Senior Agenda topics, and prospective Age Friendly Community domains, so that they are consistent and that a Strategic Plan Development Steps proposal is being prepared for the Senior Subcabinet Co-Chairs. (See below for additional discussion of this topic.) In April, Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh will discuss his office's services to seniors, with a focus on services around elder abuse and exploitation.

Noelle and Judy met with Council President Nancy Floreen. One of the topics discussed was the low rate of participation in the Design for Life Montgomery Tax Incentive Program. There was discussion about involving CoA member Noreen Chochan, whose professional focus includes adaptive design. Isabelle noted that at the last AIPC meeting, there was discussion about the low rate of participation among contractors. Noelle reported that Council President Floreen is interested in respite care and caregiver support issues.

Noelle will be meeting with Chuck Short and Gabe Albornoz to discuss the ways in which the CoA can help the county move forward with the Age Friendly Community initiative. Chuck stated that it was his impression that the Senior Subcabinet will be responsible for implementing the Age Friendly Initiative. The Strategic Plan workgroup, based on feedback from the Senior Subcabinet, is proposing an expanded Senior Subcabinet to include external

stakeholders. Chuck said that he would like to see the county create a structure for implementation that ensures its continuation into the next administration. Noelle observed that the CoA's role is to advise, to ensure that the county implement the initiative; it is not our role to implement it. Noelle will let Isabelle know about upcoming meetings so that she can attend. It was also mentioned that the County Executive's FY17 budget proposal includes funding for a Senior Fellow to work on implementation of the Age Friendly initiative.

Noelle will attend the upcoming meeting of Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

Noelle recommended rescheduling the CoA annual meeting from May to later in the year. September was selected for the 2016 annual meeting. Planning will begin in May.

### **Report from the AAA Director**

Odile reported on the County Executive's FY17 budget recommendations.

Mr. Leggett has proposed a property tax increase of 8.6%. Many of the budget proposals that would impact seniors are contingent on this increase. They include:

- \$145,000, for senior center staff and operations at the new North Potomac Community Recreation Center (but no proposed additional funding for JCA buses to transport seniors to the center).
- \$24,000, for a Senior Fellow (11 hours/week) to implement the WHO Age Friendly Community Initiative.
- \$100,000, in subsidies for Adult Day Care (would serve an additional 18 people).
- \$30,000, in additional funding for home delivered meals.
- \$200,000, for Adult Evaluation and Review Services. These funds would be dedicated to contractual staff. (These reviews are conducted by a combination of county merit and county contract RNs. Many of the contractual nurses are retired or work part-time, paid at the state rate of \$25/hour. There was discussion later in the meeting about the difficulty of finding such contractors, and whether the pool of evaluators could be increased through the use of appropriately supervised nursing students or volunteers.)
- \$300,000, in additional subsidies for Victory Crossing Senior Housing in Silver Spring. Victory Crossing will have 105 units, 95 of which will be set aside for seniors whose income is 30-60% of the area median.
- \$18,000, to enhance public information about senior services, including some payment for space in *The Beacon*.

- \$1,000,000 in grants to 30 local non-profit organizations that serve seniors, among which are five Villages.

The budget proposal also calls for reducing the age of eligibility for Call-N-Ride from 67 to 65.

The budget proposal does not include certain items supported by the CoA, including:

- \$100,000 in additional funding for respite care. (The county contracts with Respite Care of Montgomery County, which in turn provides services to family caregivers.)
- \$153,000 to increase the Adult Foster Care subsidy.
- \$40,000 in additional funding for the caregiver support coordinator position, to convert that position from part-time to full time.
- Funding for a full-time manager of the Age Friendly Initiative (rather than the part-time Senior Fellow in the proposed budget).

Discussion followed on whether the CoA should (1) support the proposed property tax increase as the funding mechanism for the other budget items; and (2) request funding for all the CoA priority items that were not in the proposed budget.

The Executive Committee determined that the CoA should pursue the following strategies:

- Support the tax increase, but request that the county develop a payment structure that reduces the impact on low income older homeowners (65 and older whose income is up to three times the federal poverty level). Chuck observed that the tax issue involves both the assessed value of property and the tax rate. Older homeowners whose home values have increased substantially over many years will be more impacted by an assessment increase and hence, a tax increase. Rudy offered to draft talking points on this topic. This discussion led to discussion about the need to publicize the various state and county tax credit and other abatement programs.
- Defer the request for funding for the caregiver support coordinator position. The position is new, and we do not yet know whether requests for assistance will justify a request for a full-time position at this time.
- While we need to maintain focus on the Age Friendly Initiative, we will not seek funding for a full-time position at this time.
- We will continue to request the Adult Foster Care (\$153,000) and Respite Care (\$100,000) subsidies.

Commission members are preparing for meetings with Council members on the budget and are reminded to sign up for those meetings, the first of which is on March 29. Background materials for Council members and CoA members will include a copy of the CoA testimony on the FY17 budget, the CoA Annual Report, the Senior Agenda, and a set of talking points. Isabelle is working on the testimony and Karen Maricheau is working with Rudy on the talking points. The talking points for the meetings with Council members will be generally supportive of the budget proposal and reflect the previous discussion. We need to be careful not to advocate on budget items that we have not previously requested (eg Call-a-Ride), but we can acknowledge and voice appreciation for the proposed increase in funding for Meals-on-Wheels, for example. We should be prepared to address the tax increase issue, and also (based on previous years' experience) the possibility of questions as to how the county should balance education vs. aging and other services.

### **March CoA meeting**

The Executive Committee approved the agenda for the March CoA meeting. One agenda item will be discussion of the CoA's role with regard to implementation of the various agendas and initiatives, building on the presentation by Isabelle and Judy described above. There will also be discussion of summer studies and the annual meeting.

### **Committee reports**

Given the time constraints and focus on the county budget, the only committee report was brief and from the PPC.

Doug, Rudy, and John Honig continue to monitor state bills and share relevant information with PPC members. Rudy reported that the crossover date by which each chamber must send the other the bills that have been passed, is March 21. Rep. Kramer's bill, HB 718, authorizing the Attorney General to file a civil suit against perpetrators of elder financial exploitation, passed the House. Rudy testified on this bill. The legislature adjourns on Monday, April 11, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.