

Meeting: Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Date: 5-23-34

Virtual Roll Call:

Attendees: David Engel, Chair, Yvette Monroe, Vice Chair Commissioners: Linda Bergofsky, Virginia Cain, Betsy Carrier, Jean Dinwiddie, Joyce Dubow, Morris Klein, Bob Levy, Kendall Matthews, Kathleen McGuinness, Anna Maria Izquierdo-Porrera, Richard Ricciardi, Beverly Rollins, Barbara Selter, Marie Sloan, Katie Smith, Mary Sweeney, Janice Zalen, Sibó Ncube Alumni: Marcia Pruzan, Marsha Weber

Liaisons: Sara Fought, JCA, Denise Israel, Transportation, Patty Hagen, Winter Growth, Constance Row Villages Consortium, Marie Brodsky Wise Cities, Mary Jo Deering, WAVE, Janine Tursini, Arts For the Aging

County: Pazit Aviv - Community Outreach Manager, Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief, Aging and Disability Services, Dr. Kimberly Y. Johnson, Director, Area Agency on Aging, Tremayne Jones, Office Services Coordinator, Tara Clemons-Johnson, Council Senior Analyst, Rafael Murphy, OGM, Shawn Brennan, Age Friendly, Stacy Sigler, Recreation, Ingrid Lizama, Latino Health Initiative, Gerard Ettienne, JCA

Guests: Kristi, SBP Village Team Member, Claudi Fess, Del. Sarah Wolek, Chief of Staff, Del. Sarah Wolek, State Delegate District 16, Kate Smith, Bradley Hills Village, Rosemary Oslinsky, Rhonda Baird, Sylvia Saunders, Marjorie Goldman, Robin Anthony Kouyate. Margaret Warker, Kathy Libby, Margie Eulner Ott, Helen R, Evan

Chair acknowledge former chair Judy Levy's husband passed away. Sending the commission's thoughts and prayers to their family.

AAA Updates

Dr. Kimberly Johnson provided updates on several key areas:

1. **Community Outreach Manager Vacancy:** An eligible list for the position, previously held by Peter Flandrau, is expected soon.
2. **Ombudsman Program:** Recruitment is ongoing for one program manager, which will complete the unit.

In response to a question from Janice about who is heading the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Patrice responded that she and Kimberly were in charge. Janice commented that the Ombudsman program may require some monitoring or at least our (CoA) paying attention. It is noted that if the Ombudsman program is not performing adequately, that is a double whammy for our nursing facility residents.

3. **AERS Team Recruitment:** Recruitment continues for nurses to conduct long-term care Medicaid assessments.
4. **Branding and Outreach:** Dr. Johnson and Dr. McGhee are collaborating with the public information office, meeting weekly to develop and implement promotional programming for Aging and Disability Services. Dr. Johnson has been highlighting Longevity, Maryland, in presentations, and promoting Older Americans Month since April. A celebration event is scheduled for May 24th at Long Branch Recreation Center.
5. **Media Feature:** Dr. Johnson was featured on EC News Now, discussing resources for older adults in support of Older Americans Month.
<https://www.dcnewsnow.com/video/older-americans-month/9718052/>
6. **Area Plan Update:** The annual update of the area plan is underway.
7. **ARPA Funding:** The total budget is \$3,551,720, and spending is on target. A no-cost extension request to ACL is pending.
8. **Village Consortium Funding:** Dr. Johnson announced that the Village Consortium funding has been approved.

A & D Chief:

Dr. Patrice McGhee provided an overview of proposed budget cuts to Aging and Disability Services by the County Council, reducing the County Executive's budget by \$8.5 million:

1. **Senior Lunch Program:** Proposed elimination of funding for the new meal program at the Silver Spring Aquatic Center, which started in April.
2. **Respite Care Rate Increase:** Proposed reduction impacting 24 families, reducing the respite services available in FY 25.
3. **Community's First Choice Program:** Proposed elimination of the offset needed to cover the deficit of this entitlement program.
4. **New Program for Unhoused Individuals:** Proposed elimination of a new program aimed at providing support for unhoused individuals under 60 who need assistance with activities of daily living.
5. **Food Hubs:** Proposed reduction affecting food hubs, which have seen increased usage by older adults during the pandemic.
6. **Infrastructure Needs:** Proposed elimination of infrastructure positions, which would hinder improvements in data reporting within Aging and Disability Services, affecting the PACS team's work.

These cuts are part of a total \$8.5 million reduction across Health and Human Services (HHS).

Commissioners responded with questions about the Budget and the rationale for the reductions with no clear explanations from Council at this time. Questions from Commissioners about steps or worthwhileness to contact CP Friedson.

Tara Clemmons Johnson provided details on the Budget specifics:

Key Points:

- Tight budget overall.
- County Executive's recommended budget for HHS was \$511 million, but the Council approved \$476 million (base budget).
- HHS Committee approved all funding requests for Aging and Disability Services and other areas.
- Council ultimately reduced funding for some new or enhanced programs across HHS.
- The food service consolidation hubs reside in HHS. The recommended funding for that this year was \$3 million. That was approved. I think the misinformation about the food service consolidation hub is that it's categorized in the budget as one time. So it's like every year it has to be approved. So it was 3 million last year, 3 million the year before that. So it was 3 million this year, but in order to avoid it being considered in the new and enhanced list, not avoid, it was considered part of the base. So that's why it was approved. So there wasn't an enhancement to it. It's just that it was one time. So it was funded at 3 million last year. It'll be funded at 3 million for FY 25. There was what a lot of people talk about at the food staples program that you all may know. So that's a separate program where there's a there have been over the past two, three years, a council commitment of \$12 million for that program each year. It's usually done in pieces where the county executive will recommend \$6 million and then they come back mid-year and they'll usually add another 6 million. And so that program saw a reduction. So it has been one time funding too, but they are moving to a new model. So like I said, it usually starts out at a base of 6 million instead of a base of six, it's starting at a base of 3 1/2 million this year. So that program did see a reduction, but that lives in the Office of Food System Resilience, not in DHHS.

Additional Details:

- The Council prioritized base funding over new programs.
- The reduction in some programs may be due to difficult budget decisions, not specific concerns about the programs themselves.
- HHS committee was 100% supportive of the asks for Aging and Disability.

Liaison Reports – Recreation, Transportation, LHI, JCA, Wise Cities

May Transportation Updates submitted by Denise Isreal

MCDOT to Host Annual Give and Ride Food Drive May 26 - June 1

MCDOT and Manna Food are hosting the thirty-first annual [Give and Ride Food Drive](#) from Sunday, May 26 to Saturday, June 1. MCDOT is asking the public to donate a non-perishable food item on any MCDOT Ride On bus or at designated drop-off sites. County bus riders who donate will have their bus fare waived.

Participating drop-off locations, aside from all County buses, include:

- **White Oak Library**
11701 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring.
- **Olney Library**
3500 Olney-Laytonsville Road, Olney.
- **Long Branch Library**
8800 Garland Avenue, Silver Spring.
- **Davis Library**
6400 Democracy Boulevard, Bethesda.
- **Gaithersburg Library**
18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg.
- **Executive Office Building (EOB)**
101 Monroe Street, Rockville.
- **Council Office Building (COB)**
100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville.

Discover Montgomery County with Ride On this Summer.

As the temperature rises and the days are longer, it's time to embark on exciting summer adventures in Montgomery County. From picturesque parks to vibrant cultural events, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Ride On has convenient bus routes that will take you directly to these summer attractions. The following are some of the must-visit destinations and the Ride On routes that will get you there:

Brookside Gardens -Immerse yourself in the beauty of nature at [Brookside Gardens](#). With stunning floral displays, serene walking trails, and a variety of themed gardens, it's a true oasis. Take Ride On [Route 49](#) to Glenmont Metro Station and transfer to Ride On [Route 10](#) for easy access to this botanical paradise.

Strathmore -Enjoy world-class performances at [Strathmore](#), a renowned arts center that hosts a wide range of concerts, exhibitions, and events. Ride On [Route 46](#) will take you directly to this cultural hub, allowing you to indulge in the arts and enrich your summer.

Cabin John Regional Park -Discover the wonders of [Cabin John Regional Park](#), offering a wide range of recreational activities, including hiking, picnicking, and even a miniature train ride. Take Ride On [Route 47](#) to access this family-friendly park and enjoy a day filled with outdoor fun.

Cool off at a Local Pool -Ride On [Route 10](#) will take you to the [Wheaton/Glenmont outdoor pool](#), offering a variety of pools and water features for all ages to enjoy. View a list of all outdoor pool locations [here](#).

Arts in Silver Spring -Take the [Flash](#) to the [Silver Spring Arts District](#) on Colesville Road between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue and enjoy

the [AFI Theatre](#), [The Filmore music venue](#), [Round House Theater](#), or the [Regal Majestic and IMAX](#).

Explore A Museum -

Immerse yourself in art, history, and culture at Montgomery County's renowned museums. Ride On [Route 301](#) will take you to the [Glenstone Museum](#), where you can admire art.

Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is pleased to announce two upcoming public open houses for the [Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit \(BRT\) Project](#) designed to engage community members and solicit valuable feedback on the proposed transit initiative. The meetings will take place both in-person and virtually, providing convenient options for participation.

In-Person Public Open House:

Date: **June 4, 2024**

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: Newport Mill Middle School - Cafeteria

Address: 11311 Newport Mill Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20902

At the in-person public open house, the public can engage by reviewing informational display boards, exploring mapping resources, and interacting with knowledgeable staff members.

Virtual Public Open House:

Date: **June 5, 2024**

Time: 7–8 p.m.

Virtual Platform: Zoom

The virtual public open house will feature a concise presentation followed by interactive breakout rooms, allowing the public to engage with knowledgeable staff members.

About Veirs Mill Road Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project

The Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT will be a 7-mile, limited-stop, branded bus service with twelve stations planned along Veirs Mill Road and MD 355. The project is geared toward enhancing mobility, connectivity, and accessibility along the Veirs Mill Road corridor. By implementing a rapid bus transit system, the project seeks to enhance transportation options, reduce travel times, and create a more efficient and sustainable transit network. The project team is committed to engaging with the community and incorporating public input to ensure that the final design meets the needs and preferences of residents, commuters, and businesses in the area.

The Veirs Mill Road Flash BRT stretches from the Wheaton Metrorail station to the Montgomery College – Rockville campus. The project will not only enhance bus services but also prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure enhancements. These include the implementation of new side paths, sidewalks, intersection signals, signing, pavement

marking, and lighting systems, all aimed at bolstering connectivity and safety for all road users.

Stacey Siglar Recreation:

“The celebration of Older Americans Month happening at Long Branch tomorrow as already mentioned. White Oak Day is June 1st from 11 to 4 over at the White Oak Community Center. We're also preparing for that WEAD event on June 11th. Holiday Park is the main host site. We will also have several satellite locations where we'll be streaming the event all day. Damascus, White Oak, and Schweinhaut for those. We have an outreach event at the renewed SDA Church on Belle Pre, June 12th, so we're looking forward to representing recreation and senior programs over there. Big volunteer appreciation event today at Holiday Park, which is just an example of some of the other volunteer appreciations we're having throughout our centers. We could not do it without them, so always great to acknowledge that.

We had 655 players playing at least one Senior Olympic event over four days. So, it was a fabulous tournament and well run and again, couldn't do it without volunteers and our awesome rec staff. You can always go to the Senior Olympics website where we will post those results. Pickleball, because it's kind of its own beast, is actually on pickleballbrackets.com and if you look at the Maryland Senior Olympics Tournament, you'll see all of those results for all of the events.”

Ingrid Lizama, Latino Health Initiative:

LHI has been consistently sharing information with our county residents through social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, which are used by our older community members. The posts we share mainly include information in Spanish about food distribution, mental health, climate health, county services, and events.

In April, we participated in activities such as GreenFest, a park clean-up with community members, and our Zumba classes, which also incorporate information about climate and county services to connect participants with resources.

We are delighted to announce that our climate short film, "Our Grain of Sand" (Nuestro Granito de Arena), has been nominated for an Emmy award. This short film features Ms. Elva Jaldin, who was the recipient of the COA Community of a Lifetime Award last year.

Many of our Health Promoters, like Ms. Jaldin, are working tirelessly to educate people about caring for Mother Earth and our own health. The videos can be accessed in this playlist: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPVB67zzbf7_fLKp7dT8e_byFSrTeALy3&si=bsXGuRSsgGbF-GnK. Although they are presented in Spanish, English subtitles are available.

Marie Brodsky, Wise Cities:

“I was in person for one of the Commission on Aging meetings last year but yes I've been very busy with both finishing school and having Wise Cities up and running so we have all kinds of organizations joining the platform now. For those of you who don't know about it, it's a platform designed specifically for older adults and families to find local resources and be aware of events that are happening in the area and programs that they're eligible for. So we've been working a lot on improving the platform. We've also done several demos to the Maryland Department of Aging and seeing how we can work with state departments of aging. And one fun fact at my graduation, Governor Wes Moore was giving the keynote speech to the University of Maryland graduating class and he started talking about Wise Cities, which was such a surprise. I'm going full-time as of this week on Wise Cities. I'm really, really looking forward to being able to focus on it and I would love to stay in touch with all of you.”

Gerard Etienne, JCA:

Welcomed the opportunity to talk about the programs at JCA. We have so many things going on it's sometimes difficult to figure out what to share so I think just in the interest of time I'll go ahead and send you just a brief write-up of what we have coming up because there's some dementia education programs, there's some employment program events, and some other things as well. I'll send an email with dates and times.

Villages:

Betsy Carrier welcomed the village members on the call. She reminded everyone of the COA's support for the village consortium and the state's backing, mentioning that Connie would present a request for a letter of support to help keep their operations running. Betsy highlighted the importance of understanding available funding sources, specifically from the county, which has recently awarded funding to Anne Arundel County business, Partners in Care. This funding supports a new village like concept providing volunteer services to seniors through a volunteer banking system and a small annual fee. Betsy emphasized the need for the COA to understand the county's funding allocation process, the criteria for evaluating applications, and to ensure the process is

fair and equitable. She suggested the COA should follow up to learn more about the Partners in Care Program, its role in aiding Montgomery County seniors to age in place, and the county's grant evaluation process. Betsy then handed the discussion over to Connie for her to describe her request to the COA.

Connie Row:

Connie Row, president of the consortium and the Friendship Heights Neighbors Network, outlined the consortium's mission to support small, struggling villages and develop new ones in underserved and rural areas through a hub-and-spoke model. This model, proven successful in other regions, aims to provide administrative services and support to local villages. Connie highlighted the support from Delegate Wolek and the potential for statewide implementation starting in fiscal 2026.

However, Connie expressed concern over Montgomery County's grant decisions, which allocated \$200,000 to an out-of-county organization while rejecting the consortium's two grant requests. This funding shortfall threatens the consortium's operations and compliance with upcoming legislative requirements. Despite some temporary ARPA funding ending in September 2025, the consortium needs immediate financial assistance to continue.

Connie stressed the need for clarity on the county's grant program, questioning its objectives and alignment with state policies supporting villages. She called for an examination of the grant process, transparency, and reviewer qualifications. She urged the COA to advocate for the consortium and local villages, suggesting a letter to the county executive and council to address these concerns and ensure support for the villages in the county.

Commissioners asked questions about the Grant process and Partners in Care history which was explained as a program initiated by MDOA. Commissioners discussed looking into the Grants Management process.

Discussion on the difference between the State commitment and the County commitment to Villages.

Dr. McGhee introduced: Rafael Murphy, Director of Office of Grants Management

Discussion Summary:

1. Overview of Community Grants Process:

- **Rafael Murphy:** Explained the new grant management process. The county received over 320 proposals totaling more than \$50 million, with less than \$6 million available for distribution. The review process was lengthy due to the high volume of proposals and the need for rigorous application scrutiny. Future grants will be more strategically focused to avoid broad and unspecific categories.

2. **Future Grant Processes and Timelines:**

- **David Engel:** Inquired about the timeline and availability of funds for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Rafael Murphy:** Mentioned that the FY25 budget has been approved, and competitions for new grants can start immediately. Emphasized a move towards more department-specific grants rather than a central community grants pool.

3. **Feedback and Improvement for Future Applications:**

- **Virginia Cain:** Asked about feedback for organizations that did not receive funding.
- **Rafael Murphy:** Confirmed that feedback sessions will be offered in July to help applicants improve future proposals.

4. **Challenges and Solutions:**

- **Anna Maria:** Highlighted issues with the review process and low compensation for reviewers.
- **Rafael Murphy:** Acknowledged the concerns and discussed plans to adjust compensation and resource allocation to better handle application reviews.

5. **Strategic Focus and Support:**

- **Delegate Wolek:** Suggested having a specific category for village support within the seniors' funding bucket.
- **Rafael Murphy:** Supported the idea of more strategic and focused grant programs and encouraged advocacy for such changes.

6. **Future Communications and Schedules:**

- **Rafael Murphy:** Plans to post a grant schedule on the OGM website and improve communication through newsletters and regular updates.

7. **Immediate Funding Needs:**

- **Connie Row:** Raised concerns about immediate funding needs for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Rafael Murphy:** Advised that information on reallocated or unused funds would need to be sought from the Office of Management and Budget or relevant departments. Emphasized the goal of building non-profit capacity to secure state and federal funding.

Action Items:

- Rafael Murphy to provide links and resources to Dr. McGhee for distribution.
- Feedback sessions to be scheduled for July to assist applicants.
- Explore advocacy for more strategically defined grant categories.
- Post and regularly update a grant schedule on the OGM website.

Next Steps:

- Follow-up meeting with Rafael Murphy to discuss further details and assistance.
- Commissioners to consider advocating for more focused grant categories.
- Organizations to prepare for feedback sessions and improve future applications based on provided guidance.

Noted by Mr. Murphy:

Just for context, the entire Community Grants NDA is less than 95% of the County's funding given to nonprofits. The Community Grants pool is less than 3% of total nonprofit funding. The vast majority of nonprofit funding comes from department budgets. The FY25 budget should have an entire breakdown of all funding going to seniors from all sources.

Noted Comment: Just want to make sure we focus on the gap in the Consortium financial need for this coming FY.

Noted Comment:

FY25 Aging-In-Place Grant

<https://aging.maryland.gov/SiteAssets/Pages/aginginplace/FY25%20Aging%20in%20Place%20Grant%20Draft-Edits-4-19-24%20.pdf>

Consortium is applying to FY25 Aging in Place Grant.

From state.

Claudia Fess, Del. Wolek Chief of Staff:

State Delegate Sarah Wolek. We wanted to make sure that everyone knew we are available to discuss State support of Villages. Delegate Wolek sponsored HB1103: The Miriam Kilty Aging and Senior Social Connection Hub and Spoke Pilot Program that supports the Montgomery County Village Consortium. The Maryland Department of Aging was supportive of the bill and will administer funds to the Consortium starting in FY26. The State is looking to the Consortium to test out the hub and spoke model to better understand how this model and villages can support older Marylanders. For any questions or comments, please feel free to reach Delegate Wolek's office at sarah.wolek@house.state.md.us. I have to hop off but Delegate Wolek will be trying to join if her other meeting ends in time.

Chair David Engel called for a motion to form a task force focused on funding for the villages and the village consortium. He asked for a show of hands from the commissioners to indicate their approval. After confirming unanimous consent, David proposed working on the task force member selection at a later date and invited volunteers to email Betsy Carrier. He encouraged current commissioners and those alumni vocal about village issues, to get involved in identifying funding sources. David concluded by thanking everyone for the robust discussion on villages and grant funding.

Public Forum discussion will be moved to a later date.

Commission on Aging Old Business

Unanimous approval of April CoA minutes

Committee Reports

Aging in Community

Report of the Aging in Community Committee May 14 meeting

The Committee reviewed the agenda for the Forum.

Discussed the topics the Committee might want to consider for budget priorities. They included:

- Multi-generational caregiving
- Needs of the oldest of old
- Focus on Assisted Living
- Promote new guidelines from County on MPDU for older adults. Review and comment on new guidelines.
 - Good possibilities for advancing.
 - Off shoot of Forum.
- Transportation
 - Follow up on Rec issues.
- Solo Aging
 - What are resources in the county?
 - Invite Steve Gurney?
- Renter Issues
 - Make sure that renting is affordable and accessible and equitable.
 - Need support for older.
 - Renters' rights
- Work and Ageism
 - Enforcing anti-discrimination
- Reframing aging
 - MD Philanthropy Network
 - MD Dept of Aging
- Cross-cutting issues
 - Learn From other committees.
 - Learn from the Ambassadors program.
- Help advance the Kelty bill and consortium work

These items will be discussed at the next meeting where the Committee will work on identifying budget priorities.

Health and Wellness:

Mental Health Services Review

- **Current Status:** Wrapping up the review of mental health services in Montgomery County.
- **Next Steps:** Developing a fact sheet/resource sheet with the information gathered during the investigation.

Budget Priorities

- **Access Hears Program:** The program has been successful but is currently out of funds and unable to distribute hearing aids for the rest of the year. Discussion

needed on future funding to avoid discontinuation.

- **Non-Relevant Budget Items:** Nutritional benefits issues in the budget are not directly relevant to the Health and Wellness Committee. More information required for informed decisions.

Fact Sheets and Communications

- **Discussion:** Recent communication call highlighted the importance of fact sheets, many of which fall under the committee's purview.
- **Pandemic-Related Issues:** Issues that arose during the pandemic should be reassessed to focus on underlying problems rather than the pandemic context.

Future Topics and Participation

- **New Ideas:** Encouraging the entire Commission on Aging to propose new topics for the committee to consider.
- **Participation:** Inviting participation from all members in future discussions and directions.

Communications

Ambassador Program

- **Status:** The program is progressing well.
- **Next Steps:** Writing a pilot program report and pausing over the summer. Awaiting Peter's replacement to resume activities.

50 Plus Show

- **May Episode:** Featured Carmel Roques and tribute to Austin Heyman
- **June Episode:** Will feature Dr. Kimberly Johnson and Mario Warzusin, administrator for Adult Protective Services discussing elder abuse prevention and WEAD day.

New Senior Site Review

- **Launch:** Expected by the end of this month or early next month.
- **Volunteers:** A few have volunteered to review the site for correct links and additional content. More volunteers are needed and welcome.

Library Liaison

- **Role:** Ensuring COA documents, such as fact sheets and the new life transition folder, are stocked in libraries.
- **Document Review:** Fact sheets are being reviewed for accuracy, with updates being requested from the original committees.

Future Plans

- **Fact Sheets:** Establishing review dates for ongoing accuracy.
- **Ambassador Program Meeting:** A team meeting is scheduled for next Friday to solidify program rules and discuss the ambassador program further.

Public Policy

Discussion Topics:

- **Pending Bills:** Reviewed bills currently before the county council.

- Public Policy Goals: Discussed reorienting goals to increase proactive involvement in legislation at both county and state levels.
- Slide Presentation: Linda/ Kate presented slides outlining these new goals. Slides can be made available upon request.

Nursing Home Oversight:

- Follow-Up Call: Conducted with county and state health officials regarding nursing home oversight.
- **Lawsuit Impact:**
 - Barbara's Query: Asked about the impact of a recent lawsuit against a nursing home on committee activities.
 - Morris's Response: Noted it's too early to determine the full impact. The lawsuit has made the MDH possibly more responsive, and if successful, it could ultimately be beneficial to oversight efforts.

New Business

Preparations for FY25 Budget Priorities and Expanded Advocacy Approach:

- **Advocacy and Budget Priorities:**
 - Linda and Kate introduced a new design for advocacy and budget priorities, moving beyond just focusing on top budget items for the county operating budget.
 - The Commission aims to develop a broader slate of advocacy issues and budget items, including perennial advocacy issues like supporting the villages and the village consortium.
 - Emphasis on aligning advocacy items with the Age-Friendly work domains.
- **Process and Timeline:**
 - A format and timeline will be developed for presenting budget priorities and other advocacy items.
 - The typical July meeting will focus on reviewing and ranking budget priorities, with the new process allowing for additional advocacy items.
 - Collaboration with the AAA and Aging and Disability Services to include their budget priorities.

Ongoing Advocacy Strategy:

- **Year-Round Engagement:**
 - Anna Maria suggested that budget advocacy should be a year-long effort with continuous engagement with relevant stakeholders, not just during the budget season.
 - Proposal for quarterly meetings to keep the issues and priorities visible to decision-makers.
- **Improved Scheduling and Coordination:**
 - David Engel agreed on the need for continuous advocacy and proposed a revised schedule to ensure more ongoing advocacy at different government levels.

- Emphasis on understanding council members' committee focuses due to the increase from seven to eleven council members.

Committee Guidance and Process Clarification:

- **Guidance for Committees:**

- Committees will receive expanded guidance to present both budget and policy priorities.
- David Engel mentioned that draft suggestions have been prepared, with Linda and Kate presenting slides from the last Public Policy Committee meeting.

- **Clarification of New Process:**

- David reassured Barbara that while the process will expand, committees should continue refining their current priorities.
- Linda Bergofsky emphasized the importance of setting both policy and budget priorities in parallel, creating a continuous loop of reevaluation.

Next Steps:

- Finalize and present the new process and timeline to the Commission.
- Maintain focus on current priorities while integrating new advocacy strategies.
- Engage in ongoing discussions to align policy priorities with budget priorities effectively.

Adjourn 11:58 AM