

Advocacy & Issues Management Committee Minutes

December 9, 2020

Welcome

Brenda Jackson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and welcomed everyone for joining us on the virtual meeting.

Minutes

September 9, 2020 minutes were approved through consensus.

Status Report on the General Assembly

Brenda asked Sharnese and John Metcalf if they could give us an update on the election landscape of the General Assembly. She said those of us who were watching it closely there were initial thoughts that there could be a down ballot wave for the Democrats but that didn't happen. We have our Democratic Governor and Republican controlled General Assembly.

Sharnese stated she would talk from a legislative perspective not from the leadership. She informed there were no changes and the House lost five seats. She feels it will be tighter and tighter within these two years. She shared that just the other day the Governor met with the Health Team; that the Governor and Secretary are very interested in expanding Medicaid which was the topic of conversation this week. Krovic and others member of the majority party in the General Assembly said "no way jose" and informed them they should look at other things around containing cost and affordable insurance. Sharnese feels this makes it a little harder of us, with the things we wanted to do, especially around the language with Medicaid eligibility error. John and Sharnese will talk later today on how to move forward on this piece. Sharnese stated the few people who were there willing to help us are no longer there. She informed the Medicaid Transformation funding, the law requires it starts July 1, 2021, but the funding to support some portion of that still has to be appropriated by the General Assembly. Sharnese feels this will be an issue for the department and it is "slowly" moving forward. Around the RFI and PED study of NCFAST, the hope was the General Assembly would take more of a role in that, they have not done that. Sharnese stated they have worked with the Department and learned they have developed a new governance sub-committee for child welfare for P4 of fourteen voting members, it is half and half. Our membership members on that committee are: Heather Skeens, Chuck Lycett, Velvet Nixon, Cris Weatherford, and Kristy Preston. Sharnese shared that SB 708 and HB 918, the focus on both bills are back, and both will probably be introduced in some format for 21-22 Session. She asked us to keep our eyes open. She talked about 908 Billion dollar COVID Bill, included in there are monies for local municipalities and states and the General Assembly has to appropriate those monies. She feels the General Assembly will wait to January to come back. Also, there's a recount that will take place, either this week or next, where the Supreme Court Justice seat is out there with 406 vote difference. They will do random count and if that still shows a close margin then they will ask for a total recount. If challenged they will count those votes. Sharnese encouraged everyone to reach out to their legislators and invite them for a virtual session with you. Collectively this will help us to think through who is out there and who could help us. It is going to be a hard session for us. Brenda stated that the State Supreme Court has shifted and that it was interesting too.

Discussion on 2020-2021 Legislative Priorities

Brenda opened up the floor for any ideas or suggestions. What our strategies and priorities are. The leadership of the advocacy committee has been working closely with the leadership with adult services committee. Brenda stated the Division of Aging and Adult Services has an interest in the White Paper and the Roadmap and it encapsulate everything that we have concerns about as it relates to Adult Protective Services and Guardianship. Brenda stated we struggled last year and it looks like we will struggle this year in identifying key legislators who have an interest in seniors and aging in Adult Services. Division of Aging has hired someone to work on legislative matters and they have reached out to us to partner. We have had the Coalition on Aging come and speak with us in September and they want to partner with us. Jan has sent out to members our 2019-2020 Legislative Priorities. We will go over those priorities.

Tracie Murphy talked about building relationship with our legislators in our community with grass root efforts. Sharnese stated that once she gets the committee assignments she will send out the link for all members. Sharnese stated at State County joint meeting the Division of Aging and Adult Services talked about vision sessions they will have in January and February with the Center for Supportive Families. Sharnese feel we need to capitalize on this. Sharnese also mentioned she has a call with Tom Atkins and Angela Bumgarner on Friday to talk about aging issues. Brenda stated that advocacy was inviting the Division of Aging to our January meeting and inviting Heather back from the Coalition on Aging. Jan stated we needed to go ahead and talk with our community members and share our information before they go back to session. We are struggling with our memberships connecting with their legislators. How do we bolster this? Velvet asked if we could approach it from a COVID 19 direction with the facilities. The discussion was the facilities' focus is on the dollars and already has a strong legislative coalition. Brenda stated we could look at COVID as an impact on our senior population as with isolation and depression. Sharnese stated that with that you need the data. The committee also discussed inviting others in the aging field. Antonio asked about inviting AARP to our meeting. Brenda stated AARP

was part of the coalition and could be invited that way and also AARP had a lot of data. Sharnese stated we needed to be mindful of what their agendas are due to competing dollars. Sharnese stated we have to be strategic and not put the same old same on a piece of paper. We need to move the needle. Sharnese reminded us that in the APS and guardianship world the General Assembly puts little to no dollars. We rely heavily on county dollars. Sharnese asked how can we go back to the General Assembly on guardianship and message it as the guardian should be someone who the state contract with through private entities. Stoney called in on an Adult Care Home rate decrease and asked the membership if they had heard that. Sharnese stated she did know about an approach by them for a rate increase that would come from SSBG. Sharnese stated we didn't want to be in competition with them for that funding. Brenda stated that due to COVID their homes were being under-utilized. Brenda stated Advocacy will do a joint call with Adult Service Committee for our January meeting and get an idea of what they are looking for in those vision sessions. Lastly, Brenda walked through the priorities with the committee.

- Priority #1- Keep and refresh.
- Priority #2- Keep and build in Medicaid Transformation impacts: per member-per month and county budgets.
- Priority #3- Keep No changes.
- Priority #4- Remove but pay attention.

Note: SB 708 and HB 918 will be matters that we will have to deal with and in the new biennial will probably not have the same bill numbers.

Federal Legislative Landscape

Sharnese stated with the policy group we didn't have Chris Waugh as a contact anymore. Sharnese updated the membership list and sent it to Tom Joseph. Brenda stated we are in a transition phase between the two administrations. Glenn reminded us that the Board of County Commissioners Legislative Goals for January 14 & 15 2021. Brenda encouraged us to send in our legislative matters to our county managers and commissioners. Betsy Wells stated the Board Association was there to support and help in any way they can.

Other Discussion

There were no further questions or comments and the committee adjourned at 9:30 AM. Next Meeting January 13th 2021.

Minutes submitted by:

Yvette Smith