Commission on Aging Budget Appeal Hearings
April 19, 2017
Commission on Aging Conference Room
1:00 p.m.
AGENDA (Revised 4/17/17)

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Silent Prayer
5. Approval of Agenda
6. Public Time
7. Old Business- None
8. New Business- Appeal Hearings
   A. Berlin Seniors (1:10 – 1:30)
   B. Senior Legal Services (1:35 – 1:55)
   C. Milan Seniors for Healthy Living (2:00 – 2:20)
   D. MCOP Home Care (2:25 – 2:45)
   E. MCOP Specialized Transportation (2:50 – 3:10)
   F. LIFE (3:15 – 3:35)
9. Public Time
10. Commission Members’ Comments
11. Adjournment
April 12, 2017

Jeffrey J. McBee
Monroe County Commission on Aging
965 South Raisinville Road
Monroe, MI 48161

APPEAL

Dear Mr. McBee:

Please consider this an appeal by Monroe County Senior Legal Services of the proposed Senior Millage funding as stated in your April 5, 2017 letter. Our appeal is supported by data reflecting both increased demand and the importance of our services to the senior population.

INCREASED DEMAND

Over the last few years, MCSLS has steadily increased the number of clients served and units/hours billed per year. Since 2014, increased demand for legal services resulted in increased hours of client service by 10%. In the same period, the number of clients served has increased over 20%. Clients served already in 2017 show an even more significant increase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>CLIENTS SERVED</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1046</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 through 3/31/2017</td>
<td>434 (39% of our contracted units in the first quarter)</td>
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MCSLS has efficiently increased service without increasing staff. But we cannot continue to do so under the current staffing levels. While MCSLS does not have a traditional waiting list, the people in crisis (with court dates, deadlines or emergencies) get prioritized and others are pushed out to later dates. Without increased staffing levels, many people will not get the service they need to avoid a legal crisis, and the costs of seniors losing their benefits, housing or financial stability will be carried by the entire community.
The data from SEMCOG and the Older Adult Needs Assessment show that the sheer numbers of seniors will grow exponentially over the next decade or more. But the need for more services will not wait 10 years; it will appear each year, each month, each week. We need not speculate, as the historical figures above show a steady increase in recent years. As we continue to see higher and higher volume, MCSLS will not be able to keep up with the level of service we provide.

MEETING CRITICAL NEEDS

Legal services is a unique non-profit service in many ways. Because some people will never need an attorney's help, legal assistance is often undervalued by the wider community. However, when a person does have a legal issue that endangers their housing, finances or health, there is likely no substitute for affordable legal representation.

MCSLS has handled many cases that directly involve a priority identified in the Older Adult Needs Assessment, including health and financial stability and housing assistance. The Case Examples attached are summaries of actual cases MCSLS has handled which demonstrate the very basic needs that are being met as a result of legal representation. The services MCSLS provides are home-based in many cases, which is an area identified in the Needs Assessment as one of the fastest growing needs. MCSLS's outreach also covers the entire county, reaching seniors even in isolated geographic areas.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons, I ask that you approve funding of 3400 units at $67.73 per unit for a total funding of $230,282.00.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to work with the Commission to ensure the legal needs of Monroe County seniors are met in a responsible way. Please advise me regarding the date and time of the appeal hearing when I can further explain my position and answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Kate Weber
Executive Director
CASE EXAMPLES

HEALTH:

A 64 year old woman with COPD was forced to be on oxygen for 18 months. She was uninsured. The medical equipment supplier for the oxygen supplies agreed to provide the equipment at a reduced rate because of her low income and lack of insurance. The supplier then refused to honor the agreement, and sent the bill to collections, who harassed her for payment and damaged her credit. After invention from MCSLS, we were able to get all the charges waived, and removed from her credit report.

A 61 year old man terminally ill man had been wrongfully denied unemployment benefits and had been ordered to repay over $2,500 in previously paid unemployment benefits. Because of the lack of income, he could not pay for his health care needs. We represented the client in a hearing and restored his full unemployment benefits as well as removing the obligation to repay past amounts, allowing him to get the treatment he needed.

HOUSING:

An 86 year old woman was threatened with a nursing home eviction. Medicaid determined that the participant was able to care for herself despite advanced memory loss and stopped paying the nursing home charges. We appealed the Medicaid determination, and gained a favorable outcome, where the participant will be able to continue to reside in the facility with Medicaid payments.

A 62 year old disabled woman's landlord refused to make repairs to the home she rented, and attempted to illegally evict her by cutting off the utilities. Our representation assisted her in getting utilities restored, and defending against the eviction for a sufficient time to allow her to find suitable alternate housing.

A 67 year old man had his kitchen ceiling fallen in due to a water leak, and instead of offering repair, the landlord attempted to evict him. We successfully defended the eviction, got the repairs to the water and ceiling repaired by landlord, and we negotiated a fair lease to protect his housing stability going forward.

FINANCIAL STABILITY:

An 83 year old woman's son dropped her off at a housing facility because he didn't want to care for her any longer. Her son still had control of her finances and all her belongings. We were able to assist her in revoking the son's access to money and demanding return of her belongs. We continue to work to get a full accounting of all the funds the son spent while he controlled her finances.

An 82 year old disabled woman was on the verge of losing her home because of the cost of care for her disabled husband. We assisted her in getting Medicaid benefits to allow her husband to receive full time nursing home care without a financial burden on her. This allowed her to care better for herself and allowed her to remain in the home.

A 66 year old disabled woman had an adult daughter was living with her, and used a Power of Attorney to sell her vehicles and misuse her funds. We revoked the Power of Attorney, helped the client begin an investigation by Adult Protective Services, and evicted the daughter. The client now is secure in her home and her finances are protected.

We represented a 93 year old woman and prepared Michigan Home Heating and Homestead Property Tax Credits for her. She obtained $926 in credits, which was sufficient to pay her winter property tax bill and keep her in her home.