

**Administration Committee
Administrator/County Board Size Subcommittee Meeting
Minutes
June 24, 2014**

Committee members present: Chair David Hintz, Ted Cushing, Tom Kelly, Alex Young, Lisa Charbarneau, and Brian Desmond. Excused Margie Sorenson.

Others present: Jonathan Anderson (Lakeland Times) and Dan Gleason (recording secretary).

Call to order: Chairman Hintz called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in Committee Room # 1 of the Oneida County Courthouse noting the meeting had been properly posted, is in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law, and is ADA accessible.

Approve agenda: Motion by Cushing, second by Kelly to approve the agenda. All ayes; motion carried.

Approve the minutes of the June 10, 2014 meeting: Motion by Kelly, second by Hintz to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2014 meeting. All ayes; motion carried.

County Administrator & County Board Size: Hintz discussed the delegation of the areas to be researched from the previous meeting adding an additional bullet point to costs of a levy limit. Additionally, Hintz remarked that in his opinion it would be very difficult to reduce the County Board size to the suggested number of 9 from the current 21 without an administrator.

Duties of Administrator: Desmond discussed the fact sheets from the UW Extension and the corresponding chart that breaks down the differences between the executive, administrator, and the administrative coordinator and how it would change how the county currently operates. Desmond noted the administrator would appoint or remove the department heads subject to Board confirmation, appoint to committees and boards, prepare and present a budget to the County Board, and review performance of department heads. Kelly spoke with Blaine at City Hall and commented on ranking the duties in order as to importance. Kelly noted that he felt the budget coordinator, Margie, was quite strong, so budget might rank third on such a list. Desmond commented that it would be the administrator's responsibility to coordinate all the administrative and management functions of county government, noting the fact sheet stated that any individual county board supervisor attempting to supervise or give direction to staff is operating outside his or her authority. Kelly questioned how the Board would staff all the committees with only 9 people. Young commented that after hiring an administrator, the city operated with fewer full-time committees and were able to meet less often because of the reduction in size of the meeting agenda. Hintz proposed that a crafting of a package that outlined the duties, costs, etc. with items listed for each section. Hintz stated that last year's attempt of the County Board to set some guidelines on budget preparation did not yield the desired result. Part of the problem was that individually, each department's proposals sounded reasonable, however, once added together it was evident the county could not afford to do everything. Hintz stated that an

administrator might be in a better position to work through it and cut the budget if necessary. Kelly added that an administrator would be required to give the board a yearly "State of the County".

Cost of Administrator: Hintz stated he prepared a draft estimate of what it might cost to hire an administrator and sought agreement on what a ballpark figure might be so they could weigh the expected cost against the benefits and the levy limit. The initial estimate of \$250,000 included the administrator's base salary and labor burden, an administrative assistant base salary and labor burden, office space, and equipment. Cushing questioned if allowances for a vehicle and professional organizations were included; noting the cost could grow past the \$300,000 level. Kelly asked if it would be feasible to add an additional person in the clerk's office that could overlap with the administrator's office. Young stated that there would likely be confidentiality issues that would likely preclude the blending of the offices. Cushing cited the UW Extensions report that expressly states that the administrator is to stay out of the business of other elected officials including the clerk. Hintz stated that he would like to settle on a preliminary figure. The committee agreed the figure of \$250,000 would be a good starting point based on qualifications and certifications. Charbarneau pointed out an administrator should be on contract.

Pros and Cons of Administrator: Young stated he assembled a list of both advantages and disadvantages, but did not attach associated costs or savings since it would be difficult to estimate. Young noted the advantages to be; run the county like a business, free up elected officials to focus on policy rather than day-to-day operations, administrative expertise and specialization in public administration, and provide clear lines of authority and accountability both with responsibility for projects in making it easier for the public to deal with one office as opposed to many departments. Young added administrators are held to professional standards rather than the partisan/parochial concerns of an elected official, foster cooperation between political parties and administrators are educated and trained in the current county management and state and federal laws. Young cited an instance in which the City Administrator was able to sort a tax issue that would have likely had an impact of \$250,000 if not resolved. Young also added many professional services can often be done by an administrator rather than paying outside sources. Young recommended looking at counties that have recently made the transition to get an idea of how their reliance on outside professional services has changed to help estimate a cost benefit. Young concluded the advantages by adding an administrator would improve responsiveness to both other county officials and community leaders by having one point of contact, rather someone from the outside who does not understand the committee and/or department structure. Hintz agreed it would be difficult to assign a dollar value to certain benefits. Young proposed examining the savings other counties have experience. Cushing stated that proving it will save money in the long run would be the single most difficult task. Cushing stated he was not against change but having an administrator does not guaranty the county will be better run, adding that Oneida County currently ranks in the top 5 counties in the state in terms of financial stability. Hintz pointed out that regardless of long-term savings, it would be difficult to find the projected \$250,000 of initial cost in the budget. Cushing posed the question of what programs or services might have to be cut in order to find the \$250,000. Hintz stated that only about \$15 million of the \$50 million budget is tax levied dollars with the other \$35 million coming from grants and other sources. Young addressed the perception that staff is not as

accountable or responsive to citizens as an elected position, but countered that having a full time person running the show they can oversee all the different areas and probably be more efficient. Young also discussed the board having more freedom and time to focus on strategy and policy even though there might be the perception that authority is being taken away from elected officials. Cushing noted that everything an administrator does must be approved by the board. Kelly noted that an administrator is not elected and therefore would not be political. Cushing added in his opinion although an administrator's politics don't have to do with the public, they do have to do with the politics of board makeup itself. Young discussed the City Administrator's ability to function removed from the politics. Cushing discussed the effectiveness of the county in dealings with both the WPS building and Printpack without an administrator.

Other Issues – County Coordinator History: Charbarneau discussed the history of the county coordinator beginning in the fall of 2005 when the Labor Relations Committee and the County Board Chair had been to some training and were talking about the benefits of having some sort of an administrator. In 2006 they eliminated the Human Resources Director position and created a hybrid position of county coordinator. The county coordinator shared many of the same duties of an administrator, however, didn't necessarily have the authority. Positive things that came out of the position have been maintained such as department head meetings and things with the efficiency team. In 2011 there was a consensus by the Labor Relations Committee that then went to the County Board that the county coordinator position wasn't really doing what it was hoped it would do. The county coordinator position was eliminated, the county returned to the previous setup and the Human Resources Director position was reestablished leaving some of those duties with the Human Resources Director position. Young stated although he was not with the county at the time, he thought the position might have come up short do to a lack of authority and position specific qualifications not being required. Young then revisited the levy issue noting the city allocated the cost across departments in order to equitably distribute administrative costs. Young stated that depending on the rules governing the funds, the county might be able to reduce the percentage of cost that would need to be tax levy funded. Cushing added that department chairmen could be responsible for determining what percentage of a county administrator's time will be spent in each department and therefore each department would be accountable for a certain percentage of the \$250,000. Young discussed the city's formula which used a hybrid between operational budget of the department and the number of full time staff; however, it may make sense to include capital expenditures as well. Cushing agreed that the previous attempt was not a full-fledged attempt and anybody who would read the job description of what was proposed verses what was had would come to the same conclusion. Hintz agreed, but noted the argument would still need to be faced. Desmond noted that the Board and Labor Relations Committee did not want to go so far as to give up everything you are delegating to a county administrator which is why the hybrid position was created. Cushing stated that it went back to how the package would be sold to the County Board and the effect on the authority of the supervisors. Charbarneau asked how the City handled the administrative cost allocation since a portion of grant money is already allocated to administrative services. Charbarneau questioned if an additional portion of departments grant funding is allocated to an administrator, might the department be eligible for money that they are not getting or would the department need to find the money within the existing budget. Hintz thought perhaps both.

Redistricting Update: Charbarneau stated she had contacted Andy Faust from North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) regarding redistricting. Faust stated in an email that it would be difficult to reduce the size of the County Board during the decade before the next census since they are unable to change the existing ward boundaries. However; it is possible to cut the Board size in half by combining districts in order to create equal population districts, and maybe take three meetings to accomplish. Hintz stated that a reduction in the number of supervisors and consolidation of committees might reduce cost associated with mileage and per diems. Desmond noted that if you hire an administrator then the day-to-day operations would be handled by the administrator. Kelly commented that the committees might be consolidated along the way after the administrator has been in place for a couple of years. Young stated he feels that they are 2 separate issues and that they really don't belong tied to each other. Cushing commented that Hintz was in charge of the committee responsible for reducing the size of the Board and could not reduce it to 19. Young questioned the reason for wanting to cut the County Board size because the cost savings would be insignificant. Cushing expressed concern that reducing the County Board size will result in diluted representation.

Impact on Current Work Process: Desmond discussed the effects on the hiring of department heads being subject to County Board approval, annual reviews would be changed on the heels of a recent change, the administrator would be overseeing all operations as opposed to needing to wait until a committee meeting, county board supervisors would be free to focus on policy, budget process might become more streamlined, and appointment of committees are made by the administrator. Cushing asked if there is any room in the statutes to how strict the duties are. Desmond stated that statutes are strictly defined and that's why the county previously opted for the county coordinator position. Young commented having an administrator did help streamline the city's budget process. Desmond noted that, for the better, there could be unforeseen changes in way an administrator would want to run the county and policies that could be implemented. Hintz listed areas that an administrator might be of help including cell phone contracts for the county, real estate transactions, and planning for office space with others developing overtime. Young stated that the consideration should be given to what are the areas of expertise such as engineering/public works or looking for someone with a strong financial background in terms of the needs of Oneida County.

Future meeting dates:

July 8, 2014, 9:30 a.m.

July 22, 2014 1:30 p.m.

Future agenda topics: Continue with current bullet points, discuss visitation with counties that have transitioned to a county administrator position, discuss development of a rough draft of a package to review with Mort McBain for either the July 22 or the early August meeting.

Public Comments: none

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Cushing, seconded by Kelly. All ayes; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

June 24, 2014

David Hintz, Committee Chair

Dan Gleason, Recording Secretary

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