

Intercounty Coordinating Committee (ICC)

June 18, 2007

Sauk County West Square Building

Attendance:

Jenny Erickson, Sauk County UW Extension; Judy Ashford, Sauk County; Marty Krueger, Sauk County; Kathy Schauf, Sauk County; Orrin Helmer, Green Lake County; Russell Kottke, Dodge County; Steve Nass, Jefferson County; John Tramburg, Columbia County; Debra Wopat, Columbia County; Jeff Hoffman, Green Lake County UW Extension; Steve Grabow, Jefferson County UW Extension; Kerry Beghin, Sauk County; Carol Thompson, Sauk County; Katie Crawley; Senator Feingold's Office, Craig Maher, UW-Oshkosh; Ray Seaholm, Dodge County; John Brennan, Green Lake County; Matt Stohr, WCA;

1. Introductory Business

Call to Order – Chair Steve Nass called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

2. Certification of Open Meeting Notice

The Secretary confirmed that the requirements of the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law were met.

3. Adoption of Agenda

Motion by Columbia, second by Sauk County to approve the agenda. Approved.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Dodge County, second by Green Lake County to approve the minutes of the May 2007 meeting of the Intercounty Coordinating Committee. Approved.

5. Reports from Visiting Legislative Officials

Katie Crawley from Senator Feingold's Office reported that Senator Feingold worked with First District Congressman Paul Ryan are introducing new legislation to create a line-item veto to target earmarks.

Matt Stohr voiced concerns from county officials about a change in the navigable waterway policies introduced by Feingold. The change would include transferring authority from Wisconsin DNR to EPA and Army Corps of Engineering.

6. September ICC Planning Session

ICC members agreed that they would like to conduct an evaluation/assessment of ICC at the September 17th session in Columbia County. They may also discuss a more formalized planning process.

7. Update of County Issues – Matt Stohr, WCA

- Currently a vacancy at WCA
- Update of state budget process:
 - Governor Doyle introduced his budget in February 2007
 - Joint Finance (comprised of 8 republicans and 8 democrats) reviewed the budget. Most controversial issues were split with 8 votes each. Because of the split decision most of the budget remained as the Governor had proposed.
 - The Joint Finance budget will move first to the Senate and then the Assembly.

- A Conference Committee will likely be formed to serve as the negotiating body to help the Assembly and Senate come to agreement on the budget.
- The final budget could be approved in late September or early October.
- Representative Wasserman drafted bill to reduce the number of counties from 72 to 18. The Wisconsin Counties Association will send a sample resolution to each county to consider. The resolution will ask the Legislature to initiate a broader discussion of this topic beyond just reducing the number of counties.
- Last session a bill passed that took away the county's ability to impose a park impact fee. This session a new bill will clarify the rights of the county to collect those fees. For example, the fees may have to directly relate to the development project.

8. Open Discussion of County Issues

- Dodge County announced that Dave Neuendorf, Dodge County UWEX Agent has announced this retirement effective August 15, 2007.

9. PROGRAM: The County Budget: The Current Fiscal Condition and Where Do We Go From Here?? By Craig Maher, Associate Professor, Department of Public Affairs at UW-Oshkosh and City of Wauwatosa Council Member.

- Dr. Maher distributed a draft copy of the Fiscal Health of Wisconsin Communities.
- Maher and Deller, UWEX conducted two online surveys in 2004 and 2007. A total of 209 communities responded to the survey including 9 counties.
 - Of those responding, 48.8 percent reported that their current revenue base is inadequate and more than 64 percent responded that their fiscal condition in five years will be inadequate.
 - Comparing 1997 results to 2004 and 2007, the fiscal health of Wisconsin communities has fundamentally changed for the worse.
 - The local perceptions of fiscal capacity has slightly improved.
 - Local leaders were asked to evaluate a total of six service delivery improvement strategies. The most frequently agreed with strategies include:
 - improving productivity through better management (65.6 percent)
 - pursuing regional cooperative agreements (44.5 percent)
 - contracting out services (43.5 percent)
 - When asked about the revenue side of the equation, there seems to be strong agreement that communities should pursue grants from the federal and state governments (76.6 percent agreed) and adopt or increase user fees and charges (72.3 percent).
 - Two thirds of respondents agreed that increasing property taxes was a viable option.
 - Drawing down cash reserves had a mixed reaction where 45.0 percent supported the approach, and 42.6 percent disagreed with the option.
 - Similarly, creating or expanding enterprise funds was supported by 25.9 percent, opposed by 36.4 percent and neutral responses were 35.9 percent.
 - Compared to 2004, the biggest differences in revenue strategies were:
 - in 2004, 65.3 percent agreed with pursuing grants from the federal and state government, the percent rose to 76.6 percent in 2007;
 - in 2004, 71.7 percent agreed the adoption or increase in user fees and charges compared to 72.3 percent in 2007; and
 - while half of the respondents agreed with increasing property taxes in 2004, the percent rose to 67.5 percent in 2007.

- The most frequently agreed with expenditure strategies included:
 - targeted budget cuts (62.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed);
 - delaying capital expenditures (62.2 percent);
 - delaying routine maintenance (51.2 percent); and
 - refinancing outstanding debt (45.4 percent).
- The least agreed with expenditure strategies include:
 - discouraging population growth (5.8 percent agree or strongly agree);
 - laying off workers (11.9 percent);
 - increasing short-term debt (26.8 percent); and
 - hiring freeze (26.8 percent).
- Comparing responses in 2004 to 2007:
 - In 2004, 35.1 percent of respondents supported limiting population growth, the proportion in support dropped to 5.8 percent in 2007;
 - Laying off workers also appears to have lost favor – while 34.8 percent supported the strategy in 2004, only 11.9 percent agreed in 2007;
 - Hiring freezes dropped as an option from 37.4 percent agreement in 2004 to 26.8 percent in 2007; and
 - Support for increasing short-term debt lost favor between 2004 and 2007 (35.2 percent vs. 26.8 percent).
- Local officials and concerned citizens should look upon the current fiscal situation as an opportunity for change rather than a crisis that requires quick answers.
- Political historians have documented that “radical” long term changes that have proven to be the foundation of sound public policy come out of time of crisis.
- It is almost human nature to be reactive to crisis then proactive, particularly in a political setting.
- Perhaps the current fiscal crisis is a window of opportunity for innovative communities to make significant strides forward. The future of the local economy may depend upon it.

10. Other Issues: None.

11. Next Meeting: July 16th in Green Lake County

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Green Lake, seconded by Columbia. The ICC meeting was adjourned by Chair Nass at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Erickson
 Community Development Educator
 UW-Extension, Sauk County