

MINUTES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION COUNCIL
MEETING OF AUGUST 26, 2008

Walworth County Administrator David Bretl called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Roll call was made by those present introducing themselves. Deputy County Administrator Shane Crawford asked those present to be sure to sign the sign in sheet as that would be used for the record.

Present:

Town of Spring Prairie Supervisor Robert E. McIndoe
Town of Spring Prairie Chair Jim C. Simons
Town of Troy Chair Allen Curler
Town of Whitewater Chair Ron Fero
Town of Whitewater Supervisor Dale Jensen
Town of LaFayette Chair Bruno Schifflerger
Town of Richmond Chair Wayne Redenius
Town of Lyons Chair Bill Mangold
Town of Linn Chair David Bollweg
Town of Linn Supervisor Mike Palmer
Town of East Troy Chair Robert Mueller
Town of Darien Chair Cecil Logterman
Town of Bloomfield Chair Ken Monroe
Town of Geneva Supervisor Trish Fahey
Town of Geneva Supervisor Steve Kukla
Town of Sugar Creek Chair Gary Waller
Town of LaGrange Chair Frank Taylor
Town of Walworth Chair Joe Abell
Town of Walworth Supervisor Bill Pearce
Village of East Troy President Bill Loesch
Village of Mukwonago Trustee Darlene Johnson
Village of Genoa City President Barry Goad
Village of Fontana President Ron Pollitt
City of Lake Geneva Mayor Bill Chesen
City of Elkhorn Administrator Sam Tapson
County Board Chair Nancy Russell

Also Present:

Town of Delavan Administrator John Olson
Town of Delavan residents Don & Merilee Holst
Speakers Richard Stadelman, Dan Thompson and William White
University of Wisconsin Extension Local Government Center Specialist Alan Probst

Excused: City of Whitewater

Administrator Bretl introduced Alan Probst of UW-Extension Local Government Center, who explained the support Extension provides to municipalities about issues relating to local government. He urged those present to check out their website as their advice is to not pay a consultant until you have researched what UW-Extension can provide.

Supervisor McIndoe of the Town of Spring Prairie made a motion to approve the agenda with a second by Chair Fero of the Town of Whitewater. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Logterman of the Town of Darien made a motion to approve the minutes of May 27, 2008 with the correction that his name is added to those present. The motion was seconded by Supervisor McIndoe of the Town of Spring Prairie and carried unanimously.

Deputy Administrator Shane Crawford introduced the speakers for this evening. William White is an attorney with Michael Best & Friedrich and is Special Counsel on land use issues. Dan Thompson is Executive Director of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. Richard Stadelman is Executive Director of the Wisconsin Towns Association.

William White stated that anything he has to say this evening would upset someone in the room as each person could think he is not in favor of towns, not in favor of cities, or not in favor of villages. He noted that several years ago he represented the City of Delavan in a lawsuit involving the Town of Delavan. After thousands of dollars was spent by both cities and several court rulings, everything was the way it was when it all started. He decided at that point that he would concentrate on solutions rather than litigation between adjoining municipalities. He stressed the best possible and most efficient government is for the people we serve.

He gave everyone a written hand out covering the ways of cooperation using intergovernmental agreements, revenue sharing agreements, cooperative plans and cooperative use of extraterritorial zoning powers. He then gave examples of municipalities that have used these statutes to establish working relationships. He did point out that the legislation passed in the 1990's to help with the annexation issues is lengthy and cumbersome. They are now taking steps to streamline this process.

Dan Thompson stated he and Richard Stadelman had been involved in the committee that worked on the 1990's legislation Mr. White referred to. In the 1970's and 1980's there was no way to get municipalities together even if they wanted to and a mechanism was needed to provide for an agreement. Property rights were a big issue with the builders and developers and they worked for ten to twelve years before legislation was passed. They both felt that something was better than nothing. Legalities aside, the place to start is with what you want to do together and what the incentives are to get together. Good lawyers will help to make a good agreement. The place to start is with the politics of the people in the city, town and county. Outline what you want to accomplish. It isn't the law that is the problem; it is the politics. He noted there are 1800 units of government in this state with only 24 agreements in place.

Richard Stadelman also gave out some information from the Department of Administration and the Department of Revenue. He too gave several examples of governmental units that have entered into agreements. The process for reaching a cooperative boundary plan was included in his hand out. He recommended the first step is to start talking about the intergovernmental things you are already doing and why you are doing them and why they are working. Start over a cup of coffee, but be careful about not violating the open meetings law. But do start a very informal dialogue. Be prepared to negotiate and to compromise. He encouraged everyone to use all of the tools that are available including things such as revenue sharing and performance measurements.

Administrator Bretl thanked the speakers for their coming and sharing the information with everyone. He wondered if there was one particular agreement that could be used as a model agreement. Dan Thompson replied that every agreement is different although there are similarities but each circumstance is unique. Ron Fero, Chair of the Town of Whitewater related the difficulties the town has been having with the City of Whitewater but they have put their plan on hold recently until they have a discussion with the town next month.

It was pointed out that when officials have been in office for a period of time they are able to see what each other have in common. Things don't happen without political leadership and it takes political courage to take on the status quo.

Ron Fero wondered why cities and villages are so opposed to townships over the years. He pointed out town taxes are usually much lower than city taxes and that is why some people want to move to towns. Richard Stadelman discussed the history of the formation of towns. He pointed out that regional cooperation needs to help people rise above some of the divisive issues. Ron Fero stated cities make plans and they don't tell towns about their plans but want to annex town land. Dan Thompson asked what the town would be willing to give up and Ron Fero responded they want to share things such as services and revenue. The role of the Smart Growth planning was briefly discussed. Richard Stadelman also noted the possibility of transfer of development rights and gave some examples of how that has worked.

Administrator Bretl asked the speakers what they have observed from the roll of county government. Dan Thompson could not recall any county ever wanting to get involved. Richard Stadelman believed this county is the first to be involved and felt it was excellent. Most elected people are people of good faith. William White gave the example of the Town of Bristol and the Village of Pleasant Prairie cooperating with the county executive acting as mediator. Richard Stadelman discussed the Town of Verona and City of Verona issues as well as the Town of Madison and City of Madison issues. He noted the levels of service drive the tax rate and most cities have more services than towns. He noted you have to give up something to get something. Three communities joined together to form one police department and to solve the issue of what to name the department they used the school district name of D. C. Everest.

It was noted Walworth County is unique in that we have a number of cities of nearly the same size. We also have a history of families where some live in the town, some in the city and they are very generous in volunteering their time in many different groups. This might help us in cooperating with each other.

Darlene Johnson of the Village of Mukwonago stated that when they had a problem with a dam breaking they had cooperation from a lot of communities. People can work very well together.

Administrator Bretl felt that was a good note to leave on. He thanked the speakers for coming to promote good government. He also invited everyone to see Lakeland School September 7th at 1:00 p.m.

He also confirmed the next meeting date of Tuesday, November 25th to talk about water quality and quantity issues.

Chair Logterman of the Town of Darien made a motion to adjourn with a second by Supervisor McIndoe of the Town of Spring Prairie. The motion carried unanimously.

Administrator Bretl adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy C. Burwell, Secretary