

**MINUTES OF THE
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION OF DEPARTMENTS,
COMMITTEES AND THE NUMBER OF SUPERVISORY DISTRICTS FOR
ONEIDA COUNTY MEETING
November 30, 2010**

Members Present: Chairman David Hintz; John Young, Carol Pederson, Denny Thompson, and Tom Rudolph.

Others Present: John Potters, County Coordinator; Ken Krall, WXPB Radio; Richard Moore, *The Lakeland Times/Northwoods River News*; Peter Wolk, District #18 Supervisor; Jackie Cody; an unidentified member of the public; and LuAnn Brunette, Buildings & Grounds Leadperson/Committee Secretary.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hintz called the meeting to order at approximately 9:30 a.m. in Committee Room #2 of the Oneida County Courthouse. He noted that the meeting notice had been properly posted and mailed in accordance with the Wisconsin Open Meeting Law and accommodations would be made for qualified individuals pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda by Pederson/Young. All aye on voice vote.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 1, 2010 MEETING

Motion to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2010 committee meeting as presented by Thompson/Young. All aye on voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment at this time.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS ON PROPOSED COMMITTEE CONSOLIDATION TO INCLUDE FEEDBACK FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS THAT WERE INTERVIEWED

Chairman Hintz stated that the last meeting included submission of a plan for consolidation of committees, and committee members were assigned to obtain comments from department heads and chairs of standing committees. He asked that committee members also include their own ideas on possible consolidation.

Supervisor Rudolph – Public Works, consisting of Highway and Landfill

Rudolph stated he spoke with Nick Scholtes, Oneida County Highway Commissioner, who indicated he didn't have any particular concern about combining meetings with the landfill, but did have concerns about the length of meetings if committees were combined. He stated Scholtes indicated to him that the highway agenda runs from eight to fifteen items, and if the county did

proceed in this direction he would like to see the meetings held at the highway department building, as they have the space to accommodate staff, committee members and members of the public. He stated that Scholtes also felt it would be necessary to have immediate access to information in his office during the meetings. Rudolph indicated he hadn't had the opportunity to obtain input from Charlie Evenhouse, Solid Waste Director.

Rudolph stated his feeling was there are a many possibilities and opportunities for combining, but his big concern was the range of departments that would be covered under the proposed committee structure and his uncertainty that the committee structure would be able to efficiently operate for all the departments. He pointed out that law enforcement and judiciary has seven departments, noting he felt it unrealistic to think one committee could handle all of that. Supervisor Rudolph stated this is essentially the same proposal that was very soundly turned down when previously presented to the county board, so he would suggest if this committee wants to make a proposal to the board, that it propose something less drastic a change as this. He stated this proposal seems to be "fixing things that aren't broken". He continued, this is not to say there isn't opportunity for consolidation and streamlining, but that he felt this was going too far at the present time, and the committee needed to take a hard look at this and see if this is something that fits Oneida County government.

Supervisor Young explained that the proposed public safety and judiciary committee had only one additional thing added, emergency management. He stated everything else is covered under the law enforcement committee at this time.

Supervisor Rudolph presented an option that he felt was between what was previously presented and the current committee system. He stated he would also combine social services, veterans service, the department on aging and public health.

Supervisor Pederson – Health and Human Services, consisting of Health, Social Services, and Department on Aging

Supervisor Pederson stated she spoke with department heads and chairs, and the people she spoke with were concerned with the potential length of the meeting under the new structure. She stated she also received comments from individuals stating they felt this would not save the county that much money. Pederson noted that there are statutory requirements for both board of health and commission on aging. She explained that a physician and nurse must be included as part of the board of health makeup, which could be worked around. She continued that the commission on aging must include people over the age of sixty, and that also seemed workable.

Pederson stated she personally thought having three board members instead of five may create an efficiency as well as a cost savings, and questioned if perhaps

there is reasoning behind the structure of five supervisors per committee that she isn't aware of. She indicated another issue is the limited meeting schedule, with some committees currently meeting twice a month. Pederson indicated positive comments from staff and their willingness to cooperate, noting Linda Conlon, health department, indicated she felt it workable to meet every other month while Dianne Jacobson brought up the possibility of meeting every six weeks. She stated another reason for consolidation of committee meetings would be to allow County Coordinator John Potters the opportunity to attend more committee meetings. Pederson stated she could support their original proposal or she could support Rudolph's proposal, but felt the need to work in this direction. Supervisor Pederson stated that committee members she talked to were not very supportive at all. (She related that Sonny Paszak and Bob Metropulos of the commission on aging, along with possible others from that commission whose names she didn't write down were not supportive of the change.) Pederson further related members of the commission on aging indicated that other counties, such as Brown County, have changed committee structure and aren't happy with the revised system. Pederson stated she didn't research this, so she wouldn't know if it is factual.

Supervisor Young – Public Safety & Judiciary, consisting of Emergency Management, Circuit Courts, Clerk of Courts, Sheriff, District Attorney, Corporation Counsel, and Medical Examiner; and Administrative, consisting of Finance, ITS, County Clerk, County Treasurer, LRES, Resolutions Review

Supervisor Young stated no one he spoke with said they were against or for the proposed changes, with the exception of some supervisors. He stated his concern was that everyone have an open mind to proceed with this, noting the county's options are to privatize, downsize or eliminate, stay with what we have, or tweak what we have. He concluded that something has to be done, noting when supervisors say we won't save money, they should speak with the finance director. He discussed the need to try something different.

Supervisor Thompson – Property, consisting of Buildings & Grounds, Land Information, Register of Deeds, Forestry & Outdoor Recreation, and Mining

Supervisor Thompson stated he had been hearing much of the same as the others, noting a consensus that things can be improved. He indicated he heard more often than not, the need to take this as a step-by-step approach. Thompson stated some consolidation has taken place as in the case of land records including real property, land information and register of deeds all handled by one committee. He discussed the need to continue to move in that direction. Supervisor Thompson discussed the need to clean up the simpler things first and then take time on things that may not be as evident. He related that he wouldn't want to make mistakes by moving too fast. Supervisor Thompson discussed issues that could arise by consolidating committees, when an issue like mining becomes very active, that committee may no longer meet once a month, but four or five times a month. He stated there should be safeguards to protect against

that. Supervisor Thompson discussed examining the possible elimination of some committees by rolling the duties into another committee. He stated that in his interviews with various chairmen, he heard the same theme, move cautiously, step by step. He concluded that those interviewed agree that we need to do something; things must change, as government at this level isn't sustainable.

Supervisor Young responded that it wasn't their intent to propose a mandate for a limit of one meeting per month, and he gave LRES as an example, when, during union negotiations additional meetings would be required. He discussed the need at times for more meetings, noting that those meetings might also cover additional items for other departments.

Supervisor Thompson continued that he felt a significant restricting of the number of meetings would be required to achieve the dollar savings, and most folks are afraid that this may not play out.

Supervisor Young noted that some are creating a kingdom, and don't want anything to happen to their kingdom.

Supervisor Pederson stated she noticed that the department heads she spoke with were willing to work with the committee, and she saw this as positive.

County Coordinator John Potters – Information From Other Counties

Potters related he visited Wood County, and obtained information from Langlade and Sheboygan Counties. He stated that Wood County downsized from thirty-eight to nineteen supervisors, noting part of the consolidation included committee consolidation, and referred to their organizational chart. He stated that the UW Extension staff was involved, along with their standing committee of supervisors and department heads who worked to develop this. He reviewed results of a survey taken both before and after the changes, noting the reason for the outcome was that department heads no longer attend the entire committee meeting, but after the consolidation were only called in for their particular agenda items as needed. He stated the change resulted in the time for supervisors increasing, but for staff, decreasing. Potters related there was a savings, not as much as anticipated, noting the savings was impacted by travel costs. He stated anticipated savings were projected to be as much as \$75,000 to \$80,000, but was actually about \$35,000 to \$40,000. He noted that the savings would change depending on the county, further noting the greatest cost is the travel; more meetings mean more travel, so elimination of meetings did cut the cost. Potters indicated that the length of meetings did increase, but meetings were streamlined for less detail and utilized department heads' knowledge of their departments, not getting into the minutia of what else was going on. He stated that this resulted in no less interaction, but by the involvement of more departments, supervisors were now more knowledgeable of the departments and their structures. Potters also provided information from St. Croix and Chippewa Counties who are currently going through this.

Supervisor Rudolph noted that from the information provided from Wood County, they had forty-eight committees prior to consolidation, but after consolidation had thirty-nine; he stated he felt some of this information was misleading as the consolidation wasn't as drastic as it would first appear.

Potters discussed how the fifteen standing committees would be similar to the standing committees that Oneida County has, and discussed how their reduction from fifteen to six reduced the number of standing committees, but did not really reduce the number of outside committees. Potters stated he didn't feel these outside committees were being concentrated on at this time, and Chairman Hintz concurred. Potters discussed the outside committees as being comprised of mostly non-board members, containing more community representation.

Chairman Hintz discussed the St. Croix committee structure that was looked at during the previous meeting, and questioned if it was similar to that of Wood County.

Potters indicated that the committee structures were similar, noting some may have different names, but explained that every county has different responsibilities depending on location in the state, geography, population and whether or not they have nursing homes.

Supervisor Thompson questioned UW-Extension staff involvement in the Wood County consolidation effort.

Potters responded, they provided research and facilitated the meetings.

Supervisor Thompson questioned if Wood County hired an outside consultant.

Potters responded their consolidation was studied in-house, with the UW acting as their consultant.

Chairman Hintz – Planning & Development, consisting of UW-Extension/Land Conservation, Planning & Zoning and Tourism

Chairman Hintz stated that he visited with the planning & zoning department head, who indicated he had no concerns over the combination; he also discussed the proposed consolidation with Supervisor Holewinski, planning & zoning chair, and his comments were about meeting length. He stated Holewinski said the chairmanship of planning and zoning required a lot of his time, and he didn't know if he'd have time to chair the committee if the consolidation takes place. He discussed Holewinski's concern about the meeting length. Hintz discussed the tourism council, noting he felt this were an outside committee compiled of twenty members, three-quarters of which are non-county board members. He stated that while this is not outside the scope of the

committee, at this time concentration is on the consolidation of standing committees of the county board.

Chairman Hintz discussed the need to present a plan that is sellable to the county board, noting that the board probably wouldn't accept this plan.

Supervisor Young stated he found it strange that the department heads buy into the proposal, but the supervisors don't. He noted this is an indication to him that some people are here for the money.

Chairman Hintz indicated he has a strong feeling there is a need to do something significant, but he recognized the political realities – the board needs to approve the change. He stated he was convinced the committee could present a sellable package. He stated his certainty that government can work better, more efficiently, and the dollars will follow. He indicated a step-by-step process could be used, noting the first step doesn't have to be the last, but should be significant. Chairman Hintz distributed copies of a proposal he developed. He stated that he has continued to make changes as he has reviewed the proposal, and would further change the proposal after what he's heard today. He discussed the need to work with the committee chairs to run better meetings, hitting highlights of departments, and to standardize and organize departments to do a better job. He discussed the lack of productivity in meetings lasting more than an hour to an hour and a half. He discussed the need to take today's input and combine these ideas with what had been discussed previously to develop a plan.

Potters noted an issue with the proposal distributed by Hintz that might be of concern, regarding the mandated make-up of the board of health and commission on aging.

Chairman Hintz asked the committee team of Pederson and Young to take today's input and come back to the next meeting with the revised plan. He suggested a blend of the plan proposed by Supervisor Rudolph, the original plan and his own plan that he distributed to create a third generation plan to be discussed at the next meeting.

Supervisor Young commented that no matter what plan is put forward, the process will require education. He noted the potential meeting length for consolidated committees is of great concern.

Supervisor Rudolph discussed the challenge of the consolidation of soil & water conservation with the UW, and his steps as chair of that committee to work with staff to streamline the agenda, combine items where possible, and distribute written reports with meeting packets so committee members could pose questions and allow for staff response during meetings. He stated that this seems to have worked out very well, noting the last couple of meetings were not

long in duration. He stated this is something that could be looked at as a model for other committees.

Chairman Hintz discussed the need to develop a plan that would be more acceptable by the county board, and he asked for the committee team to have a proposal developed by incorporating the ideas presented on how to consolidate the committees. He stated he personally liked using committee names to show the recommended consolidation, noting that the next meeting could allow for review of the revised plan, providing the committee the opportunity to tweak the plan and then present it to the county board.

COMMITTEE TEAM UPDATE/FEEDBACK

Chairman Hintz stated this was covered under previous discussion.

SUPERVISORS TEAM UPDATE/FEEDBACK

Chairman Hintz stated the signed resolution (reducing the county board from twenty-one to nineteen supervisors) would be co-sponsored by the other ad hoc committee.

DEPARTMENTS TEAM UPDATE/FEEDBACK

Potters reported he started to compile a list of department heads or non-department heads who do cross-department functions such as ITS, finance, LRES, and buildings & grounds. He stated the nature of these departments' functions requires cross-department interaction; therefore, he concentrated on these departments. He stated he also wanted the committee to include individuals with experience and who had seen the stages the county's committee structure has gone through to this point. He stated that he contacted people, some of whom have shown some hesitation, due to perception. He stated that some have concerns about their input being time consuming, and they don't want others to have the perception that they have too much time on their hands, noting he chose department heads rather than non-department head staff for this reason. Potters stated he had tentative agreements from everyone on his selection list, however, some want to speak with their committee chairs prior to a firm commitment. He stated his list: John Sweeney, Mike Romportl, Lynn Grube, Curt Krouze, and Margie Sorenson.

Potters stated that upon review of the minutes he saw that he had discussed consideration of individuals to achieve a group with a variety of personalities, past experience, who would give an objective view, and stated he felt that he had achieved that mix. He discussed utilization of the county's corporation counsel, noting he would include Brian Desmond as needed. Potters stated that he felt somewhat limited with a five-person committee, as other counties have included more people, including county supervisors. He stated he felt he did have involvement of supervisors through this committee, although the group wouldn't be meeting with the committee on a weekly or bi-weekly basis.

Chairman Hintz stated once the staff group begins, he would be open to change if Potters felt the need to include a supervisor or two, or if Potters felt the need to include additional people, that change could be addressed.

Potters stated that at the first meeting of the staff group, he would like Chairman Hintz and County Board Chairman Ted Cushing to be present and provide ideas, directions, and discuss what the committee is seeking. He stated his concern that as this committee is looking into this, there are outside supervisors who are doing something similar. He stated that the members of the staff group indicated they wouldn't want this to be a waste of time, but wanted this process to be done properly. He discussed their comments regarding the need for this to be conducted by use of rationale, not driven by a personal agenda. He discussed the need to approach this process properly and not in a scattered fashion. Potters expressed his desire to come up with the best information possible. He stated these were the comments and concerns of the people selected, and additionally, some worried about the time constraints, but understood how important this is and are willing to do whatever is necessary.

Supervisor Thompson discussed what Potters presented, noting people want to see a step-by-step, rational approach, but worried about the other process that could take place, such as on county board floor. He stated that the option of an individual bringing something to the board floor is viable, noting if you lose that option, change may never happen.

Potters agreed that there is potential for the option of a resolution being brought to county board by an individual, however, these staff members want to see rationale behind the process. He stated that they also have concerns that recommendations be based on research and reasoning.

Supervisor Rudolph question if this five-member committee were cast in concrete.

Chairman Hintz responded that the committee had decided to proceed ahead with that, but it could be changed.

Supervisor Rudolph stated it was a good list, noting the addition of UW staff could be beneficial as Kuzlik has all ready been through a consolidation, further noting this is an educational process. He stated he would like to see Dan Kuzlik added to this list based on his experience.

Potters discussed his agreement with the concept of utilizing UW staff, noting he had struggled with how to include that in this group. He stated he would like to have Brian Desmond on the staff committee as well, with access to legal information, but stated he felt he could involve both of these without having to require them to attend every meeting.

Supervisor Rudolph stated he was suggesting use of staff experience that is all ready here, and not miss that opportunity.

Chairman Hintz interjected that Desmond should advise on legal matters, but not be a member of this committee.

Potters stated he would like to have had Kuzlik on the committee, but was limited to five members.

Chairman Hintz stated he was not opposed to adding a member to include Kuzlik.

Supervisor Thompson indicated he didn't see the sense of it, noting the staff committee would be looking at ways to consolidate or become more efficient, noting he didn't always see their policies as being more efficient.

Supervisor Rudolph moved to add Dan Kuzlik, UW-Extension, to the team that Potters has put together to look into department consolidation. The motion died due to lack of a second.

Supervisor Pederson noted that the UW-Extension is funded 60% by the State of Wisconsin and only 40% by the county, and questioned if that enters into this picture, as she pointed out the rest of the staff is not in that category.

Supervisor Rudolph commented that we continue to not utilize experience that is out there, and discussed that he found that troubling.

Chairman Hintz stated he anticipated that Potters would use Kuzlik as an advisor.

Potters agreed stating he would anticipate using every resource that is available.

Chairman Hintz stated he was willing to participate with the staff group as much as Potters may want. Discussion followed on setting a team charter or goals.

Potters stated that other counties have gone through a process of program evaluation and rank. He stated that Oneida County has part of this done in the Departmental Information Document, which lists programs and associated costs. He stated other counties listed programs and ranked those programs based on an interview process and assignment of a point value system. He stated that in doing so, it might recommend removal of services or programs from one department and move those to another department that might be better or more efficient at handling those programs and services. He stated that it might make more sense to do this, while it may appear that two departments could be combined, it may make more sense to move programs and services.

Chairman Hintz discussed the proposed change in forestry duties to concentrate on harvesting that brings in revenue.

Supervisor Rudolph indicated it was interesting forestry was mentioned, as he felt forestry should concentrate on the management of the forest, of which harvesting is only one part.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Hintz asked again for public comment, as there were now members of the public present.

Jackie Cody, 4517 Fetke Lake Road, Rhinelander, addressed the committee. She expressed her disappointment that the committee didn't act on a second to the motion to more thoroughly discuss the experience of Dan Kuzlik. Cody discussed an example of compiling a care team, where it would make sense to take advantage of using the available experience. She stated that decisions will be made that will impact the county's operation, noting it is an elitist who does not need experience.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Future agenda items were discussed as: how to update county board on the process, committee consolidation plan, and team updates (3),

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Dates for future meetings were discussed. Chairman Hintz called the next meeting of this committee for January 4, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned by a motion of Rudolph/Thompson. The time was 11:00 a.m. All aye on voice vote.

David Hintz,
Chairman

LuAnn Brunette,
Committee Secretary