

DOWNSIZING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Administrative Center, Room 3220, 400 N. 4th St.

4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Berns, Sharon Hampson, Vicki Burke, Ray Ebert, Ralph Geary, Monica Kruse, Andrea Richmond

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve O'Malley, Dave Lange, Margaret Norden, Dave Holtze

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Co-Chair Hampson called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST THOUGHTS

The purpose of the committee arises from the County Board decision to reduce its size from 35 to 29 members, and to provide adequate supervisor coverage for the standing committees, as well as several special committees which require a County supervisor in its membership. Co-chair Hampson asked each committee member to give their primary goal or concern for committee structure:

- Supervisor Ebert: Stated he would like to see workload distributed more evenly to alleviate some committees having to hold longer meetings than other committees, and to consider a committee of the whole taking the place of Executive Committee;
- Supervisor Richmond: Suggested combining Aging and Long-term Care with the Health and Human Services Board to avoid duplication;
- Supervisor Kruse: Stated she would not like to see Aging and Long-term Care combine with the Health and Human Services Board, or to rework the entire system, but instead to see changes that streamline committees;
- Supervisor Hampson: Suggested that committee outlook should focus more on policy;
- Supervisor Berns: Stated he would consider having supervisors serve on more than one committee, but also stated that it takes supervisors time to develop a level of expertise that they can then share with other supervisors;
- Supervisor Geary: Stated he did not have an issue with having fewer committees, or having supervisors serve on more than one committee, so there could still be seven members per committee.
- Supervisor Burke: Stated she was satisfied with the current number of standing committees, and spoke about other committees that have related concerns.

There was discussion about chairs and vice-chairs being elected by the individual committee, rather than appointed by the Board Chair. There was also discussion about having public comment at County Board meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

STATE MANDATED COMMITTEES

WCA provided a memo regarding statutory committees. It appears that the County has all required committees, although some may have been combined with committees that are not mandatory.

CURRENT COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- a. What is working well
- b. Problems with current structure

A flow chart was provided to show the standing committees and the departments that report to each. Discussion was held regarding elected officials' relationship to the County Board, and the Board's ability to make policy decisions. Steve O'Malley gave the example of planning for the Law Enforcement Center addition, which had a lot of impact on jail policy, even though the sheriff, who is elected, has authority over day-to-day jail operations. Discussion was held regarding overlap of committee oversight and dual authority that requires joint committee meetings. Supervisor Kruse stated that any large organization, such as a school or company, would have the same issue.

Further discussion was held regarding policy planning meetings, and having presentations at that meeting that have already been given to committees. There was also discussion regarding meeting times. Supervisor Geary suggested that all meetings be held at a time that is convenient for the public, and that they should remain at that time for two years.

COMMITTEES BY COUNTY

- a. Standing committees by county
- b. Counties that recently downsized

A summary was provided to show the number of committees by county, and committees for counties that have downsized. Steve O'Malley pointed out that many counties have followed the La Crosse County model for a more streamlined structure. Discussion was held regarding rural counties having different needs and emphases which determine committee structure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES TO COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The item was referred to a future agenda.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Suggestions for changes to committee structure
Statutes governing Health, Human Services, and Commission on Aging
Statutes governing selection of chairs and vice-chairs
County survey of committee chair appointment vs. election
Committee chair continuity, leadership, and term limits
Meeting times for major committees
Membership numbers on each committee
Role of policy planning meetings

DETERMINE NEXT MEETING DATE

The committee set the next meeting date for December 13, 2011, at 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ebert/Geary to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Disclaimer: The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next committee meeting. Margaret Norden, Recorder