

TASK FORCE STUDY

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

FINAL REPORT

NOVEMBER 1990



Winnebago County

WISCONSIN

The Wave of the Future

**REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE
TO STUDY THE
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

November 1990

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The task force decided to focus on the decision-making structures and processes of county government rather than the implementation structures and processes. It believed that studying the efficiency and effectiveness of county administrative units was beyond the capacity of the group, but would be an appropriate subject for a future study.

The task force met eleven times. It reviewed the Wisconsin state statutes on county government, several reports on administrative home rule, the organizational structures and processes of other counties with a county executive, previous county studies, board and committee agendas and minutes, and studies of the decision-making process on two major issues in this county. Individual members attended committee meetings and spoke with the department heads.

ISSUES, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue 1: The Responsibilities of the County Executive and the County Board Under Current Wisconsin Statutes

Discussion: Chapter 59 of the Wisconsin Statutes is quite clear in assigning policy-making and review responsibilities to the county board and administrative responsibilities to the county executive. This division of responsibilities changes the role of the board from what it is in counties without an executive or administrator and what it was in this county before the advent of administrative home rule.

The task force examined the procedures for leasing, purchasing, contracting, budgeting, and personnel in terms of the policy-making role of the board and the administrative responsibilities of the county executive. While there have been some conflicts, by and large this broad division of responsibility has been accepted in Winnebago County. However, in part this has been due to accommodations made by individual officials rather than by a clear definition of roles.

The budget process is of some concern in that the county board committees play a significant role in the initial construction of department budgets before they are sent to the county executive. While there may be merit in this approach, it is not required by state statutes and it could be a point of contention at some time in the future. The task force also notes that the county executive has the responsibility of submitting a budget that he is prepared to defend.

At the committee-department head level, the evidence on the policy-administration separation is mixed. A review of the minutes of a sample of three committees showed the following: the personnel and Finance Committee dealt almost exclusively with policy issues, about 30 percent of the issues considered by the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee were administrative in nature, and an even higher percentage of the issues in the Airport Committee were essentially administrative.

Issue 2: Relationships between the County Executive, Other Elected County Officials, and the County Board

While the state statute is explicit about the responsibilities of the county executive and the county board, it does not address (1) the relationship between the county executive and the other elected county officials, that is, the clerk, clerk of courts, coroner, district attorney, registrar of deeds, sheriff, and treasurer, and (2) the relationship between these officials and the county board.

Our understanding of the statutory requirements are as follows: (1) the county executive is responsible for preparing the annual budget for all departments, including those with elected heads, but that in the departments with elected heads, day to day administration is the responsibility of the elected officials; (2) all departments are required to adhere to county-wide policies and procedures adopted by the county board; and (3) the departments of elected officials are assigned to a committee of jurisdiction in the same manner that departments with appointed heads are assigned.

Six of the seven departments with elected heads are assigned currently to the Judiciary and Public Safety Committee (clerk, clerk of courts, coroner, district attorney, register of deeds, and sheriff) and one (treasurer) is assigned to the Personnel and Finance Committee.

Recommendation:

2.1. Procedures need to be in place to assure that departments with elected heads follow all county-wide policies and procedures.

Issue 3: The Structure of County Board Committees and Related Board and Commissions

Discussion: It would be an understatement to observe that the structure of committees, boards, and commissions is complex. In examining this structure, the task force has made these observations. (1) The use of many specialized committees tends to fragment issues. (2) Where the option exists for either board or citizen members to serve on a board or commission, county board members usually are appointed. (3) Board members, as a rule, have multiple assignments that are not always related to each other.

The task force recommendation that the county board adopt a structure of six committees, with shared membership on several boards and commissions, is based on the following reasons:

1. The establishment of committees with broad functional jurisdiction encourages board members to evaluate issues from a broader and more integrated perspective that the current more fragmented committee structure now permits.

Issue 4: Compensation for Board Members

Discussion: The task force reviewed practices in other counties and considered various compensation options. While the current per diem arrangement may recognize varying work loads for supervisors, it leaves the impression with the public that supervisors have a monetary incentive to have more committees and hold more meetings. This impression is unfortunate, but the only way that it can be dealt with is to change to a uniform yearly salary.

Recommendation:

4.1. Each county board member should receive an annual salary of \$3,000 plus mileage and expenses.

4.2. The county board chair should receive an annual salary of \$5,000 plus mileage and expenses.

Issue 5: Board and Committee Operating Rules

Discussion: The task force reviewed the rules of operation for the board and its committees. It believes that the rules are sufficient to enable the board and its committees to operate in an orderly fashion, given the current structure. However, the task force believes that the entire board should be better informed about all aspects of county government and more involved in making policy decisions. The current system places too much weight on the decisions of the committees, which as individual committees, constitute a small minority of the board. Heavy reliance on the committee system without well informed and regular review by the entire board raises serious questions about government by majority decision. If the key decisions are made by the committees and then ratified by the full board, then what we really have is government by the minority. The task force believes that the operating rules should be changed to strengthen the role of the entire board.

Recommendations:

5.1. The county board should have two meetings each month. The first meeting should be as a committee-of-the-whole meeting in workshop session. In addition to a review of the issues coming up for action, this meeting should contain a major presentation by the staff of one or two related departments and their committee of jurisdiction. The second meeting, preferably one week later, should be the official business meeting.

5.2 All resolutions should be submitted to the county clerk before the workshop session.

5.3. All board members should receive the same materials.

ment. It particularly examined the major arguments used to justify the use of a large county board. Here are the conclusions of the task force.

1. A large board is not necessary to operate Winnebago County government.

Most county boards throughout the United States have between five and fifteen members. It is highly unlikely that Winnebago County possesses such unique characteristics that it requires such a large board for its operations.

2. A large board does not provide more citizen representation.

The argument for a large board to better represent citizens assumes (1) that each supervisor represents a specific interest that deserves to be represented, (2) that the issues coming to the county board are all clearly linked to the various interests, and (3) that there are many issues, each of which must be represented by a single supervisor.

The task force has observed that none of these assumptions appears to be the case. First, supervisors generally make up their own minds and vote accordingly (not according to an "objective" interest of their district). Second, specific interests are not clearly identifiable along geographic lines in the county. Most issues deal with broad county issues that are more likely to consider service levels for persons distributed throughout the county rather than geographically based issues. Third, there surely are not 45 different geographically defined interests to be represented.

Urban versus rural interests are sometimes mentioned. One of the primary observations made by the task force was that when an issue with an urban-rural dimension comes up (e.g. library system support), there almost never is a vote along geographic lines. Supervisors in city districts regularly vote with supervisors in rural districts.

3. A large board may discourage citizen participation.

The evidence reviewed by the task force suggests that while citizen interest in running for county board never has been particularly high, it has declined substantially over the past 16 years.

5. A large board costs a good deal of money.

Expenditures on supervisor per diem allowances and mileage and one materials necessary to operate the county board will be between \$125,000 and \$135,000 for the 1990 fiscal year. A board with 20 members would cost approximately \$65,000. This would be a very substantial savings.

Conclusion

The recommendation of the task force on board size is based on the conclusion that while a large board can make effective decisions, a small board can make these same decisions, but in a more efficient manner and at substantially less cost. Winnebago County may be paying for more government than it needs.

Recommendation:

7.1 The Winnebago County Board should consist of a minimum of fifteen (15) and a maximum of thirty (30) supervisors.

Issue 8: County Executive or County Administrator?

Discussion: The task force did not discuss this issue at any length. It notes the advantage of an independent political leader and administrator in the county executive option and the advantages of greater professional expertise in county administration and greater likelihood of a cooperative relationship between the board and the administrator with the county administrator option. The task force believes that these options should be formally studied in the near future.

Conclusion

Government is working in Winnebago County through the efforts of dedicated elected and appointed county officials and citizens should take pride in the accomplishments of county government. But like all complex organizations, county government can be improved in order to respond to a rapidly changing environment. We offer our recommendations with pride in our county government and with the hope that these recommendations will contribute to further accomplishments.

**ATTACHMENT 2
Duties of County Executive & County Board**

<u>Action</u>	<u>County Executive</u>	<u>County Board</u>
PERSONNEL	Appoints & terminates non-elected personnel	Approves position cap count
	Negotiates contracts of bargaining units	Approves appointment & termination of department heads who require confirmation
	Develops and recommends salary & fringe benefits for non-bargaining employees	Approves negotiated contracts
	Administers & manages all County County functions except those areas reserved for elected department heads	Approves salary & fringe benefits for non-bargaining employees
	Recommends personnel policies	Approves personnel policy manual

CONTRACTS	Develops bid specifications	Establishes contract policies
	Opens & awards bids	
	Negotiates contracts under the statutory amount	Monitors contracts for conformance with Board policy
	Administers contracts	

PURCHASING	Administers policies & procedures	Establishes policies and procedures

LEASES	Develops & negotiates	Approves (if not appropriated in budget)
	Executes (if appropriated in budget)	

BUDGETS	Develops budget with staff	County committees develop preliminary budget with staff prior to submission to Executive*
	Recommends budget to County Board	
	Signs budget	Approves or amends budget
	Administers budget	
* Winnebago County practices not defined in state statute.		

Administration Committee

- (1) The committee shall be composed of county board supervisors, with the number of members to be determined by the county board.
- (2) The committee shall act as the policy oversight* committee, reviewing policy issues and recommending policy legislation to the county board, for the following departments and activities: auditor, corporation counsel, county clerk, finance, information systems, lobbyist, maintenance, personnel, purchasing/insurance, and county treasurer. It also shall act as the policy oversight committee for the Affirmative Action Commission, the Civil Service Commission, and the Housing Authority.
- (3) The committee shall approve or deny all requests for transfers in accordance with Section 65.90 (5)(b) Wisconsin Statutes, including transfers from the contingency fund, when these transfers affect the areas overseen by this committee.
- (4) The committee shall review the annual executive budget for those departments and activities within its policy oversight jurisdiction and make recommendations to the county board at the annual meeting for the board's consideration and adoption.
- (5) The committee shall have the following personnel responsibilities:
 - (a) To establish the procedure for the preparation and submission of personnel requests for consideration by the committee and the county board;
 - (b) To receive all personnel requests from committees and boards of jurisdiction for review and recommendation;
 - (c) To review proposed personnel policies and amendments as submitted by the personnel director and county executive and submit recommendations to the county board;
 - (d) To review personnel actions in county departments as reported by the personnel director;
 - (e) To review and adopt affirmative action plans submitted by the Affirmative Action Commission; and,

* The term "policy oversight" describes the duties of (1) developing policy, including the scope and level of services, for action by to the county board, (2) reviewing proposed operational policies, for action by the county board, (3) monitoring the implementation of policy by the department, with information sent to the county board, and (4) recommending operational changes to the department head.

**Health Services Committee
(Option 1)**

- (1) The committee shall be composed of county board supervisors, with the number of members to be determined by the county board.
- (2) The committee shall act as the policy oversight committee, reviewing policy issues and recommending policy legislation to the county board, for the following departments and activities: Park View Health Center and public health.
- (3) The committee also shall act as the County Health Committee as specified in Section 141.01 Wisconsin Statutes.
- (4) The committee shall approve or deny all requests for transfers in accordance with Section 65.90 (5)(b) Wisconsin Statutes, including transfers from the contingency fund, where these transfers affect the areas overseen by this committee.
- (5) The committee shall review the annual executive budget for those departments and activities within its policy oversight jurisdiction and make recommendations to the county board at the annual meeting for the board's consideration and adoption.

**Health and Human Services Committee
(Option 2)**

(1) The committee shall be composed of county board supervisors, with the number of members to be determined by the county board.

(2) The committee shall act as the policy oversight committee, reviewing policy issues and recommending policy legislation to the county board, for the following departments and activities: child support, community programs, family court counseling, Park View Health Center, public health, social services, and veterans services. It also shall act as the policy oversight committee for the Board of Directors of ADVOCAP, the Human Service Board*, the Veterans Service Board, the Commission on Aging, and the Winne-Fond Lake Policy Board.

(3) Members of the committee shall serve as the county board members on the Human Services Board.

(4) The committee also shall act as the County Health Committee as specified in Section 141.01 Wisconsin Statutes.

(5) The committee shall review requests to transfer funds between budgeted items and make recommendations to the Administrative Committee, to act in accordance with Section 65.90 (5) (b) Wisconsin Statutes.

(6) The committee shall review the annual executive budget for those departments and activities within its policy oversight jurisdiction and make recommendations to the county board at the annual meeting for the board's consideration and adoption.

*The task force recommends the establishment of a Human Services Board, to replace the Social Service Board and the Community Programs (51.42) Board. The Human Services Board, according to Section 46.23 Wisconsin Statutes, shall consist of from seven to twelve members, with not less than one-third nor more than two-thirds being county board members, appointed by the county executive.

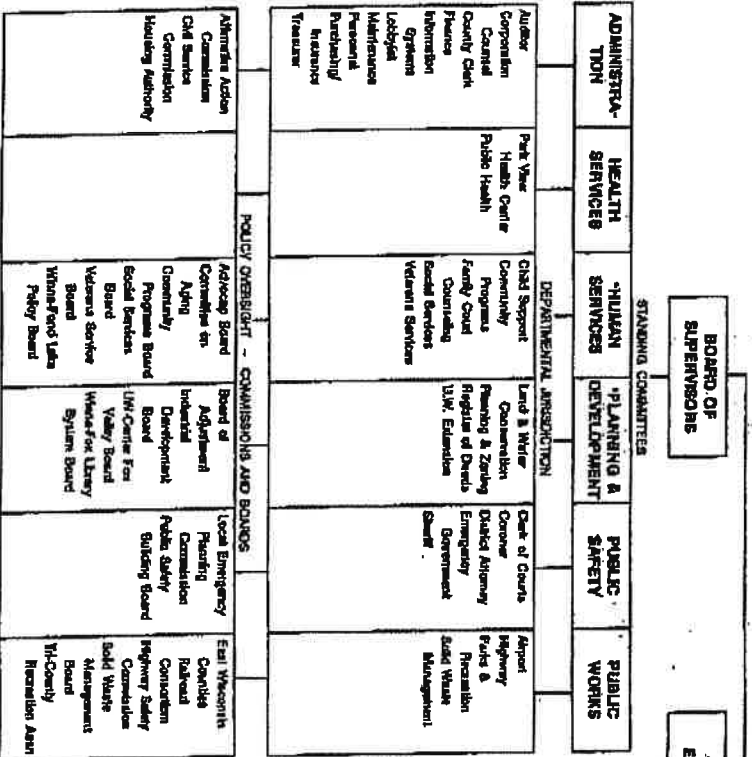
<u>Board size</u>	<u>Minimum # supervisors</u>	<u>Maximum # supervisors</u>
7	2	4
8	2	5
9	3	6
10	3	6
11	3	7
12	4	8

Public Safety Committee

- (1) The committee shall be composed of county board supervisors, with the number of members to be determined by the county board.
- (2) The committee shall act as the policy oversight committee, reviewing policy issues and recommending policy legislation to the county board, for the following departments and activities: clerk of courts, coroner, district attorney, emergency government, and sheriff. It also shall act as the policy oversight committee for the Local Government Emergency Planning Commission and the Public Safety Building Board.
- (3) The committee shall be the County Emergency Government Committee as specified in Section 166.03 (4)(c) Wisconsin Statutes.
- (4) The committee shall review requests to transfer funds between budgeted items and make recommendations to the Administrative Committee, to act in accordance with Section 65.90 (5) (b) Wisconsin Statutes.
- (5) The committee shall review the annual executive budget for those departments and activities within its policy oversight jurisdiction and make recommendations to the county board at the annual meeting for the board's consideration and adoption.

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

ELECTORATE



*MANDATED OR REFERENCED BY STATUTE

DEPARTMENTAL JURISDICTION - 1/2003 S&L

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DEPARTMENTS	DEPARTMENTS
Airport	Highway
Child Support	Information Systems
Community Programs	Land & Water Conservation
Corporation Counsel	Maintenance
Emergency Government	Port View Health Center
Family Court Counseling	Public & Recreation
Finance	Personnel
	Veterans Services

COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS

Advocates Board	Housing Authority	Tri-County Recreation Association Board
Advocates Action Commission	Veterans Services Board	UW Center For Valley Board
Board of Adjustment	Industrial Development Board	Veterans Services Commission
Child Services Commission	Local Emergency Planning Commission	WhoseFood Lake Policy Board
East View, Cassades sub-board Commission	Public Safety Building Board	WhoseFood Library System Board
Highway Safety Commission	Solid Waste Management Board	

Attachment 5**LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1. The county board and the county executive should develop formal procedures to define responsibilities in the areas of budgeting, personnel, purchasing, contracting, leasing, and any other significant areas involving both policy and administrative dimensions. (See Attachment 2 for a division of responsibilities).

1.2. The county board and its committees should strengthen its policy-making capacities by explicitly considering issues of mission and policy such as scope and level of service, procedural policies, and approaches to policy oversight. It should devote time to long-range planning and goal setting activities.

1.3. More attention should be paid to the budget as a policy document rather than simply an allocation of monies. The budget is the major instrument of the board in the determination and direction of policy in the county.

1.4. Committee chairs and department heads should review draft agendas before committee meetings to determine that all items are policy related.

2.1. Procedures need to be in place to assure that departments with elected heads follow all county-wide policies and procedures.

3.1. The county board should adopt a committee structure consisting of the following committees:

- Administration Committee
- Health Services Committee
- Human Services Committee
- Planning, Development, and Education Committee
- Public Safety Committee
- Public Works Committee

3.2. In cases where there is an overlap between the responsibilities of a statutorily mandated committee, board, or commission and a county board committee, either the county committee should serve as the mandated unit or members of the county committee should serve on the mandated unit together with citizen members.

3.3. Committees should be approximately the same size.

3.4. Each county board member should be assigned to only one county board committee, except for the county board chair who should not have a committee assignment. Some board members, of necessity, will be assigned to non-board units; however, there should be no expectation of multiple assignments.

4.1. Each county board member should receive an annual salary of \$3,000 plus mileage and expenses.

Attachment 6

Survey of County Board Supervisors

In November, 1990 a survey of county board supervisors was conducted by Karen Matze as part of her work in the Master of Public Administration program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

Twenty-eight supervisors, or 62 percent, completed and returned the surveys.

On the question of number of committees, the survey results are as follows:

- 36% (10) The board does not have too many committees.
- 54% (15) The board has too many committees.
- 11% (3) Not certain.

On the question of the size of the board, the survey results are as follows:

- 32% (9) The board size is alright as it is now.
- 54% (15) The board is too big.
- 14% (4) Not certain.