

## **Governor's Commission on Government Reform, Efficiency, and Performance**

Minutes of Meeting held on July 8, 2016

9:00AM

State Capitol, Madison, WI

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**Commission Members Present:** Co-Chair Scott Neitzel, Secretary Dave Ross, Mr. Robin Gates, Mr. Bob Ziegelbauer, Secretary Richard Chandler, Mr. Michael Heifetz, and Mrs. Linda Seemeyer.

**On the Phone:** Co-Chair John Shiely, Senator Janis Ringhand, Senator Howard Marklein, and Representative Adam Jarchow.

**Excused:** Mr. Ara Cherchian.

1. Co-Chair Neitzel opened the meeting and called the roll. Waylon Hurlburt took the roll.
2. Co-Chair Neitzel called for the approval of the June meeting minutes. The June commission meeting minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Co-Chair Neitzel introduced Andrew Phillips and Thomas Meaux speaking on behalf of the Wisconsin Counties Association.
4. Andy and Tom gave their presentation regarding sharing county services. Andy looked at other state examples to develop their proposal. Tom talked about how in the Ozaukee/Washington County example they needed a change in state law to complete the consolidation. To do it under current law would have distributed aid on an equalized value basis and not a per capita basis. Tom said the consolidation is allowing better services and saving both counties money. Tom also talked about the many layers of government in Wisconsin compared to other states.
5. Co-Chair Neitzel called on Commission members to ask questions of Andy and Tom.
  - Secretary Ross talked about his experience with the City of Superior and Douglas County. He was concerned about requiring state approval. This may be a roadblock to reforms and local officials should be allowed to make these decisions. Andy said there may be cases when the state may contract with local counties and not a joint agency.
  - Bob Ziegelbauer talked about eliminating the many layers of local government. Andy agreed and an example discussed was having an elected county treasurer and having to hire staff to do the work of the treasurer.
  - Co-Chair Shiely asked how this would work in practice and Andy clarified that they are looking to combine duties and Tom talked about how half his levy is out of his control because it falls under other constitutional officers.
  - Bob Ziegelbauer talked about how the City of Manitowoc combined functions, but at the county level because of other elected officials this isn't possible.
  - Senator Ringhand asked about solutions to having to hire staff to do other elected officials duties and asked if counties will take advantage of this joint agency idea. Tom thought counties would take advantage of this tool. Ultimately county officials are accountable to local electors.

- Linda Seemeyer talked about northern counties having to take advantage of tools like this to survive. She thinks this is a great idea, but had concerns over funding. Andy said the counties can pull out at any time and ultimately have control over the funding.
  - Senator Marklein supported the concept. He has rural counties and this is a way to break down siloes and that cooperation is the solution.
  - Secretary Chandler asked if this should be expanded to include schools, municipalities, and towns. Andy commented that this was a good idea.
  - Michael Heifetz asked for clarification on why legislation was needed in the case of Ozaukee/Washington counties. Andy said the funding formula was the biggest problem and Tom said that the state should allow counties to do this. Michael asked for clarification on the Dane County/City of Madison consolidation. Andy said this was complicated and part of an attorney general opinion. Michael asked about accountability. Andy said the joint agency board would be made up of elected officials and elected county boards would have to approve the budgets.
  - Co-Chair Neitzel asked how many other states do this. Tom talked about how many local government layers we have. Andy said Wisconsin is unique in how counties deliver services and that this concept was borrowed from a survey of local governments and something similar to Washington, Minnesota, and Florida.
  - Robin Gates asked about who was accountable for results. Andy said that the layers of state and county government would accomplish this. Robin asked why not just consolidate counties. Andy said nothing would prohibit this, but there is an aversion to communities losing their autonomy.
  - Co-Chair Neitzel asked about the history of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Tom said Ozaukee and Washington used to be the same county. Secretary Chandler said that northeasterners brought their style of government to Wisconsin.
  - Linda Seemeyer commented that this should save money and the savings should be put back into services.
6. Co-Chair Neitzel introduced James Langdon of the Department of Administration to talk about fleet vehicle usage and savings ideas.
  7. Jim gave his presentation.
  8. Co-Chair Neitzel called on Commission members to ask questions of Jim.
    - Linda Seemeyer asked about using a rental car. Jim said that the state has a contract and this may provide savings.
    - Secretary Ross asked about maintenance and operations. He talked about saving money by doing fewer oil changes. Jim said fleet directors make these decisions, but that this is an option to save costs.
    - Co-Chair Neitzel asked why the state pays a higher rate to pay for personal vehicle usage over using a state car. Jim said this is outlined in the state compensation plan, not statute.

- Bob Ziegelbauer asked if the changes being proposed are in state statute or policy. Jim said only one was in state statute, governor approval of vehicle purchases.
9. Co-Chair Neitzel asked if there were any questions on past white papers discussed by the Commission. There were no questions.
  10. The August Commission meeting was set to be on Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM in Green Bay.
  11. Co-Chair Neitzel adjourned the meeting.