

**MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE
AGENDA**

**AUGUST 19, 2020
3:30 P.M.**

210 RIVER DR., WAUSAU, WI

Task Force Purpose: Determine the optimal number of Marathon County Supervisory Districts, each represented by one County Board Supervisor. In making this determination, the Task Force shall consider the expected impact of the proposed board size on: the ability to attract well qualified candidates and to foster competitive elections, the efficient functioning of county governance, and the cost of County Government.

Members: John Robinson – Chair, Craig McEwen - Vice Chair, Tim Buttke, Sandi Cihlar, Jacob Langenhahn, Arnold Schlei, Rick Seefeldt, David Eckmann, Deb Hager

The meeting site identified above will be open to the public. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health directives, Marathon County encourages Task Force members and the public to attend this meeting remotely. To this end, instead of attendance in person, Task Force members and the public may attend this meeting by **telephone conference**. If Task Force members or members of the public cannot attend remotely, Marathon County requests that appropriate safety measures, including adequate social distancing, be utilized by all in-person attendees.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning **five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

PHONE NUMBER: 1-408-418-9388

Access Code: 146 568 6744

Password: 1111

When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. CALL TO ORDER;
2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS;
3. PUBLIC COMMENT

POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

1. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE JULY 15, 2020 MEETING;
2. COMPARISONS AND CONSIDERATIONS USED BY OTHER COUNTIES;
3. DECISION MAKING CRITERIA;
4. REVIEW OF COMMENTS FROM COUNTY BOARD PRESENTATION;
5. COUNTY BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT;
6. NEXT STEPS;
7. NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME;
8. ADJOURN.

Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 or e-mail infomarathon@mail.co.marathon.wi.us one business day before the meeting.

FAXED TO:

News Dept. at Daily Herald (715-848-9361), City Pages (715-848-5887),
Midwest Radio Group (715-848-3158), Marshfield News (877-943-0443),
TPP Printing (715 223-3505)

Date: August 12, 2020
Time: 2:15 p.m.
By: cek
Time/By: _____

SIGNED Rebecca J. Frisch
Presiding Officer or Designee

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:

Date: _____
Time: _____ a.m. / p.m.
By: County Clerk

**MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE
MINUTES
July 15, 2020**

MEMBERS: *John Robinson – Chair, Craig McEwen - Vice Chair, Tim Buttke, Sandi Cihlar, Arnold Schlei, Rick Seefeldt, David Eckmann, Deb Hager*

OTHERS PRESENT: Rebecca Frisch, Dave Mack, Jamie Alberti, William Litzer, Valerie Carrillo, Meg Ellefson

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Call to Order

In the presence of a quorum, with the agenda being properly signed and posted, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinson at 3:30 p.m. via WebEx.

2. Welcome and Introductions

All were welcomed and introductions were made.

3. Public Comment

The Public Comment portion of the agenda has been temporarily suspended, pursuant to Marathon County Resolution # R-29-20, dated April 21, 2020, because the technology necessary to afford the public the opportunity to address the County Board, or its subgroups, during public Comment is difficult to guarantee, if a large number of individuals have elected to call in.

POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

4. Approve Minutes July 15, 2020 meeting

Action: MOTION / SECOND BY BUTTKE / CIHLAR APPROVE THE JULY 15, 2020 MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE, NO DISSENT.

5. The Agenda items of:

CONSIDERATIONS USED BY OTHER COUNTIES;

DECISION MAKING EVALUATION CRITERIA;

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES;

were all discussed during the overall conversation of the meeting and no one individual item was discussed with the intent to take action on them separately. Consensus was reached on how to proceed with items at the next meeting.

The overall discussion was as follows:

A continuation of the discussion on issues Supervisors would like to address from the previous meeting. This include costs, public engagement, evaluating myths, and the use of a self-assessment of current and past County Board Supervisors for their opinions, like what is working?, Where are there problems?, Supervisor workloads, and overall challenges.

Robinson and McEwen gave a summary of the conversation they, with Frisch and Mack, had with members of the UW-Extension regarding the experience Washington County had a few years ago. How they looked at their committee structure to help identify the ideal number of supervisors to function on the committees. How they went from an Administrator position to an elected Executive position. Hager helped explain the differences in the types of administrative structures.

MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE

June 17, 2020

The conversation then moved to the criteria needed to help members make a decision on the Board Size. Ideas regarding the cost of the Board and Committees, the Efficiency of the Committee and even the current large Board. The Diversity on the Board and ways to make it more diverse or represented. The geographic size of the supervisory districts and how to get more participation in the election process.

Members ask to see comparisons of other like sized counties with Marathon, like Wood, Chippewa, Fond du Lac, and St. Croix counties.

Members agreed to discuss the evaluation criteria, other county considerations, the Board self-assessment, and presenting information to the County Board at the August Task Force meeting.

6. Future Meetings and Schedule – August 19, 2020

Action: THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 19, 2020 AT 3:30 PM AT 210 RIVER DRIVE, WAUSAU, WI AND VIA WEBEX.

7. Adjourn

Action: There being no further business to come before the members, **ROBINSON ADJOURNED THE MEETING OF THE MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE AT 4:30 PM.**

Submitted by:

Dave Mack, Program Manager

Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning

DM: CK

August 12, 2020

County Comparisons

Statistical Information

County	Expenditures per Capita	Levy per Capita	Highway Miles	2019 Population	Board size	Population per District	Administration Type	Sq Miles	Sq. Miles per District
Brown	\$755	\$347	975.3	252,452	28	10,100	Exec	529.71	18.92
Chippewa	\$980	\$301	721.4	64,881	15	4,300	Admin	1,008.37	67.22
Dane	\$919	\$359	1,049.40	537,328	37	14,500	Exec	1,197.24	32.36
Eau Claire	\$1,016	\$349	835	103,159	29	3,600	Admin	637.98	22.00
Fond du Lac	\$1,112	\$440	767.9	104,423	25	4,200	Exec	719.55	28.78
Kenosha	\$1,143	\$413	505.6	170,071	23	7,400	Exec	271.99	11.83
La Crosse	\$870	\$300	564.3	119,484	29	4,100	Admin	451.69	15.58
Marathon	\$737	\$371	1,228.80	136,517	38	3,600	Admin	1,544.98	40.66
Milwaukee	\$1,048	\$319	169.2	946,296	18	52,600	Exec	241.4	13.41
Outagamie	\$753	\$332	685.4	187,092	36	5,200	Exec	637.52	17.71
Ozaukee	\$639	\$246	309.5	89,905	26	3,500	Admin	233.08	8.96
Portage	\$957	\$435	868	71,680	25	2,900	Exec	800.68	32.03
Racine	\$1,154	\$286	305.7	196,487	21	9,400	Exec	332.5	15.83
Rock	\$852	\$439	426.2	160,444	29	5,500	Admin	718.14	24.76
St Croix	\$972	\$406	655.8	89,692	19	4,700	Admin	722.33	38.02
Sheboygan	\$877	\$434	898.3	116,547	25	4,700	Admin	511.27	20.45
Washington	\$611	\$276	363.9	137,637	26	5,300	Exec	430.7	16.57
Waukesha	\$560	\$270	812.6	405,991	25	16,200	Exec	549.57	21.98
Winnebago	\$701	\$406	439.1	170,580	36	4,700	Exec	434.49	12.07
Wood	\$891	\$366	648.7	75,450	19	4,000	Coord PT	793.12	41.74
Average	\$955	\$390	548.4	206,806*	26.45*	8,525*		638.32*	24.13*
Median of All Counties	\$1,064	\$496	549.4	41,588					

* Average of the 20 Counties Shown

County Size Comparison and Information

Rank	Land Area ▼	County / Population
Marathon	1,544.98 sq mi	Marathon, WI / 134,886
Bayfield	1,477.86 sq mi	Bayfield, WI / 15,064
Marinette	1,399.35 sq mi	Marinette, WI / 41,488
Douglas	1,304.14 sq mi	Douglas, WI / 43,901
Sawywe	1,257.30 sq mi	Sawyer, WI / 16,516
Price	1,254.37 sq mi	Price, WI / 13,888
Clark	1,209.81 sq mi	Clark, WI / 34,575
Dane	1,197.24 sq mi	Dane, WI / 502,984
Grant	1,146.85 sq mi	Grant, WI / 51,272
Oneida	1,112.97 sq mi	Oneida, WI / 35,754
Ashland	1,045.03 sq mi	Ashland, WI / 16,065
Forest	1,014.07 sq mi	Forest, WI / 9,198
Chippewa	1,008.37 sq mi	Chippewa, WI / 63,051
Oconto	997.99 sq mi	Oconto, WI / 37,483
Jackson	987.72 sq mi	Jackson, WI / 20,543
Taylor	974.88 sq mi	Taylor, WI / 20,596
Polk	913.96 sq mi	Polk, WI / 43,698
Rusk	913.58 sq mi	Rusk, WI / 14,468
Monroe	900.77 sq mi	Monroe, WI / 45,116
Shawano	893.06 sq mi	Shawano, WI / 41,697
Lincoln	878.97 sq mi	Lincoln, WI / 28,566
Dodge	875.62 sq mi	Dodge, WI / 88,589
Langlade	870.64 sq mi	Langlade, WI / 19,706
Barron	862.71 sq mi	Barron, WI / 45,718
Vilas	856.60 sq mi	Vilas, WI / 21,368
Dunn	850.10 sq mi	Dunn, WI / 44,045
Sauk	830.90 sq mi	Sauk, WI / 62,681
Burnett	821.85 sq mi	Burnett, WI / 15,387
Portage	800.68 sq mi	Portage, WI / 70,337
Washburn	797.11 sq mi	Washburn, WI / 15,785
Wood	793.12 sq mi	Wood, WI / 74,261
Vernon	791.58 sq mi	Vernon, WI / 30,124
Juneau	766.92 sq mi	Juneau, WI / 26,607
Columbia	765.53 sq mi	Columbia, WI / 56,659
Iowa	762.58 sq mi	Iowa, WI / 23,754
Iron	758.17 sq mi	Iron, WI / 5,927
Waupaca	747.71 sq mi	Waupaca, WI / 52,212
Trempealeau	732.96 sq mi	Trempealeau, WI / 29,274
Saint Croix	722.33 sq mi	Saint Croix, WI / 85,442
Fond Du Lac	719.55 sq mi	Fond Du Lac, WI / 101,709
Rock	718.14 sq mi	Rock, WI / 160,465

Buffalo	671.63 sq mi	Buffalo, WI / 13,374
Adams	645.65 sq mi	Adams, WI / 20,604
Eau Claire	637.98 sq mi	Eau Claire, WI / 100,607
Outagamie	637.52 sq mi	Outagamie, WI / 179,139
Lafayette	633.59 sq mi	Lafayette, WI / 16,847
Waushara	626.15 sq mi	Waushara, WI / 24,409
Manitowoc	589.08 sq mi	Manitowoc, WI / 80,805
Richland	586.15 sq mi	Richland, WI / 17,842
Green	583.96 sq mi	Green, WI / 36,971
Pierce	573.75 sq mi	Pierce, WI / 40,859
Crawford	570.66 sq mi	Crawford, WI / 16,525
Jefferson	556.47 sq mi	Jefferson, WI / 84,201
Walworth	555.13 sq mi	Walworth, WI / 102,920
Waukesha	549.57 sq mi	Waukesha, WI / 392,511
Brown	529.71 sq mi	Brown, WI / 252,698
Sheboygan	511.27 sq mi	Sheboygan, WI / 115,168
Florence	488.19 sq mi	Florence, WI / 4,473
Door	481.98 sq mi	Door, WI / 27,789
Marquette	455.60 sq mi	Marquette, WI / 15,224
La Crosse	451.69 sq mi	La Crosse, WI / 116,470
Winnebago	434.49 sq mi	Winnebago, WI / 168,413
Washington	430.70 sq mi	Washington, WI / 132,526
Menominee	357.61 sq mi	Menominee, WI / 4,382
Green Lake	349.44 sq mi	Green Lake, WI / 19,001
Kewaunee	342.52 sq mi	Kewaunee, WI / 20,545
Racine	332.50 sq mi	Racine, WI / 195,039
Calumet	318.24 sq mi	Calumet, WI / 49,502
Kenosha	271.99 sq mi	Kenosha, WI / 167,268
Milwaukee	241.40 sq mi	Milwaukee, WI / 953,401
Ozaukee	233.08 sq mi	Ozaukee, WI / 86,930
Pepin	231.98 sq mi	Pepin, WI / 7,39

Draft Selection Criteria

Efficiencies/Costs	How will the change impact the cost to conduct county board and committees
	How will the change impact staff resources dedicated to support the board and committees?
Representation	How does the change impact the ability to represent their constituents, interact with local units of government and other groups?
	Will the change lead to an increase in diversity among members?
	Will the change lead to increased interest among public in running for the county board?
Time Commitment	Will the change impact the amount of time required to fulfill the job duties?
	How many committees will the average supervisor be on based on the change?
Organizational issues	Will the change require any modifications to committee structure?
	Will the change create problems relating to obtaining quorums?
	Will there be any open meeting issues because of the change?
	Will the change increase or decrease the efficiency of the board?

County Board Leadership Interview Information

Thank you for your service and your willingness to answer a few questions. Your responses will help inform and focus the County Board Size Task Force's development of a survey to all County Board Supervisors.

To make the best use of your time the questions are being provided to you in advance. This also provides you an opportunity to prepare in advance of the interview. You have a very valuable perspective as a leader of County Board and we want to create an environment in which you can be candid about the effectiveness of the Board, Committees and your work as a Supervisor.

The interviews are anticipated to be about an hour in length. All responses will be confidential and anonymous. The information you provide will be analyzed for themes. None of your responses will be released verbatim. The summary of the interviews will include general themes and frequency of the themes.

Deb Hager will be contacting you in the next several days to schedule your interview. We would like to have the interviews completed by Labor Day.

Thank you again for your candor and willingness to participate.

County Board Leadership Interview Questions

Demographics

1. Are you currently employed? Full Time? Part Time? Self Employed?
2. Do you hold any other elected office?
3. How long have you been a County Board Supervisor?
4. How long have you been either a Chair or Vice Chair of a Committee/County Board?

Time Commitment

1. Thinking about the time you spend in County Board meetings, committee meetings, preparation for meetings, constituent work, local government communications, and other County activities, what is the average amount of time you spend in a month on County Board related activities?
2. If given the opportunity would you spend more or less time on County activities? Why?

County Board

1. From your perspective, thinking about County Board, what works well?
2. In the spirit of continuous improvement from your perspective, thinking about County Board, what would you suggest to improve the effectiveness of County Board?

Committee

1. From your perspective, thinking about the Committee(s) you serve on, what works well?
2. In the spirit of continuous improvement from your perspective, thinking about your Committee work, what would you suggest to improve the effectiveness of Committees?
3. How satisfied are you with your current Committee appointments? Why?

Supervisor

1. In your time as a Supervisor what is your most significant contribution to County Board?
2. In your time as a Supervisor what is your most significant contribution to Committee work?
3. What talents do you have that we are not currently tapping into?
4. What one change to County Board/Committee would you suggest that would help you be more effective?

Forms of County Government

A plain language discussion of the different forms of county government in Wisconsin

Basis. In Wisconsin, county government is generally considered the basis for local government. Article IV of the Wisconsin Constitution directs the state legislature to provide for “one or more systems of county government”; stipulates the powers of county boards; and provides for elected county officers. It provides for the legislature to confer “powers of local, legislative, and administrative character” for county boards, which are discussed in detail in the Wisconsin Statutes. It further provides for the constitutional elected officers at the county including coroners, registers of deeds, district attorneys, county clerks, treasurers, surveyors, and sheriff. Again, the duties, powers, and limitations are described in the Wisconsin Statutes.

Section 59.01 of the Wisconsin statutes establishes the county as a “body corporate.” Essentially, this gives the county government its authority to exist and operate as a governmental entity.

The ways Wisconsin counties conduct the business of local government are stipulated in the Wisconsin Statutes. They are found primarily under Chapter 59, however, there are other requirements and mandates relevant to county government spread throughout the statutes. Wisconsin counties have a great deal of flexibility in the type of government they choose for their county and even a good deal of flexibility in how each form of county government is interpreted through the provisions of “Administrative Home Rule.” Paragraph 59.03(1) of the Wisconsin Statutes authorizes administrative home rule for counties. Under “Administrative Home Rule” every county may exercise any organizational or administrative power, subject only to the Constitution and to any enactment of the legislature which is of statewide concern and which uniformly affects every county. This essentially means county boards can do whatever they wish in their local government provided it does not conflict with the Wisconsin

Constitution, the Wisconsin Statutes, or other actions of the Wisconsin legislature. Naturally, there are some other limitations to this, such as Federal law, court decisions, etc. but there is still a great deal of freedom in county government.

Forms of County Government. In compliance with Article IV of the Wisconsin Constitution, the legislature provided for three forms of county government. Those forms are the County Executive, County Administrator, and County Administrative Coordinator. The state provides for all counties to have an elected Board of Supervisors comprised of members of the electorate with powers authorized by Section 22, Article IV of the Constitution and specified by Section 59.10 of the statutes. In Wisconsin, there is no provision for a commission form of government where individual county supervisors are directly responsible for the operational aspects of any county department. In a true commission form of government, which still exists in some other states, members of the elected body are assigned responsibility for specific departments, i.e. an elected “commissioner” is assigned to supervise a specific department such as the highway department, veterans affairs, social services, etc. The elected official so assign actually supervises and directs the operations of that department and controls that department’s budget. While this is considered by some to be desirable because it places an elected person directly in charge of a government operation, this form of government has been in long-term decline because it has frequently been seen to encourage non-productive competition between commissioners and their respective departments; it distracts from the elected official’s primary responsibility of policy making and planning; and it places a person in charge of a department who frequently has no training or experience in government departments which have become increasingly complex. In the most severe cases, this form of government has also been considered more prone to official corruption. Hence, the Wisconsin legislature and statutes do not provide for this form of government. The title “supervisor” appears to be a primary source of the misinterpretation of the duties of Wisconsin County Boards of Supervisors. They do not directly “supervise” under Wisconsin law; they “oversee” through their policy making and budgeting authority.

County Executive. In the County Executive form of county government, a County Executive is elected by the citizens specifically to act in the capacity of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the county. While Milwaukee County is required to have a County Executive, any county in the state may choose this form of executive structure. This form of government is generally chosen due to such reasons as political climate, complexity of governmental issues in that county, projected growth, or some other issue or issues for which the citizens feel the need for a full-time elected CEO who answers directly to the citizens.

The County Executive coordinates and directs all administrative and management functions, appoints (subject to county board confirmation) and supervises department heads; appoints members to boards and commissions; also subject to board confirmation; submits the annual budget; and holds veto authority over board decisions, ordinances, resolutions, and appropriations. The county board can override vetoes of the County Executive with a 2/3 majority vote. In short, the County Executive is the highest level political leader in the county with powers and relationship with the board which can be generally equated to those between a Mayor and city council or the Governor and Legislature. While the county board of supervisors is restricted to legislative duties and oversight, the County Executive literally manages and supervises all departments and activities, both day-to-day and long-term via planning. This includes every county action and service except those performed by constitutional officers, such as the Sheriff, where the County Executive's authority is essentially limited to budgetary control.

County Administrator. The second form of county government provided for by the legislature is the County Administrator form. The County Administrator form of government is an optional form of government. It can be chosen but its adoption is not required anywhere by statute. This form of county government is very closely related to the City Manager form of government at the municipal level and is often chosen because population, growth, and/or complexity of government issues within the county are seen to require a full-time professional manager/administrator to ensure efficient service provision. The County Administrator is the Chief Administrative

Officer (CAO) of the county and is appointed by the county board “solely on merit” with no weight given to residence, political affiliation, etc. The County Administrator is responsible for coordinating all administrative and management functions of the county government and appoints and supervises department heads subject to county board confirmation. The statutes provide for the County Administrator to appoint members to boards and commissions, where statutes give this authority to county board or its chairperson, subject to board confirmation but, in a practice which is not uncommon, county boards sometimes retain this authority for the Board Chairperson. The County Administrator is responsible for preparing and submitting the annual budget, which must be approved by the Board of Supervisors before it becomes official, and answers to the county Board of Supervisors as a whole, not to the county board Chairperson.

A key point here is that the County Administrator “supervises” versus “coordinates”. Those department directors, who are not elected or Constitutional officers, work for, report to, and are evaluated by the County Administrator. Through this supervisory authority, the County Administrator is expected to manage/administer the daily business of county government. The County Administrator has hiring authority (subject to county board approval) and firing authority over department heads unless that authority is revoked by local ordinance by the Board of Supervisors. However, constitutional officers and elected department heads do not fall into this category. They do not “work for” the County Administrator but must recognize his/her authority regarding coordination between departments, resource allocation, and management issues outside of the non-supervised department which require coordination and support from other county departments. Essentially, the County Administrator must foster a relationship of trust and cooperation with those officer and department heads not under his/her supervisory control to effectively manage county operations. County Administrators commonly assume additional duties, especially in smaller populated and rural counties, such as Human Resources Director, Emergency Management Director, Media Spokesperson, and even IT Director, which further exemplifies the need for a broad education and experience level for prospective County Administrators.

Administrative Coordinator. County Administrative Coordinator is the third form of county government authorized by the state legislature and is probably the most misunderstood form. The legislature has mandated that, if a county has not adopted the County Executive or County Administrator form of government, it MUST adopt the Administrative Coordinator form of government. Commonly, those counties who do not employ a full-time professional as an Administrative Coordinator comply with this statutory requirement by appointing either the County Board Chair or a department head, such as the County Clerk, with the title and duties of Administrative Coordinator, almost as an additional duty. This usually occurs in smaller, more rural counties where the coordination of county services can be managed by someone on a part-time/additional duty basis.

The duties and authority of an Administrative Coordinator are similar to that of a County Administrator but the Administrative Coordinator does not have appointment authority and “coordinates” rather than “supervises.” The Administrative Coordinator’s duties can be compared to those of a city or Village Administrator who works under a mayor or village president. A Village Administrator coordinates daily municipal operations but must defer to the Village President for final decisions on non-routine matters. The county Administrative Coordinator performs in a similar manner with the County Board Chair holding final approval authority over non-routine decisions. However, remembering that Wisconsin counties have administrative home rule authority, the position of Administrative Coordinator can be made as strong or as weak as the Board chooses via local ordinance. Although the statutes do not give the Administrative Coordinator supervisory authority over department heads, the Board of Supervisors may give a limited amount of such authority to the Administrative Coordinator under their Home Rule authority if they so wish. The Administrative Coordinator can, like the County Administrator, be assigned additional duties that need to be performed but no other staffer exists to perform them. The Administrative Coordinator reports and answers to the Board of Supervisors and the Board Chair.

When a county comes to the conclusion that it requires a full-time professional to perform the duties of either County Administrator or

Administrative Coordinator, there are a number of criteria commonly considered essential for that person to be qualified for the position. Persons selected for these positions are generally expected to possess at least a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Finance, Planning, or some other closely related field. A Master's Degree is often listed as "preferred" on advertisements for such positions. Experience in a staff position and/or as an assistant administrator or coordinator is commonly expected. Often, a period of five years of such experience before entering that primary administrative position is required. Candidates for either of these positions are routinely screened via background checks, criminal history checks, financial records checks, and reference checks prior to an offer being made for the position. A residency requirement is common in rural areas but less so in more urban areas. In short, a county with a County Administrator or full-time Administrative Coordinator should be able to count on an experienced, well-educated manager and leader to keep daily operations and service provision in order and operating at an acceptable level of efficiency while the Board of Supervisors concentrates on long-term visioning and legislation.

County Board of Supervisors. Now that we've discussed the three forms of county government provided for by the legislature via the statutes, the question arises, "How does the Board of Supervisors fit into this?" The Board of Supervisors role, as well as that of the individual supervisors, is collective and primarily legislative. There is NO operational authority vested in any individual supervisor. The County Board Chair holds operational authority when assigned the duty of Administrative Coordinator but not when there is a County Executive or County Administrator. Direction is given to the County Administrator, Administrative Coordinator, and department heads via the collective decision of the County Board, committees, and commissions via majority vote on a policy, resolution, ordinance, or simple vote for decision. The title of "Supervisor" does not denote actual supervisory authority. Individual supervisory authority over department directors occurs only in "Commission" forms of government, as noted earlier, which are not authorized in either the Wisconsin constitution or statutes. The board and supervisors direct the operations and service provision of the county through legislation (ordinances and resolutions), directives, plans (land use plans, capital

plans, etc.), and, probably most important, approving a budget. Controlling the finances is a far more effective tool for ensuring the desires of the board are met than attempting to perform on-the-ground supervision.

In reviewing the relationships in each of these forms of government, useful comparisons can be made using other levels of government and industry to better facilitate understanding. The relationship between the County Executive and the County Board can be seen largely as a local version of the same relationship as between the Governor and Legislature. The County Administrator can be easily compared to a Wisconsin City Manager working under the oversight of an elected City Council or a corporate CEO operating under the oversight of a board of directors. The relationship between an Administrative Coordinator and the Board of Supervisors is more complex because the Coordinator's level of authority is dependent upon how the Board of Supervisors view and define the position. Comparisons with a Chief of Staff or Executive Officer in higher levels of government or military organizational structure compare well in some cases. In others, it may closely mimic that of a County Administrator with just a few instances of operational authority retained at the board level.

Understanding the forms of government and the legitimate roles of elected officials, appointed officials, and staff departments is essential to good county government.