

Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration
Toledo Lucas County Public Library
325 Michigan Street
Toledo, Ohio

Minutes
August 28, 2009

The Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration meeting was called to order on August 28, 2009 at 10:40 by Chairperson Anita Lopez. A quorum was present.

In attendance:

Anita Lopez, Chair	Lynda Murray	Tom Weidman
Daniel Troy, Chair	Tim Downing	Michael Cochran
Chester Jourdan	Marty Jenkins	
Dan Foley	Jennifer Economus	

Daniel Troy moved and Tom Weidman seconded to approve the July 31, 2009 minutes. The motion was adopted unanimously.

Tim Downing reported that \$140,000 has been appropriated by the commission. The total budget for the Commission is \$160,000. The Commission has received an invoice from the John Glenn Institute for \$8,000. Mr. Downing has some questions about this invoice; he will discuss this with the Institute before recommending consideration and payment at the next Commission meeting.

Welcoming remarks by Margaret Danzinger , Deputy Director of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. TLCPL is a county-wide public library system.

University of Toledo - research project for the Commission through the John Glenn Institute. They will inventory and collect data and look at incentives and impediments for collaboration activities in Lucas County. Part of their report will include data from a survey of 156 elected officials. They have not included school boards and judges in the survey; however, they may rethink the initial exclusion of school board members. They plan to have the research completed in November. They suggested that it would be appropriate to assemble the researchers for all four authorized projects to collectively discuss the scope of their work. The Commission agreed that this would be a good idea, and urged Dave Wirick to organize such a meeting.

Questions *Responses:*

Daniel Troy - Research is focused on Lucas County. In your recommendations, are you going to look at consolidation as well as collaboration? Yes

Tim Downing - Are you going beyond incentives locally or are you going to look at state law? *I think the report will look at state law as that's where there is a lot of meat.*

Chester Jourdan - Great idea to bring the researchers together, and share the proposals electronically beforehand. Dave Wirick is doing that.

Marty Jenkins - At last hearing we had testimony from a township outside the county and village inside the county. I hope your research goes beyond the Lucas county line. *We are going to be looking at whether or not location has any impact on willingness to consolidate and collaboration.*

Mike Cochran - I think that if you are going to look at consolidation, that you look at large government entities as well as small.

Ben Konop, County Commissioner

The library is a great model of collaboration. Another model is the health department. In some ways we've been successful, and in some ways a failure. I convened a 21st Century Government Commission, labor, political entities...looking for less duplication and efficiencies. Came up with a 70 page report document, on county's web site. Government needs to raise taxes or cut services.

Some of the major recommendations were:

Improving service through regionalization. The better service that people see through regionalization, the more they support and are willing to give up some of their local control.

Joint purchasing

There are six different IT groups in Lucas County Government - cumbersome and inefficient, should have the same platforms

Lawn care cooperation opportunities

Joint city-county vehicle maintenance

Emphasize goal setting and outcome evaluation

Opportunities are there and the crisis is there. We really don't have much choice. We want to do this proactively. Regional collaboration program must support the services directly to people.

Questions *Answers:*

Tim Downing- Did study include an implementation plan? *Yes. There was a second team to do that. We identified low hanging fruit. A lot of the recommendations still remain undone*

Why did you believe you ran into a wall? How do we avoid the same mistakes? *Elected officials have egos, and sharing and giving up control is sometimes difficult for elected officials. Maybe my relationships could have been better.*

Daniel Troy - Would you say the rules of the game or the players of the game are the problem? We can try and change the rules of the game, but the Commission

can't change the players. *We only identified things that could be done within the framework of the law ...maybe we can come up with something that provides incentives to the players.*

Dan Foley - We worked on an initiative to merge 911 call centers. We would go to city councils, we got 70% to join us...95% of the people spoke out against it. I don't think that we did a good job of communicating the issues or that might not have happened. *I think that you really have to show that services improve. You need to persuade them that service improves. Originally I thought that a big project would be good, but I was persuaded that wasn't the way to go.*

Chester Jordan - What role could TMACOG play? *I'm on that committee, and they have a role to play, but the big dollars are at the county level and the city level. It's a good place to discuss issues, but money talks; big money is at county or city level. Could TMAGOG be a delivery system across some of those boundaries? Yes, possibly.*

Mike Cochran - I am impressed. Liked that it was within existing jurisdictions. What are your further thoughts on incentives? *You need tangible rewards to make this work.*

Marty Jenkins - Three tiered model local, county, regional model. Should some of these issues taken out of the hands out of people/ there are some issues that are simply geographically dictated -- water issues vs. filling a pothole. *Citizens can feel like they are losing direct control and that is a problem.*

Jim Moody - Toledo Business Owner

Daniel Troy - The issues that you've raised are really not issues that we've been assigned. The mandatory sick leave issue didn't get to the ballot. *That was because the people didn't want it. Also uni-government was soundly defeated here.*

Marilyn Yoder - Springfield Township Trustee

Daniel Troy - I think that your collaboration in law enforcement by providing township resources to help fund the sheriff's department should be a model for the state.

Chester Jordan - What would you like to do that you can't do now? *We're very prudent with our money and we're doing okay. We're living within our budget* Have you thought of combining or contracting your fire service? *Some townships do.*

Tim Downing - Any recommendations as to what we should recommend to improve governments? *I do know one thing, I don't think that there is any waste*

in township government. Townships are very efficient and we collaborate and work very closely with the citizens.

Keith Wilkowski- Joint economic development. JEDZ agreements

Daniel Troy - Income tax revenue sharing between communities is allowed isn't it? *If you are operating under JEDZ it allows commercial but not residential revenue sharing.* Commissioners throughout the state are getting a bit upset because many of these revenue sharing deals, tax increment financing (TIF's) and some abatements hold schools harmless, but exempt or redirect the money that should go to the county government general fund and entities like MRDD and ADAMHS Boards.

Marty Jenkins - Are there similar incentives or impediments? There is so much to be achieved under existing tools. *My focus has been the JEDZ statutes, but the home rule city can give to the county some of its charter authority to achieve things. Politics and the will to do so is more of the problem, not statute.*

Dan Foley - How does the incentive of JEDZ in urban areas work?. *State of Ohio designates 1 - 2% in an area to devote to services in that area.*

Dennis Tippie - Swanton Township

Tim Downing - How does the budget for Swanton \$1.7 break down? *We spend \$600,000 on roads. We have a continuing levy, and that covers our fire. We cooperate with the City of Swanton. What are the impediments in ORC? Not having continuing education requirements for elected officials. I feel if there were more education requirements that collaboration and communication would be achieved.*

Chester Jourdan - All local government are pressurized. That's not going to change. What other opportunities do we have? *Lucas Co. townships will meet with the Lucas County Port Authority and we are looking to how we can share road equipment and share parks.*

Daniel Troy - Many view the whole collaboration thing as an attempt to get rid of people. Everyone is running their own departments, and there is always fear that "my" job is going to get eliminated. How do we get more of a mentality that there needs to be a combined operation? Your thoughts? *We do contract with other governments. We are working on fire and rescue collaboration. I'm hoping to have some great success stories by the end of the year. Unfortunately, we don't have a very good working relationship with municipalities.*

Marge Brown, Mayor of Oregon

Martin Jenkins- Has UT been included in your study? *We will be talking with them*

Chester Jourdan- Can you give examples of things that have worked well, and some things that didn't? *Egos are a problem. Also unfunded mandates. We have a JEDD with Jerusalem Township*

Daniel Troy - Incentives cost tax revenues. What can we do as a disincentive? *You will loose LGF \$\$\$ if you don't work together.*

Jeanine Perry, Lucas County Recorder and Judy Nedwick, Lucas County Recorders' Association

Martin Jenkins - Would you do something differently if you were appointed as opposed to being elected? *No, I would still have integrity.*

Tim Downing - What if your position had oversight by county commissioners? *I would behave just as I do now because I have respect for the job.*

Daniel Troy – The proper recording and maintenance of property records is an extremely important function of county government. But questions arise as to whether or not purely administrative as compared to policy-making functions require separately elected officials. In my opinion, this creates situations where commissioners have all of the responsibility, but often only part of the authority to fulfill that responsibility. *I would rather answer to the people than a small body of commissioners.*

Michael Cochran - You are indicating that the elected position of recorder has an independence that allows you to instill more checks and balances? *Yes. If there was a recorder doing things illegally in office, who would you rather have remove the person, the appointing body or the people who elected them? Electorate*

Anita Lopez- There is a real importance of accountability and preservation of property records.

Michael Cochran - Would you rather have Columbus tell you that the position of recorder should be appointed, or your residents in your county? *County*

The John Glenn Institute reported that research contracts are being developed now, but that there has been no delay in starting research.

Dr. West asked that the researches get together. OSU will look at several possibilities.

Tim Downing asked if the Fund for Economic Future was included as a recipient of the information provided by the Glenn Institute. The Glenn Institute said that it has not been included, but can amend the list and include it.

Tim Downing also encouraged the Glenn Institute to provide links to the report and web site of the State of Washington. The Glenn Institute will be providing information from other states to the Commission at the September meeting, and reports from similar commissions at the October meeting.

Daniel Troy recommended that they also contact Larry Long at the CCAO.

Dan Foley asked if the subcommittees should meet on their own or through the monthly meetings. The AG's office will determine whether separate meetings or meeting via telephone would be legal.

The next meeting of the Local Government Commission will be September 25 at 10:30 AM at the Sycamore Township Community Room.

There was also discussion of scheduling the November Commission Meeting (planned for Cuyahoga County) on Friday, December 4th rather than on the last Friday in November, and then forgoing a meeting in late December. It was agreed to poll members on so adjusting the meeting schedule.

Chester Jourdan moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Tim Downing. Motion passed.