

Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Thursday, August 24, 2000 Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Indiana State Teachers Association

Conference Center

150 W. Market, Suite 200

Indianapolis, Indiana

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sheila J. Klinker announced that there was a quorum present (Attachment A) and called the meeting to order at approximately 1:40 p.m.

AGENDA

- Call to Order	Chair Sheila Klinker
- Introductions of New Commission members	Chair Sheila Klinker
- Approval of Minutes of June 21, 1999 and Discussion of Notes of November 23, 2000	Chair Sheila Klinker
- Presentation of 1999 IACIR Survey Report	John L. Krauss Jamie L. Palmer
- Update on Annexation	Jamie L. Palmer
- Presentation on Study on Growth in Central Indiana	Greg Lindsey
- Discussion of Future Commission Issues/Efforts	John L. Krauss
- Set Remaining 2000 Meeting Dates	Chair Sheila Klinker
- Adjournment	Chair Sheila Klinker

INTRODUCTIONS

Commission members and staff introduced themselves to the group, stating their affiliation and whether they were new to the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND DISCUSSION OF NOTES

Minutes of June 21, 1999 were approved by consent. The notes of the November 23, 2000 meeting were accepted.

PRESENTATION OF 1999 IACIR SURVEY REPORT

John Krauss explained that the report of the third IACIR survey of local government had been distributed to the members and additional copies were available. He then turned the meeting over to Jamie Palmer for further discussion of the results.

Ms. Palmer explained the logistics of the survey (Attachment B). The survey was mailed to all legislators, mayors, town council presidents, county commission presidents, county council presidents and school board presidents. School board presidents were included at the direction of the commission. Even though they are not part of the commission, members felt that intergovernmental relations with school corporations are important. A sample of township trustees were surveyed—two from each county or 184 total.

Questions on the survey included some from previous surveys as well as some “hot topics” identified by the Commission. Questions used previously were included in part to provide opportunities for comparison between years.

Ms. Palmer indicated that commission staff sent an original letter and survey form followed by a postcard reminding officeholders to return the survey. Those who did not return a survey within three weeks were sent an additional letter and survey form.

Ms. Palmer presented a summary of returned surveys by elected office. She indicated that 51 percent of officeholders surveyed had returned a questionnaire. This is a good response rate for a mail-in survey.

Table 1: 1999 IACIR Survey Response Rates

All Respondents	51%
Indiana Senators	46%
Indiana Representatives	35%
County Council Presidents	61%
County Commission Presidents	60%
Mayors	61%
Town Council Presidents	44%
Township Trustees	68%
School Board Presidents	45%

There were several general questions about conditions in local communities and how they are changing. Most officials were optimistic about conditions in their communities and most think community services are meeting local needs.

Survey questions asked whether 25 specific conditions in the areas of health, public safety, economics, local services and community quality of life improved, worsened or not changed in the last 12 months. For the most part, officials said these conditions had not changed in their communities. The conditions

that were reported to have changed the most in the time period were infrastructure, police-community relations, parks/open space and economic conditions and cable TV rates. The officials reported improvement in all of these areas except cable TV rates, which worsened.

Chair Klinker asked if these results are available by area of the state. Ms. Palmer responded that that analysis is not available currently, but there are results by type of office held by the respondent.

The next questions asked specifically to name the three conditions that had improved the most in their communities and which had deteriorated the most. Interestingly, some of the conditions, such as affordable housing, economic conditions and infrastructure, were selected by some officials as improving and by others as deteriorating. This reflects differences among local governments in Indiana.

The officials were asked which conditions were the most important to be addressed in the next two years. The conditions chosen the most were infrastructure, economic conditions, affordable housing and educational quality.

John Ryan asked if telecommunications was included in infrastructure. Ms. Palmer responded that in the survey "infrastructure" referred generally to roads and sewers.

Responses to questions about job and training prospects were mixed. Generally, respondents thought work training resources were adequate and work-retraining resources were inadequate.

In response to a question about most effective local government finance reform, many officials expressed concern about school and welfare funding.

Two of the "hot topics" questions concerned state customer service. Officials were asked the type of contact they had with state government and their satisfaction with the method. Then they were asked if they were going to contact state government and were unfamiliar with the appropriate office or agency which would be the preferred method. Generally, respondents were satisfied with the contact across methods. Telephone contact was utilized most. These results relate only to communication between local officials and state government, not between citizens and state government.

Officials said they would prefer a state information center or a switchboard. They want to talk to a person.

Another set of questions asked about information technology and the local officials comfort with using available technology. The results were mixed. The area which the officials thought could use the most improvement was in using information technology to contact local citizens and provide information to citizens.

The commission has shown interest in the Census in the past. The survey included a question asking local officials if they responded to the Boundary and Annexation Survey sent out by the Census and if they had formed local complete count committees. A majority of respondents said they had participated

in the BAS, but less than half reported forming complete count committees. The Indiana Business Research Center will probably be invited back in the fall to update the Commission on census participation results.

Annexation has been a primary topic for the commission. Only municipal officials were asked if they had annexed territory in 1998 and 1999. There were more than 80 annexations reported for 1998 and less than 60 in 1999. The lower number in 1999 could be the result of state legislation limiting annexations during census efforts.

Mayor John Fernandez recommended that the annexation question in the future distinguish between voluntary and involuntary annexations.

The officials were asked which level of government should be primarily responsible for a list of services: state government, local government, or should it be shared? Officials responded that state government should have primary responsibility for corrections, healthcare for the indigent and welfare. Local government should have primary responsibility for drinking water, EMS, police and fire, property tax assessments and wastewater treatment. State and local government should share responsibility for courts, economic development, information services, public education, solid waste disposal or handling, streets and roads, tax collection and workforce development.

In summary, Ms. Palmer emphasized that the items officials said would be the most important to address in the next couple of years also are areas of responsibility the officials thought should be shared by state and local government. This result supports the work of the commission to foster intergovernmental cooperation.

Representative Scholer asked if there were any major differences in the responses between years. Tami Barreto, Center policy analyst, replied that no major differences were found.

Chair Klinker asked how the survey issues were chosen. Mr. Krauss responded that the survey was modeled in part on a national survey, then input was received from other organizations, such as IACT and AIC, as well as from the commission members.

Ms. Palmer stated that the new survey would be sent out sometime after the legislative session begins. She asked Commission members to send survey question suggestions to her.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE COMMISSION ISSUES/EFFORTS

Mr. Ryan stated that 62 percent customer satisfaction with state services, as reported through the survey is not a positive result. Mr. Krauss pointed out again that this question referred to customer satisfaction by local governments. It can be assumed that government officials would be more aware of how to contact state government, so these numbers could be even lower for citizens. Mr. Ryan commented that the images of all state governments are worsening. Increasingly, state government is expected to be information specialists, and when people have to call several times and still don't get an adequate response, there is more dissatisfaction.

Chair Klinker asked if Mr. Ryan thought this should be a topic of study for the Commission. Mr. Ryan said it could be. A reference database would be helpful.

Rick Cockrum suggested there should be some type of cross reference book by issue to answer questions and indicate the appropriate agency to contact. Access Indiana and the Web also should be used. A similar document prepared several years ago could serve as a template.

Mayor Margerum pointed out that often service requests, not information requests, are made by citizens to local government.

Senator Allie Craycraft said because citizens may have trouble contacting the appropriate agency, they want to speak with a "live body."

Chair Klinker also stated that the elderly who have questions don't always have access to the Internet, so an information specialist would be helpful.

Mayor Fernandez suggested that the focus of the Commission should be on broader policy issues.

Joyce Poling suggested the commission discuss the use of the funds to the state from gambling interests. She commented that the money should go to education scholarships.

Chair Klinker responded that when the legislation was being written they didn't want education to become dependent on gambling money, but thought the funds should be used for one-time projects instead.

Chair Klinker asked the group to respond to the issue of fiscal home rule as a commission study topic.

Mayor Fernandez suggested the broader issue of local government finance would be better for the commission.

Mayors Margerum and Bart Peterson agreed with Mayor Fernandez. Mayor Margerum added that flexibility in local government finance is the key.

Sue Paris stated that several other groups already are studying this issue. Mr. Krauss suggested that the role of the commission in this area could be to pull together all the available information from other groups that already have worked on the topic.

Gerald Gilles said one of the aspects of local government finance that should be looked at is funding education with property taxes. He stated that funding schools this way is harder on rural areas.

Representative Klinker asked if the commission should work on reassessment. There was some discussion about current court cases in Indiana on the subject.

Mr. Cockrum pointed out that the problem with reassessment is less about methodology than uniformity.

Senator Zakas suggested the commission consider studying metropolitan planning organizations and road improvements.

Mayor Peterson suggested studying police and fire pension funds.

Chair Klinker asked Matt Brooks, Association of Indiana Counties and Tonya Galbraith, Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, if they had any ideas about study topics for the commission. Mr. Brooks suggested three items: development of a best practices database, fiscal home rule and excise tax distributions errors at the state level.

Ms. Galbraith also suggested fiscal home rule as a topic. She added that she will give a presentation to the Local Government Finance Study Committee on the subject and offered to give the same presentation to the Commission at a future date. Other topics Ms. Galbraith mentioned were funding road projects for longer periods than the biennium and police and fire pension funds.

UPDATE ON ANNEXATION

Ms. Palmer updated the commission on changes made to the state annexation law in the 2000 General Assembly. HB 1228 made only minor changes to the law (Attachment C). Commission staff suggested that the commission support some minor technical changes during the next session. Several technical errors prevent municipalities from being in complete compliance with the law. For example, some annexations are effective in 60 days now, but the law still provides 90 days for remonstrance.

PRESENTATION ON STUDY ON GROWTH IN INDIANA

Dr. Greg Lindsey, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, presented work-in-progress on Central Indiana and the implications for intergovernmental relations (Attachment D). The Center is conducting research on Central Indiana as defined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (44 counties). Dr. Lindsey's presentation concerned growth dynamics and land use issues.

NEXT MEETING

No subsequent meeting date was established. Mr. Krauss suggested that the meeting be set for October or November.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

APPROVAL

These minutes were approved by unanimous consent on October 19, 2000.