Indiana Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

October 26, 2006, 1:00 P.M.

10 W. Market St., Second Floor

Indianapolis, Indiana

FOCUS GROUP NOTES

Focus Group Participants: Chris Beeson (Wayne County), David Bottorff (Association of Indiana Counties), Jacque Clements (Clinton County), Rhonda Cook (Ice Miller LLP), Dax Denton (Association of Indiana Counties), Dillon Dorrell (Ohio County), Bill Haan (Indiana Association of County Commissioners), Angie Lawson (Owen County), Judy Levine (Hamilton County), Carole Maynard (Hancock County), Cheryl Musgrave (Vanderburgh County), Linda Phillips (Tippecanoe County), Terri Rethlake (St. Joseph County), Amy Roberts (Hendricks County), Shawna Schwegman (Association of Indiana Counties), Gregg Sinders (Jefferson County), and Judy Sharp (Monroe County)

IACIR Members: Martha Wehr

IACIR Staff: John Krauss, Jamie Palmer, and Debbie Wyeth

For what types of services does your community use interlocal agreements?

- Solid waste
- Emergency management/civil defense/homeland security
- Dispatch towers
- Emergency medical services (EMS)
- Central emergency dispatch and records
- Road building (extensions, intersections, etc.)
- Drains
- Cooperative purchasing
- Animal control
- Information technology (IT) services
- Bridges
- Weights and measures
- Riverboat revenue sharing
- Local Economic Development Income Tax sharing
- Shared departments and staff
- Shared facilities (built to meet multiple needs)
- Federal homeland security grants require interlocal agreements
- Regional economic development
- Collaborative Partners
    - Local governments
    - Universities
    - Non-profits such as Humane Society
    - Private sector

Are there additional services for which this tool was considered that did not result in interlocal agreements?

- Central dispatch (turf issues)
- Purchasing
- Employee health insurance (didn't provide lower cost for one party)
- Regional economic effort folded after a while; county with industrial park ended up with economic group

What was the impetus for creating the agreements that your community has entered into? What have been the primary benefits?

- Insufficient resources without collaboration
- Pooling resources
- Efficiency
- Better communication
- Easier than complete consolidation
- Funding limitations (one partner can provide capital; the other can provide staffing)
- Provide better service
- Allowed a project to proceed sooner

In cases when a local government has no agreements, an agreement was sought but not achieved, or an agreement was difficult to achieve, what were the impediments?

- Turf
- Ownership of asset
- Fear loss of community identity
- Perception of double taxation
- Policy preferences: may agree on broad concept, but cannot work out the policy details
- Union contracts
- Need for approval from the fiscal body
- Opposition from elected officials, department leadership, or staff
- Lack of understanding, comfort with tool
- Resistance to change
- Lack of trust
- Not able to sustain a service beyond the initial effort
- Low statutory cap on telephone rate for emergency dispatch
- Cooperative purchasing requires advertisement in each participating locality (SBOA rules)
- HB 1362 doesn't allow the combined entity to keep the collective levy at creation

What activities might increase the use of interlocal agreements?

- Saving money
- Successful projects
- Tie selected available resources to cooperative efforts
- Education, education, education
- Limited fiscal resources may prompt more agreements
- Create separate local boards to oversee interlocal agreements (remove politics)
- Savings cap on rates if shared resources

- Helpline (technical assistance)
- Email communication to listservs
- Online repository of all interlocal agreements to allow communities to copy and refine
- AIC Diploma session planned for early 2005
- Ability to set a uniform levy across participating units

What types of incentives would be meaningful in encouraging the use of interlocal agreements?

- Access to extra dollars
- Allow to keep savings