

October 27th, 2005
Meeting Minutes

Location

Exhibit Room, Broome County Library, 185 Court Street, Binghamton, NY

Attendance

Constituent Members: Executive Assistant Richard David, City of Binghamton;; Supervisor Margaret Turna, Town of Chenango; Supervisor Mike Marinaccio, Town of Dickinson; Supervisor Debbie Preston, Town of Conklin; Supervisor Gordon Kniffen, Town of Kirkwood; Supervisor Ed Banks, Town of Fenton; Mayor Kevin Burke, Village of Port Dickinson

Associate Members: Jim Dimascio, Greater Binghamton Coalition

Other Attendees: Louise Vanderkulk, League of Women Voters; Darcy Fauci, Broome County; Mark Carey, Village of Endicott; Richard Jones Sr., Town of Kirkwood; Jim Bukowski, Town of Vestal; Don Kumpon, Town of Dickinson; Peter A. Olevano, Town of Union; Al Buyck, Broome-Tioga BOCES; Dave Cody, Broome County

Convene

Debbie Preston convened the meeting at 4:08 PM.

Debbie acknowledged that the presence of parks representatives from various municipalities and thanked them for coming. She said that elected officials had identified parks as an important area to look at for shared services. She said that it was important to get input from the people who deal with park issues everyday.

Debbie passed out copies of the latest shared services survey results and said that she was still waiting for more. She also passed out a list of shared highway equipment that was put together by the Denver Council of Governments and suggested that the Council create something similar.

Ed Banks expressed concern that such a list and other similar efforts may not be useful since highway supervisors already work together and help each other out when needed. He suggested that there are bigger issues for the COG to deal with.

Debbie said that highways was one of the top issues that elected officials wanted to look at for shared services. She suggested that it was very important that the highway supervisors be included in the discussion and that they have input.

There was additional discussion about whether or not highway supervisors needed or wanted help in sharing services.

Darcy Fauci pointed out that there can't be anything wrong with just sharing information and putting it out there for people to use. She said that highway is the largest budget item and that if there ways to save money we need to find out what those ways are.

Mike Marinaccio said that because highway is so large we should be concerned about how it is spent. He said that sharing services between municipalities and between highway departments is not new but some informal agreements may not be technically legal. He said formality (in making agreements) is the way to go.

Debbie changed the topic to parks. She said that municipal leaders thought there were opportunities to share services for parks. Currently, the Town of Conklin shares park services with the school district and the Towns of Kirkwood, and Binghamton. Debbie asked parks representatives to share with the Council what is being shared and what opportunities might exist.

Jim Bukowski began by saying that many municipalities share services even if it is not done openly. He said that parks representatives don't really talk to each other a lot and there are opportunities to work together if they were more familiar with each other and their activities. He said that Vestal has worked with the County to do joint bidding on playground equipment and that has worked well. He suggested that if all of the municipalities bought equipment at the same time they would be able to get a better price.

Jim reiterated that getting familiar with each other's activities could help out and knowing what everyone has (as far as specialized equipment) could be useful as well. He warned that there can be problems with shared equipment if more than one municipality needs a piece of equipment at the same time.

There was discussion about the former parks organization that existed and Darcy said that the County is willing to help organize a group if it would be helpful. Jim said that some sort of organization would be helpful even if it meant just sending out a newsletter.

Jim added that every community is always short on athletic fields but that maybe through coordination and sharing there would be enough fields available.

Debbie asked what happens if some communities don't want to share and Jim responded that with the financial situation facing local municipalities that we don't have a choice.

Dave Cody asked about relationships between Vestal schools and Town of Vestal and Jim responded that the town schedules fields but recently the school district and the Town have begun working together sharing some equipment.

Jim warned that you have to figure out who is running and maintaining equipment before hand but that it can be figured out.

Dave said that the City of Binghamton uses school district fields for free.

Others noted that Conklin and Kirkwood work together well with Susquehanna Valley School District.

Jim also mentioned that volunteerism for youth recreation activities is at a low point and that coordinated campaign to organize and recruit volunteers might be helpful. He said that maybe there could be a hotline people call if they want to volunteer but don't know who to contact.

Darcy said the County would be able to help with such an effort

Debbie then asked Pete Olevano to share some ideas.

Pete said that sharing equipment only makes sense if it is for a specialized item. Mowers aren't going to get shared but tillers could be shared. He concurred with Jim that it might be good for municipalities to coordinate and share ball fields.

Don Kumpon said that Dickinson cooperates with all of the municipalities surrounding it.

Mike said formal agreements can get worked out, which is what Dickinson has done.

There was discussion about the potential benefits of joint bidding for equipment.

There was more discussion about how talking with each other generates ideas and that no matter what, municipalities need to get more efficient.

Several attendees mentioned that the County already has a list of the highway assets that each municipality has as well as personnel lists. Darcy said she would look into getting the lists.

Debbie then said that the Council should have the consultant that has been working with the County on health insurance come to the next meeting. She also said that the Council needs to have a plan for next year and that the media needs to highlight the progress that has been made.

Darcy asked if a lack of participation in the Council of Governments/shared services meetings meant that there was a lack of interest?

Ed mentioned that Fenton's new EPO health plan provides significant savings. He also expressed concern about the new elections and voting machine procedures.

Ed asked that the Council look at the impact of outdoor wood burning furnaces.

Margaret Turna suggested that some of the issues that are frequently discussed are not important to some municipalities, which may be why they don't participate.

Everyone agreed that they needed to get more information about the voting machine issue.

Gordon Kniffen said the idea of shared services is not new and that to get others to participate the Council needs to demonstrate results and show successes.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 PM.

Recorded and edited by: Jeremy Evans
Approved by: Debra A. Preston