

## Intergovernmental Cooperative Council Agenda

Washburn University Student Union

Vogel Room

September 20, 2011

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

- 1.) Introductions of new members (sign-in sheet)
- 2.) Review of May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and minutes
- 3.) Information from Commissioner Buhler and Councilman Archer on the process of planning, collaborating, and approving the merger of the Parks and Recreation Departments.
- 4.) Article from Wall Street Journal, *When Civic Mergers Don't Save Money*

### **Other topics we have discussed previously....**

- Collect data from each organization detailing the dollars spent in Shawnee County with vendors. (several lists have been collected)
- Define the core services we each provide and how those services are funded.
- Return on Investment...can we apply the concept to something specific?
- Why do we (ICC) exist? Need a brochure...history of organization and purpose. In April of 2010, the ICC adopted the following statement: ***Through the Heartland Visioning process, the Topeka and Shawnee County community has expressed its desire for local government to work cooperatively and collaboratively, resulting in quality services to citizens and responsible stewardship of public resources. Therefore, the ICC as representatives of the taxing entities in Topeka and Shawnee County, will work together to achieve results on those strategies within its authority and purview.***

**What should be our top priority or focus for 2011-2012?**

**Other ideas and topics for next agenda?**

Meeting dates:

Oct. 18, 2011

Nov. 15, 2011

Jan. 17, 2012 .....Next organization to chair ICC – Topeka, USD 501

Feb. 21, 2012

April 17, 2012

May 15, 2012

## Intergovernmental Cooperative Council Minutes

Washburn University Student Union

Vogel Room

September 20, 2011

7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

Present: Dr. Brenda Dietrich (USD 437)  
Dan Stanley (City of Topeka)  
Greg Inkmann (MTAA)  
Mike Mathes (Seaman)  
Dr. Julie Ford (USD 501)  
Hal Gardner (USD 501)  
Larry Robbins (USD 501)  
Commissioner Ted Ensley (SN County)  
Rusty Doty (Shawnee Heights)  
Dr. Martin Stessman (Shawnee Heights)  
Dan Guenther (TSCPL)  
Shelly Buhler (SN County)  
Bob Archer (City of Topeka)  
Dave Sterbenz (Tecumseh Township)  
Janlynn Nesbitt-Tucker ( Topeka Metro. Transit)  
Allyn Lockner – Community Member  
Lea Billinger– League of Women Voters  
June Windscheffel – League of Women Voters

The next meeting date is **October 18, 2011 at WU Union in the Kansas Room @ 7:30 a.m.**

### **Old Business:**

- Introductions of new members were made.
- **Merging of Parks and Recreation Departments.** City Councilman Bob Archer and County Commissioner Shelly Buhler described the process of planning, collaborating, and finally approving the merger of the Parks and Recreation Departments. The purpose of the merger was primarily to save taxpayer dollars, share services, and develop a model on how both governmental entities could work together. There is a long history of trying to merge the two Parks and Rec departments, going back 30-40 years. In 1989 there was an editorial on the topic entitled, "Right Idea". For the idea to move forward this time, both sides had to be at the table and the timing seemed to be right. There had been changes in the council membership, the Interim City Manager was very supportive, and the two Parks and Rec Directors had been around a very long time. Part of the process involved having everyone at the table to discuss the logistics of merging two departments....IT, HR, Legal Staff, Finance staff were all involved and met weekly. This was viewed as a huge opportunity to form a partnership between the city and county.

Some of the challenges have been, as you would expect, dealing with the established culture of the two departments and a “we/they” perception. A new web-site will be up and running in January or February and the operational side of the consolidated department will be a reality as of Jan. 1, 2012.

Functionally, there is a desire to preserve existing contracts and partnerships with the city and county and to use tax dollars much more efficiently. It is hoped this merger will be very successful. Bureaucracies can make life difficult.

The question was asked...How will you define success? Consolidation, in the long run, saves dollars, so those savings would signify success. It was suggested a simple comparison of expenses at the end of 2011 to expenses at the end of 2012 (comparing apples to apples) to see if there is a savings would be a sign of success. There is also an overlap in similar functions....printing, administration, equipment. In time, there should be a need for fewer personnel and the costs associated with duplicated services or functions should decrease.

- **Brochure on history and purpose of ICC.** Commissioner Ensley provided some documents from the initial Memorandum of Understanding that established the ICC. Brenda Dietrich will take that information and additional pieces from past practices and agreements and develop a draft of a brochure for the ICC to review at the next meeting.

#### **New Business**

- Brenda Dietrich distributed an article from the Wall Street Journal, August 29, 2011, *When Civic Mergers Don't Save Money*.
- Dave Sterbenz asked about how different organizations are dealing with health insurance issues. At the Township level they are discussing the cost of different plans, the number of plans offered, and the prospect of losing grandfathered status. Rusty Doty, SH Board member and a BCBS supervisor, offered some information on health reform issues, how different entities have created insurance groups, and the specifics of how a group would lose grandfathered status. Many school districts have pooled together to form insurance trusts or to buy into the state plan. The difficulty of becoming a member of the state health insurance plan is the cost of ramping up or buying into the plan or funding the cost of a full single, which is a requirement of the plan.
- Rusty offered to present on “Healthcare Reform 101” at the next ICC meeting.
- It was suggested we develop a survey of the ICC members regarding the health benefits offered by each organization. Brenda Dietrich will send out the survey and collect the information for the next meeting.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 a.m.**

