

**Jefferson County Task Force on Organization and Operations
Task Force Focus Group Workshop Session 2
May 6, 2015
10:00-12:30pm
Courthouse, Room 202**

Agenda

- Review “Proceedings Report” from Focus Group Workshop Session 1 on April 22nd
- Briefing on the Department Head Focus Group Workshop on April 27th
- Dialogue around potential areas to place emphasis (preliminary issue areas and functions to focus): See Section 5 from Proceedings Report.
- For areas of emphasis:
 - What might be some promising initiatives that could help County government functions in the future?, or
 - What do you see as actions for enhancing the effectiveness or efficiency of County government?, or
 - What are examples of actions/strategies that could be taken to significantly address the challenges or opportunities within an area of emphasis?
- Discuss potential follow-up process steps with the facilitator (including, should the “Core Group” be reconvened to work with the facilitator on process and timetable adjustments?)
- Adjourn workshop session

**Jefferson County Task Force
on
County Government Organization and Operations:
Department Head Focus Group Workshop**

**PROCEEDINGS REPORT
April 27, 2015**

Participants:

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Kathy Eisenmann
Donna Haugom
Staci Hoffman
Stacee Jensen
Rob Klotz
Brian Lamers
Joe Nehmer
Terri Palm
Jeff Parker
Carla Robinson
LeighAnn Scherer
Blair Ward
Mark Watkins
Nicole Wayd (provided input electronically)
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Proceedings Report Prepared By:
Steve Grabow, Professor and Community Development Educator
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May 5, 2015 (draft briefing version:additional input pending)

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Department Head Focus Group Workshop Session Process and Findings

-- PROMPTING/PREPARATION WORKSHEET -- Jefferson County Task Force on Organization and Operations For Department Head Input Focus Group Questions

Instructions: For each of the four focus group topic areas (Strengths, Weaknesses, Hopes and Promising Direction), list a few ideas, from your perspective, related to the current situation and desired future condition of Jefferson County government operations and/or organization. The topic area questions are posed in different ways to help prompt your thoughts (Note: You are not expected to address each question!). This exercise will prepare you for the facilitated dialogue session. This input will be compiled and shared with the Task Force to help them frame potential County issues, refine vision ideas and identify promising strategies (including potential policy recommendations) as they respond to their charge.

The intent of the dialogue session is to share and discuss ideas among the gathered department heads. If you choose to anonymously share a point or idea, please mark the comment with an asterisk (*), and submit your worksheet to me after the workshop. All are welcome to submit their worksheet to me after the workshop in order to help assure that all ideas are compiled. (We still want you at the workshop!)

Focus Group Prompting Questions and Responses

Section 1: Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

1. What do you see as strengths in the operations and/or organizational structure of Jefferson County government? and/or
2. What are positive things associated with Jefferson County government over the past few years? and/or
3. What are you pleased with or proud of when you look at accomplishments by Jefferson County Government over the past five years or so?

Staff/Work Environment

- a. Staff in general functions at a high level; not sure everyone on County Board appreciates how lucky they are.
- b. We have high level of experience in our Departments (have seen lots of changes and have helped us over the years).
- c. We do pretty well with work-life balance which can offset demands for higher salary.
- d. We have good department heads that get along very well.
- e. Proficient and efficient Administration staff; specifically with the hiring of new employees.

Leadership

- a. We have new county administrator who thinks outside the box.
- b. We have county administrator with strong leadership skills.
- c. There is a high level of transparency and open dialogue with leadership; especially helped by monthly department head meetings.
- d. Has been a real shift since 2010; leadership has moved very far ahead in building a culture where people feel respected and honored.

Governance

- a. Committees and Board works well with Departments and Staff.
- b. Have a much friendlier and productive County Board and members now (a supportive County Board).
- c. County Board is doing less micro-managing; we have more ability to run our departments and not worry about the Board; some have "our back" more now.

Financial Condition/Budget

- a. We have budget pressures but there have been strong strides in putting processes in place to give us more accountability (ex. MIS templates, Brian has many new tools to keep track of things); this keeps our Committees more informed.
- b. We have budget pressures but there have been strong strides in putting processes in place to give us more accountability (ex. MIS templates, Brian has many new tools to keep track of things); this keeps our Committees more informed.
- c. We as an employer bring many benefits which people look to (health benefits, etc.).

Location/Demographics/Economics

- a. The County has economic growth potential and Genevieve and Ben have been making strides in working with partners/companies.

Planning/Change/Decision Making

- a. Our strategic planning for emergency operations helped get us better organized and thinking about emergencies (even if painful).
- b. Several parts of the Strategic Plan are being worked on.

Communication/Relationships

- a. Impressed with the amount of collaboration among departments.

Functions

- a. The Parks Department is a strength and has gotten donations, volunteers (we can learn from Parks and strong role with the media and in the papers; something to be proud of).

Innovation

- a. Trying new initiatives like Task Force and LEAN and other.

Trust/Reputation

- a. County as a whole is very trustworthy and open-minded which makes for excellent business and working relationships.

Section 2: Weaknesses, Challenges and Concerns

1. *What do you see as weaknesses, challenges or concerns in the operations and/or organizational structure of Jefferson County government? and/or*
2. *What are concerns or challenges you see that can affect Jefferson County government and its future?*

Communication/Relationships

- a. County Board did not show up for the Department "meet and greet"; only one County Board member showed up; i.e. essentially no Board members showed up!!!(this was part of the Orientation process in April 2014) VERY FRUSTRATING!!!
- b. Committee members have not physically been to our Sheriff's Department; this is disappointing.
- c. Our annual reports: do the County Board members want to listen?
- d. Need better communication (in general).
- e. People don't hear the positives about county government; (i.e. why would smaller committees be a good thing?).
- f. Transparency is better, but there is still disconnects.
- g. We need better explanations when there are policy changes (ex. Health changes).
- h. We need better follow through (County Administrator and all).
- i. County Board is most concerned with constituents' response, but do not come and see individual departments.
- j. County Department Heads do not regularly go to County Board meetings.

Planning/Change/Decision-Making

- a. Let's use our studies that we have spent thousands of dollars on.
- b. Not sure of positives that came out of 2010 strategic plan (Exception Parks Department).
- c. Not sure if the Administration and Rules Committee is following through with recommendations.
- d. Many plans have been done (Planning and Zoning); and should be sought out when making decisions.
- e. County Board members used to be more interested in County Plans.
- f. County Board members should be informed on matters that relate to County Plans.
- g. We need more alignment with our Strategic Plan.
- h. Still have some areas very resistant to change.
- i. Needs for succession planning with all the pending retirements (we are not planning for this).

Financial Condition/Budget

- a. Not a good understanding on revenue opportunities in county (and how this impacts economic development, population and culture and land use).
- b. Now getting into a period with much less money and more programs to run.

State/County/Community and Other Governments Role

- a. Challenge of keeping up with the constant changes in laws coming from Madison; need County to fight certain agencies and Governor.
- b. We have unfunded mandates.

Trust/Reputation

- a. Still have the climate of not being as helpful as we could to other departments (Concern about not looking busy and then penalized).
- b. Fears and threats around "not being needed".

Education/Understanding

- a. Challenge of understanding and measuring impacts of decisions.

Governance/Structure

- a. County Board is fiscally conservative to a fault (Penny wise and pound foolish).

Leadership

- a. Community leadership has different perspectives than County around growth.

Location/Demographics/Economics

- a. Concern about closing of McCain Foods.

Staff/Work Environment

- a. Concerns about not having formal cost of living adjustments for those that have "topped out" of pay scale (could lose these people); we are not keeping up.

Section 3: Opportunities and Hopes

1. *What do you see as either opportunities or hopes associated with the operations and/or organizational structure of Jefferson County government? and/or*
2. *What are opportunities or hopes you have for the future of Jefferson County government or the setting of Jefferson County and its communities?*

Facilities/Infrastructure

- a. Hope to do a study of facility needs for departments (Sheriff facilities).
- b. Hope to avoid our buildings "going to hell".
- c. Hope to remedy people literally working in closets.
- d. Hope to address controversial issue of facilities.
- e. Hope that the maintenance department has capacity to complete projects that have been started.
- f. Acknowledge that our maintenance staff is overworked and understaffed!!!!!!

Communication/Relationships

- a. Hope that our communities work together better and have one direction.
- b. Hope to use media to tell our story.
- c. Hope to offset negative comments about government.
- d. Hope that the County leverages regional and local partnerships more effectively including grants and other funding.
- e. Hope for each Department to show the value of their Departments, and communicate this to our County Board members

Functions

- a. Hope that the County Board understand that they operate beyond just the budget (only County that had a drop in per capital income and an aging population; single parenthood; child poverty and poverty in general).
- b. Hope that County Board reengages with Tourism and marketing effort; we sit between the biggest areas of Wisconsin.
- c. Hope we are recognized as the "Central Park" of Wisconsin; we should say this in partnership with our communities.
- d. Hope that we follow continuity of operations input (and see value of emergency planning).
- e. Hope to have "roadmaps" for continuity of operations.

Trust/Reputation

- a. Hope that we can work on the reputation of government (they don't like us until they need us).
- b. Hope that County Board means it when they say workforce is a great asset (hope they mean it).
- c. Hope and need to establish an environment of trust if we are going to be moving into process improvement processes.
- d. Hope to continue to build the public's trust in departments by offering excellent customer service.

Education/Understanding

- a. Public does not know what we do until they need it.
- b. Hope that the public understands that the County is the "boots on the ground" level of government.
- c. Hope to be aware of unexamined assumptions!!!!

Planning/Change/Decision-Making

- a. Hope that the Task Force puts something together and implements suggestions that come out of it.
- b. Hope that our County Board can help coordinate planning (both for County and then share with communities).
- c. Hope for better planning coordination between County and communities.

Governance

- a. County Government will really need to be there for people.
- b. Hope that County Board knows its role better and the different levels of its role.

Location/Demographics/Economics

- a. Hope that profiles on the demographics of Jefferson County is better understood by our County Board.
- b. Hope we package Jefferson County as a destination.

Financial Condition/Budget

- a. Hope that money is better focused (avoid redundant projects).

Staff/Work Environment

- a. Opportunity to use community service/internships/nearly universities to help with our busy work (i.e. data library, other routine).

State/County/Community and Other Governments Role

- a. Hope that our County communities get together more regularly to share stories, remedies, just getting together.

Section 4: Promising Direction

1. *What might be an example(s) of a new or refined initiative(s) that could help your department or County government function(s) in the future?*
2. *What do you see as a promising idea(s) for enhancing the effectiveness or efficiency of your workforce and/or department?*

State/County/Community and Other Governments' Role

- a. Use our Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) to advocate for Jefferson County interests, and use Staci Hoffman, who is on the Board of Directors.
- b. Clarify how we advocate and lobby for Jefferson County interests.
- c. Clarify mechanisms to regularly engage with State legislators.
- d. Need really good advocacy to help State legislators separate budget from policy.
- e. Provide "summits" with County and Communities to help State leaders understand local situation.
- f. Hope to learn from Towns Association and their relationships with State legislators (meet quarterly with State leaders).
- g. Have a quarterly meeting with County and State leaders.
- h. Look into County working with individual communities for certain functions (i.e. purchasing, other).

Planning/Change/Decision-Making

- a. Focus on "Major Alternatives" rather than more modest details (short term savings).
- b. Use our plans in our work.
- c. We need to think beyond "budget" in decision making.
- d. As the Task Force makes decisions, they should focus on good decision making process (do not drift away from good decision making processes; too often political processes are used)
- e. Need to use good process and have good structure if the Task Force is to be successful.
- f. Need to consider major modifications to Task Force process to assure that Department Heads and those most knowledgeable about County operations have a major role in decision making.

Education/Understanding

- a. Provide training for Committee chairs to help them.
- b. Provide leadership development training for the County Board.
- c. Provide leadership development for staff too.
- d. Need to carefully consider any unintended consequences of consolidation of departments.
- e. Need high level of understanding by policy makers if department consolidation is considered.

Staff/Work Environment

- a. Figure out ways to work together as Departments (sharing positions, etc.).
- b. Provide more cross training of staff.
- c. Partner with others for a volunteer coordinating program (software, other); this is a match making program (United Way /Chambers may be involved in coordinating).
- d. Reach out to all Department Heads if the Task Force is going to consider Department consolidation.
- e. Developing new policies and procedures within departments to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the department (increasing revenues/decreasing expenditures).

Financial Condition/Budget

- a. Leverage of regional and local partnerships and grants/other funding.
- b. Leverage the private sector where we can (lots of areas to look at).
- c. Develop a new HR/Finance system and software for efficiencies among departments and to look at impacts, future budget forecasts, etc.

Governance/Structure

- a. Focus on efficiency and effectiveness of Committees rather than number of committees (if realigning committees).
- b. Start to look into ways to combine departments (no one may want to see this) in order to avoid duplicating of efforts.
- c. When or if combining, the forms and function must be carefully considered.

Communication/Relationships

- a. Look at intergovernmental cooperation.
- b. Need strong involvement of Departments if the Task Force is to be successful.
- c. Provide opportunities for the Department Heads to have high-level dialogue (like we had today) without the County Administrator (he is highly respected, but the Department Heads need this uninhibited environment at times---i.e. 3 or 4 times per year).

Functions

- a. County should work with marketing more closely and take over some of the work formerly done by the Tourism Council.

Trust/Reputation

- a. Look into "0 Tolerance" policies and procedures (ethics protocol/squeaky clean government).

Section 5: Wrap Up Questions

1. *What other comments might you have related to the operations or organization of Jefferson County government? and/or*
2. *What else would you like share as part of input to this Task Force process?*

Communication/Relationships

- a. Hope that the Task Force continues to consult closely with Department Heads; look to Department Heads to test any ideas that the Task Force comes up with.
- b. Let all Departments know when all Task Force Meeting are held and provide more structure to their meeting schedule (Next May 6 at 10 am in Room 202.).

Education/Understanding

- a. Also be vigilant on other issues that could affect us.

Innovation

- a. Provide opportunities to provide "Innovation" in county government; what are award winning programs or examples that we should at least look at.

State/County Community and Other Governments Role

- a. Keep an eye out on proposals by VA /legislative policies that could negatively affect County VA services (State taking control but not giving County money). Jefferson County needs to be vigilant. Something is rumbling in veterans issues. (Apprise WCA and others).

Section 6: Preliminary Issues and Potential Direction Summary

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

Notable areas of strengths based on frequency:

- Staff/Work Environment
- Leadership

Weaknesses, Challenges and Concerns

Notable areas of weaknesses, challenges and concerns based on frequency:

- Communication/Relationships
- Planning/Change/Decision-Making

Opportunities and Hopes

Notable areas of opportunities and hopes for the future, based on frequency:

- Facilities/Infrastructure
- Communication/Relationships
- Functions

Promising Direction

Notable areas of promising direction (new or refined initiatives; or ideas for enhancing effectiveness or efficiency of the workforce or departments), based on frequency:

- State/County/Community and Other Governments' Role
- Planning/Change/Decision-Making
- Education/Understanding
- Staff/Work Environment

Appendix

Jefferson County Task Force on Organization and Operations Department Head Input Session

April 27, 2015
1:30-4 p.m.
UW Extension, Rooms 8 & 9

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome and Intro (Ben and Steve) 30 minutes
- ❖ Jot Ideas (Refer to Prompting Worksheet) 10 minutes
(Silently fill-out worksheet.)
- ❖ Strengths 20 minutes
- ❖ Weaknesses 20 minutes
- ❖ Opportunities/Hopes 30 minutes
- ❖ Promising Direction 30 minutes
- ❖ Wrap-Up Input/Comments 15 minutes
- ❖ Emphasis * 10 minutes

(*Department Heads will need follow-up to identify areas of agreement and emphasis.)

- ❖ Adjourn

Prepared by: Steve Grabow, Professor and Community Development Educator, UW Extension, Jefferson County Office, 4/27/15.

-- PROMPTING/PREPARATION WORKSHEET --
Jefferson County Task Force on Organization and Operations
For Department Head Input
Focus Group Questions

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Focus Group Prompting Questions

Strengths, Assets and Accomplishments

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List a Few (one or two is fine):

Weaknesses, Challenges and Concerns

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Opportunities and Hopes

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Promising Direction

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List a Few (one or two is fine):

Wrap Up Questions

1. What other comments might you have related to the operations or organization of Jefferson County government? and/or
2. What else would you like share as part of input to this Task Force process?

List if you have other thoughts:

Committee Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Committee/Board Name:

Date of Meeting:

Name (Please Print)	City or Township	Person/Firm Representing	Item # or General Comment
Barb Frank			
Carla Robinson			
Stacey Jensen			
Brian Lamers			
Staci Hoffman			
Genevieve Birch			
Danna Haysom			
Blair Ward			

