

Approved January 30, 1992  
Date

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The meeting was called to order by Senator Audrey Langworthy at  
Chairperson

9:10 a.m./p~~xx~~ on January 23, 1992 in room 531-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Theresa Kiernan, Revisor of Statutes  
Mike Heim, Legislative Research  
Elizabeth Carlson, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Joe Palacios, City Manager, Hutchinson  
Commissioner Joe Stucky, Reno County  
Mayor Joan Schrag, Hutchinson  
Commissioner Frank Lipovitz, Wyandotte County

Joe Palacios, city manager, Hutchinson read from a prepared statement. (Attachment 1.) He stated that there should be willingness and cooperation instead of mandatory concepts.

Commissioner Joe Stucky, Reno County said some results have been achieved in the city-county consolidation but more consolidation is needed. He listed the number of agencies that have been consolidated in Reno County; he feels they are working toward a common goal. He said there are many ways the city and county can cooperate which would lead to some savings for the taxpayer. He is determined to cooperate to everyone's benefit.

Mayor Joan Schrag, Hutchinson, said they saw the needs and where the city and county could work together. She said it did take a long time, but they are proud of what has been accomplished. She spoke about the DARE program which has been started in Hutchinson. She also spoke about the downtown development program which has revitalized downtown Hutchinson.

Frank Lipovitz, Commissioner, Wyandotte County spoke about the interlocal agreement which has been drawn up between Kansas City and Wyandotte County. He mentioned several of the agencies which have been combined. For instance, the county is now out of road and bridge building. What has been done in Kansas City-Wyandotte County is allowed by law. They are now discussing jail services consolidation. He stated a problem is with the duplication of elected officials, particularly in the small towns. He stated one reason for consolidation is to eliminate duplication and relieve the tax burden.

Senator Montgomery spoke about the distribution of moneys and the fuel tax as a problem. Staff was requested to research information on the formula for loss of revenue.

Senator Frahm asked if the people of the counties and cities are ready for fewer elected officials. Commissioner Lipovitz said yes, he thought they are and would be supportive, but the public must be educated to this possibility.

City Manager Joe Palacios said consolidation does not cut taxes, but it does provide better and more professional services.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
room 531-N Statehouse, at 9:10 a.m./~~p.m.~~ on January 23, 1992

Senator Gaines asked if there is anything in the law that prevents the city-county from getting together, should a law be passed or can it be done now? Commissioner Lipovitz stated they can eliminate offices now and they can make changes in the structure. It has been done; however, he does not see the political will to consolidate government, but they could begin in Wyandotte county and Kansas City.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.



APPEARANCE BEFORE  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, January 23, 1992  
9:00 A.M.

Thank you very much for inviting the City of Hutchinson and Reno County to comment on intergovernmental relations and city and county relations. My name is Joe Palacios and I am the City Manager of Hutchinson, Kansas. Also, you will hear from Mayor Joan Schrag and Reno County Commission Chairman Joe Stucky.

Today we will summarize for you our existing relationships for services with and without joint funding, and our own individual comments about the big "C" word - CONSOLIDATION.

At the governmental level, we all need to take a fresh vision on the best ways to organize governmental units at the local and state level. We also need to know how governmental units can provide more and/or better services to meet the changing needs of our communities from the organizational viewpoint. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to explore non-traditional partnerships. It is of paramount importance that you provide incentives, not hindrances, for intergovernmental cooperative agreements, mergers of functional services, and consolidation of services. It is of paramount importance that you endorse the establishment of a Kansas Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, and finally, it is of paramount importance to act now, because the timing is right for new groundbreaking on the heels of reappraisal and reclassification, federal mandates without funding mechanism, to reduce the need for establishing more special districts and to maximize the use of local resources. To sum it up, we as citizens of Kansas need to strengthen the capability for intergovernmental cooperation and restructuring through legislative means to respond to the demand of local services as well as those issues that are much broader from a regional point of view.

*Attachment 1-1  
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It is very important that willingness, cooperation, consensus-building and bridge-building concepts are used instead of mandatory concepts. Incentives must be developed and nurtured.

Now, Mr. Stuckey will discuss with you some of our intergovernmental relationships between the City and the County and Mayor Schrag will summarize the WSU report on intergovernmental relationships.

attachment 1-2  
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