



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

LOCAL SERVICE CONSOLIDATION

Room 411 South
State Capitol

December 14, 2010
10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

[The following is a summary of the December 14, 2010 meeting of the Special Committee on Local Service Consolidation. The file copy of this summary has appended to it a copy of each document prepared for or submitted to the committee during the meeting. A digital recording of the meeting is available on our Web site at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc>.]

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Zepnick called the committee to order. The roll was called and a quorum was present.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rep. Josh Zepnick, Chair; Rep. Mark Gottlieb, Vice-Chair; Rep. Jeff Stone; and Public Members Debra Amesqua, Allan Bilbao, Ron Chamberlain, Tina Cruse, Joseph Czarnezki, Ken Hartje, Chuck Hicklin, William Mielke, Mark Nicolini, and Michael Woodzicka.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED: Rep. Mark Pocan; and Public Members Richard Abelson, Dennis Dresang, Joe Heim, and Dennis O'Loughlin.

COUNCIL STAFF PRESENT: Scott Grosz, Melissa Schmidt, and Jessica Karls-Ruplinger, Staff Attorneys.

Approval of the Minutes of the Committee's November 10, 2010 Meeting

Representative Gottlieb moved, seconded by Mr. Mielke, that the minutes of the committee's November 10, 2010 meeting be approved. The motion passed on a voice vote.

<p>*ATTENTION: This was the final meeting of the Special Committee on Local Service Consolidation. Committee members are requested to send any corrections regarding these Minutes to the Legislative Council staff. After the incorporation of any corrections, these Minutes will be considered approved by the committee.</p>

Discussion of Committee Assignment

WLC: 0001/1, relating to county and municipal expenditures for emergency services

Jessica Karls-Ruplinger provided a description of the draft, noting that the contents of WLC: 0001/1 remained the same since discussion of the draft at the November 10, 2010, committee meeting. Chair Zepnick indicated that the vote to recommend this draft would occur by mail ballot.

WLC: 0002/1, relating to different property tax levy rates for parts of cities, villages, towns, counties, and school districts added by attachments to school districts, consolidations, and boundary changes under cooperative agreements (first consideration)

Scott Grosz described the draft, noting that the contents of WLC: 0002/1 had not changed since discussion of the draft at the previous committee meeting. Chair Zepnick indicated that the vote to recommend this draft would occur by mail ballot.

WLC: 0004/1, relating to loans to implement the consolidation, or cooperation for the provision, of local governmental unit services or the consolidation of local governmental units

Jessica Karls-Ruplinger described the draft, highlighting the differences between the first version of the draft, WLC: 0004/P1, and the current version, WLC: 0004/1. In particular, Ms. Karls-Ruplinger noted three sections of the draft in need of attention from the committee, relating to funding of the loan program under the draft, interest on loans made under the draft, and the scope of audit and review of loans made under the draft. In addition, committee members offered their feedback on the draft. Mr. Mielke suggested amending the draft to require both communities involved in an effort to consolidate or cooperate to sign on to a loan made under the draft. Representative Gottlieb expressed concerns with the shift of appropriations from the expenditure restraint program (ERP) to the loan program proposed by the draft. He noted that participants in the expenditure restraint program may feel it is inappropriate to take money from that program in order to fund a loan program that could provide loans to communities that are not eligible for the ERP. Representative Gottlieb suggested the deletion of the transfer of money from the ERP. He also suggested that the committee could propose creation of the loan program, but leave its funding to future steps in the legislative process.

Mr. Hartje suggested the inclusion of sovereign nations in the definition of local governmental unit. Chair Zepnick asked the Legislative Council staff to conduct additional research on this option. Mr. Mielke opposed the removal of language relating to the study of consolidation and cooperation and suggested clarification of the activities that would be permitted to be funded by a loan under the program proposed by the draft. Representative Gottlieb suggested an option to include the study of consolidation and cooperation but to require the Department of Administration to give preference to implementation. Ms. Amesqua questioned whether a notion of “study” could be included in the definition of “implementation.” Chair Zepnick noted that it should be the committee’s intent to loan money only when there is a real expectation of achieving consolidation or cooperation. Ms. Amesqua reminded the committee that abuse of the program was unlikely, since the program offered loans (which have to be paid back) rather than grants.

Representative Stone offered the suggestion that the committee may look to the Board of Commissioners on Public Lands as a source of funding or administration for the loan program, noting

that it was unrealistic to draw on general purpose revenue to fund the program. Representative Stone also suggested the use of the mail ballot to revise the draft. Mr. Bilbao agreed with Mr. Hartje's earlier suggestion regarding sovereign nations as well as Mr. Mielke's suggestion regarding signatories to loans made under the program. Mr. Hicklin reiterated the suggestion to define "implementation."

Chair Zepnick ended the discussion on WLC: 0004/1 with instructions to committee members to send any additional revision requests to Legislative Council staff. He noted that he would review the requests and decide on the contents of the mail ballot.

WLC: 0019/2, relating to an exception to county and municipal levy limits for expenditures related to the implementation of service consolidation or cooperation or the implementation of political subdivision consolidation

Melissa Schmidt described the draft, highlighting the differences between the first version of the draft, WLC: 0019/1, and the current version, WLC: 0019/2. Chair Zepnick noted that Representative Gottlieb had expressed certain concerns with the drafts relating to exceptions from levy and revenue limits. Mr. Chamberlain emphasized the importance of the exception from the levy limit, noting that municipal budgets are tight and that, in many cases, no consideration of consolidation or cooperation would occur without the exceptions.

WLC: 0043/1, relating to an exception to school district revenue limits for expenditures related to the implementation of service consolidation or cooperation, or to the implementation of school district consolidation

Scott Grosz described the draft and compared WLC: 0043/1 to the previously discussed draft, WLC: 0019/2. Ms. Cruse reiterated Mr. Chamberlain's comments regarding the previous draft, noting that the similar budget challenges exist for school districts.

In consideration of the shared subject matter, the committee reached consensus to combine WLC: 0019/2 and WLC 0043/1 into a single draft prior to a mail ballot vote.

Other Business

Prior to the committee's discussion of bill drafts, Mr. Hartje raised concerns regarding the differences in statutory language regarding the fire protection obligations between certain local governmental units, explained in Memo No. 2, and expressed an interest in revising the statutes to align statutory language on these obligations. Chair Zepnick thanked Mr. Hartje for his interest in the topic but noted that the committee would focus its efforts on the proposals listed on the agenda.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

SG:ksm