

# Chapter Eight

## Intergovernmental Cooperation

The issue of intergovernmental cooperation is increasingly important; since many issues cross over political boundaries, such as watersheds, labor force, commuter patterns, and housing. Communities are not independent of each other, but rather dependent on each other. The effects from growth and change on one spill over to all surrounding communities and impact the region as a whole.

### Overview

Wisconsin Statute §66.30, entitled “Intergovernmental Cooperation”, does enable local governments to jointly do together whatever one can do alone. Unfortunately, there is little public policy in Wisconsin law that encourages, let alone requires, horizontal governmental relationships such as town to town and municipality to county or town. The result is that towns, municipalities, and counties act more as adversaries than as partners.

Statewide, Wisconsin has more than 2,500 units of government and special purpose districts. Having so many governmental units allows for local representation, but also adds more players to the decision-making process. In general terms, intergovernmental cooperation is any arrangement by which officials of two or more jurisdictions coordinate plans, policies, and programs to address and resolve issues of mutual interest. It can be as simple as communication and information sharing, or it can involve entering into formal intergovernmental agreements and sharing resources such as equipment, buildings, staff, and revenue.

As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another’s needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them. Intergovernmental cooperation makes sense for many reasons including trust, cost savings, consistency, and ability to address regional issues. Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust between jurisdictions. It can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. It can lead to consistency of goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of neighboring communities. Finally, by communicating and coordinating their actions and working with regional and state jurisdictions, local communities are able to address and resolve issues that are regional in nature.

The major beneficiary of intergovernmental cooperation is the local resident. They may not understand, or even care about, the details of a particular intergovernmental issue, but residents can appreciate their benefits, such as cost savings, provision of needed services, a healthy environment, and a strong economy.

A variety of factors, some long-standing and others more recent, have brought the issue of intergovernmental cooperation to the forefront. Some of these factors include:

- Local government's financial situation;
- Opportunity to reduce costs by working together;
- Elimination of duplication of services;
- Population settlement patterns and population mobility; and
- Economic and environmental interdependence.

In addition, as more jurisdictions create and implement comprehensive plans and share them with surrounding communities, new opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation will be identified.

## **Intergovernmental Relationships**

Currently, the Village of Marathon City has numerous relationships and several general agreements in place. The following is a summary of existing and potential cooperative efforts.

### **Surrounding Communities**

The Marathon City Fire Department provides fire protection and/or EMS services to portions of many neighboring communities including the Towns of Cassel, Marathon, Mosinee, Rib Falls, and Stettin. The Village has an agreement with the Village of Edgar for the provision of ambulance services and first responders. In the future, the Village may house local EMT and ambulance services. The Fire Department has mutual aid arrangements with other local fire departments and participates in the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) Division 130, which covers Marathon County. As a MABAS agency, the Department agrees to standards of operation, incident command, minimum level of equipment staffing, safety, and on-scene terminology, allowing agencies to work together seamlessly on any emergency scene.

### **Marathon County**

Marathon County provides several services to the Village. The County Highway Department maintains and plows County and State highways within the Village. The County Sheriff manages the public safety Communications Center which provides 911 dispatch service for police, fire, and ambulance/EMS response. The Marathon County Public Library maintains a branch location in the Village. The County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department maintains a county-wide park system and county forest system for the use and enjoyment of all County residents.

In many cases where state and federal agencies require area-wide planning for various programs or regulations, Marathon County sponsors a county-wide planning effort to complete these plans and include each individual local unit in the process and resulting final plan. Examples of this include the County Outdoor Recreation Plan which maintains the eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administered park and recreation development funding of each local unit that adopts it, and All Hazard Mitigation Plans which are required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in order for individual local units of government to qualify for certain types of disaster assistance funding.

## North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was formed under §60.0309 Wis. Stats. as a voluntary association of governments within a ten-county area. Marathon County is a member of the NCWRPC, which qualifies the Village for low-cost local planning assistance. Typical functions of the NCWRPC include (but are not limited to) land use, transportation, economic development, intergovernmental and geographic information systems (GIS) planning and services.

## State and Federal Government

The Wisconsin departments of Natural Resources and Transportation are the primary agencies the Village might deal with regarding development activities. Many of the goals and objectives of this plan will require continued cooperation and coordination with these agencies.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources takes a lead role in wildlife protection and sustainable management of woodlands, wetland, lakes, and other wildlife habitat areas, while Wisconsin Department of Transportation is responsible for the planning and development of state highways, railways, airports, and other transportation systems. State agencies make a number of grant and aid programs available to local units of government like the Village of Marathon City. Examples include local road aids, the Local Roads Improvement Plan (LRIP), and the Priority Watershed Program. There are also a number of mandates passed down from the state that the Village must comply with, such as the biannual pavement rating submission for the Wisconsin Information System for Local Roads (WISLR).

Most federal programs are administered by the states, so the Village would be dealing with the responsible state agency with regard to federal programs and regulations.

## School Districts

The Village of Marathon City is served by the Marathon School District. The Marathon School District operates a 4K-5 grade elementary school, a 6-8 grade middle school, and a 9-12 grade high school. St. Mary's School is a 4k-8 grade parochial school located within the Village.

## Post-Secondary Education

- **Northcentral Technical College (NTC)** – located in Wausau, NTC has over 190 program offerings including two-year associates degrees that combine technical skills with general education. NTC also offers one- and two-year technical diplomas concentrated on hands-on learning and short-term certificates to improve job skills. NTC also has a transfer credit program with the UW school system.
- **Mid-State Technical College** – located in Marshfield, is one of 16 regional colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College system, with campuses in Adams, Marshfield, Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Rapids. They offer associate degrees, technical diplomas, and certificates in a wide variety of high demand fields.

- **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point (UWSP)** – located in the City of Stevens Point, UWSP was founded in 1894. When combined with its satellite campuses in Wausau and Marshfield, total enrollment is over 8,000. The campus offers 80 baccalaureate degrees, 17 graduate programs, and 90 minors, and is known for its robust fine arts and natural resources programs.
- **University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point at Wausau** – offers courses leading to a baccalaureate degree. They also offer graduate degrees including Master of Business Administration (MBA), Physician Assistant (in partnership with UW Madison), and Master’s Degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (in partnership with Northern Vermont University).
- **University of Wisconsin Stevens Point (UWSP) at Marshfield** – located in Marshfield, students can work toward a variety of bachelor’s degree options including business administration, nursing, and social work.

## Programs

**66.0301 – Intergovernmental Cooperation:** Wisconsin Statute §66.0301 permits local agreements between the state, cities, villages, towns, counties, regional planning commissions, and certain special districts, including school districts, public library systems, public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts, sanitary districts, farm drainage districts, metropolitan sewerage districts, and sewer utility districts, Indian tribes or bands, and others.

Intergovernmental agreements prepared in accordance with §66.0301, formerly §66.30, are the most common forms of agreement and have been used by communities for years, often in the context of sharing public services such as police, fire, or rescue. This type of agreement can also be used to provide for revenue sharing, determine future land use within a subject area, and to set temporary municipal boundaries. However, the statute does not require planning as a component of any agreement and boundary changes have to be accomplished through the normal annexation process.

**66.0305 – Municipal Revenue Sharing:** Wisconsin Statute, §66.0305, Municipal Revenue Sharing, gives authority to cities, villages, and towns to enter into agreements to share revenue from taxes and special charges with each other. The agreements may also address other matters, including agreements regarding services to be provided or the location of municipal boundaries.

Boundaries of the shared revenue area must be specified in the agreement and the term of the agreement must be for at least ten years. The agreement must specify the formula or other means for sharing revenue, the date of payment of revenues, and the means by which the agreement may be invalidated after the minimum 10-year period.

## Goals, Objectives & Policies

**Intergovernmental Cooperation Goal:** *The Village of Marathon City is a cooperative and collaborative partner with other units of government and organizations to most effectively and efficiently provide services to residents.*

1. Establish and maintain good working relationships with other units of government including adjoining towns, Marathon County, the State of Wisconsin, and the federal government.
  - a. Promote communication between the Village and other governmental entities.
  - b. Periodically review existing shared services agreements and explore additional agreements which would benefit the Village.
  - c. Increase interaction with pertinent agencies to address specific local strategies like economic development expansion.

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