

## Introduction

County government serves two purposes. It provides certain services at the local level for the state, and it is also a unit of local self-government. Although counties do not engage in activities not specifically authorized by statute, they have a great deal of latitude in the way in which services are actually provided. Chapter 59 of State Statutes is dedicated to the structure and function of county government.

State Statute provides county government with flexibility in service provision through:

§59.03 Home rule. (1) Administrative Home Rule. Every county may exercise any organizational or administrative power, subject only to the constitution and to any enactment of the legislature which is of statewide concern and which uniformly affects every county.

This allows the county to structure operations in the administrative manner in which it deems appropriate and offers for local decision making. It is within this context that Eau Claire County defines its mission in serving the people of Eau Claire County.

### EAU CLAIRE COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

“To provide quality, innovative and cost-effective services that safeguard and enhance the well-being of residents and resources.”

This mission is accomplished through the provision of a wide array of programs and services. The annual county budget serves as a good starting point for detailed information regarding the services provided by the county. It has financial data as well as narratives describing functional and programmatic goals and plans.

### **County Government Structure**

State statute is also the basis for the structure of county government. Wisconsin Statutes §59.01 creates county government as a body corporate; delineates maximum board size, the duties and powers of the board in its legislative role; as well as options for managing the day to day operations. County government has the option of having a County Executive, Administrator, or Administrative Coordinator.

Eau Claire County has chosen to organize with an appointed Administrator.

## County Departments

The Board of Supervisors provides policy oversight to County Officers and Departments.

<u>Elected County Officials</u>	<u>Appointed Department Heads</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Circuit Court Judges</li><li>- Clerk of Circuit Courts</li><li>- County Clerk</li><li>- County Treasurer</li><li>- District Attorney</li><li>- Register of Deeds</li><li>- Sheriff</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Aging &amp; Disability Resource Center</li><li>- Children's Court Services</li><li>- Corporation Counsel/Child Support</li><li>- County Administrator</li><li>- Facilities</li><li>- Finance</li><li>- Highway</li><li>- Human Resources</li><li>- Human Services</li><li>- Information Systems</li><li>- Planning &amp; Development</li><li>- Purchasing</li><li>- Register in Probate</li><li>- Veteran Services</li></ul>

Effective governance is based on mutual understanding and respect for each other's position and viewpoint. Leadership responsibility can easily become confused and controversial when roles are not understood.

In Eau Claire County the Board provides leadership through the creation of the vision, mission, and overall strategic plan for county governance. The will of the Board is communicated through its role in creating policy. The three ways in which the Board develops policy are resolutions, ordinances, and the yearly budget. The Administrator takes the operational and administrative leadership role on behalf of the Board.

The following table labeled "*The Model Relationship Between Council and Staff*", from the International Journal of Public Administration details expectations and obligations between the governing body (Board of Supervisors) and staff.

Although written to highlight relationships with a city council the premise holds true for county government and provides a basis for understanding the roles and relationships of board and staff. When staff and board work together as a team the County as an organization is able to flourish.

## THE MODEL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNCIL AND STAFF

<b>What the governing body expects from the staff</b>	<b>What the staff expects from the governing body</b>
No surprises	Broad policy direction as opposed to involvement in day-to-day decisions
Communicate in lay terms	Respectful consideration for professional judgment and the staff personally
Be conscious of community values and sensitive to them	Trust that staff's motives are oriented towards the public good
Make sound recommendations (reliable, professional, factual, unemotional)	Provide freedom and resources to carry out our mission
Demonstrate commitment to the organization and the community	Speak as a body
Understand the value of citizen trust of our local government	
<b>Obligations of the governing body to the staff. What will the governing body contribute to the staff?</b>	<b>Obligations of the staff to the governing body. What will the staff contribute to the governing body?</b>
Back up the staff	Do our job skillfully and with integrity
Trust staff's recommendations	Provide the best professional recommendations
Respect staff expertise, training, and knowledge	Encourage community input
Provide latitude in carrying out goals	Maintain a professional demeanor
Educate the community	Demonstrate our commitment to the city and community
Communicate our priorities as a body	Identify policy issues and take them to the governing body
	Be responsive to governing body needs and requests
	Provide the best practices and benchmark with high quality peer institutions
	Provide a range of options and explain consequences of policy recommendations
	Educate the council

## County Board

A key role of the county board is how they define the culture of the organization, by setting the standard for acceptable behavior. Courteous, respectful interactions within the organization foster an environment where innovation and creativity thrive.

Supervisors serve a legislative function which includes policy making, law making, budgetary approval, and cooperative decision-making. It is important to note that no operational control resides with individual Supervisors. Supervisory authority is collective versus individual. Individual Supervisors have no management or leadership role outside of committees and commissions; their authority is collective as a member of the board.

The work of the Board is accomplished through committees, whose focus is policy development. The policy making process is an integrated process that includes input from department heads, constituencies and stakeholders through committee processes. Committees working collaboratively with staff develop policy initiatives, and then make recommendations to the board as a whole through the use of resolutions, ordinances, and the budget.

A primary role of committees includes providing oversight of departments to assure that departmental staff are managing such that the mission, vision and goals that were developed by the committees and County Board are being met. Tools to assist committee members in this role include reporting from department managers of progress toward goals, tallies of service outputs, progress toward key outcomes (collectively referred to as performance measurement).

### **A Board Member's Approach to the Job**

*One of the reasons a board member's job is so difficult is that "the job" is essentially a group responsibility. In fact, it is hard to discuss how an individual is to approach a group task. Yet each board member has a responsibility to come with an effective mind-set, to carry out his or her part of preparation and participation and to take responsibility for the group. These are not always easy tasks. Here is some advice on the frame of mind and individual preparations necessary for any board member to play an effective role in creating a productive board. (This advice is adapted from Your Roles and Responsibilities as a Board Member, Carver Guide No. 2, pp. 13-17.)*

**1** Be prepared to participate responsibly. Do your homework. Come prepared to work (sometimes the work is to listen) agree and disagree as your values dictate and accept the group decision as legitimate even if not – in your opinion – correct. It is not acceptable, for example to have opinions but not express them.

**2** Remember that your identity is with the entire ownership, not with the staff or with a single constituency of the ownership. If you identify too closely with staff, you run the risk that you might be talking to them more than to those who you should be in ongoing conversation with: the owners. Be a microcosm of your ownership, not a shadow of the staff. And even though you may personally identify with certain constituencies of the ownership more than others, as a board member you represent the entire ownership. There is no way a board can be big enough to have a spokesperson for every legitimate interest, so in a moral sense you must stand for them all.

**3** Be responsible for group behavior and productivity. Although doing your own job as a single board member is important, you must also shoulder the potentially unfamiliar burden of being responsible for the group. If you are part of a group that doesn't get its job done, meddles in administration or breaks its own rules, you are culpable.

**4** Be a proactive board member. You are not a board member to hear reports. You are a board member to make governance decisions. Although it may be necessary at times to get data through reports, don't let that cast you in a passive role. Even when you are receiving education, do so as an active participant, searching doggedly for the wisdom that will enable good board decisions.

**5** Honor divergent opinions without being intimidated by them. You are obligated to register your honest opinion on issues the board takes up, but other board members are obligated to speak up as well. Encourage your colleagues to express their opinions without allowing your own to be submerged by those who are louder or more insistent.

**6** Use your special expertise to inform your colleagues' wisdom. For example, a board member who is an accountant can certainly help board members understand what financial jeopardy looks like or what indicators of financial health to watch carefully. He or she shouldn't however, assume personal responsibility for ensuring financial soundness.

**7** Tolerate issues that cannot be settled quickly. Resolving short-term concrete matters may give you a feeling of completion but is likely to involve you in the wrong issues.

**8** Don't tolerate putting off the big issues forever. The really big issues will often be too intimidating for you to resolve comfortably. Yet putting off a decision is itself a decision. Don't tolerate board inaction as a form of decision making.

**9** Support the board's final choice. No matter which way you voted, you are obligated to support the board's choice. This obligation doesn't mean you must pretend to agree with that choice. What you must support is the legitimacy of the choice that you still don't agree with.

**10** Don't mistake form for substance. Don't confuse having a public relations committee with having good public relations. Don't confuse having financial reports with having sound finances. Don't confuse having a token constituent board member with having sufficient input.

**11** Remember that the organization is not there for you. Being an owner representative is very different from seeing the organization as your personal possession. The organization does not exist to satisfy board members' needs to feel useful, self-actualized, involved or entertained. Your job is to faithfully serve the ownership of the organization.

**12** Support the chair in board discipline. Although the board as a whole is responsible for its own discipline, it will have charged the chair with a special role in the group's confronting its own process. Don't make the chair's job harder; ask rather what you can do to make it easier.

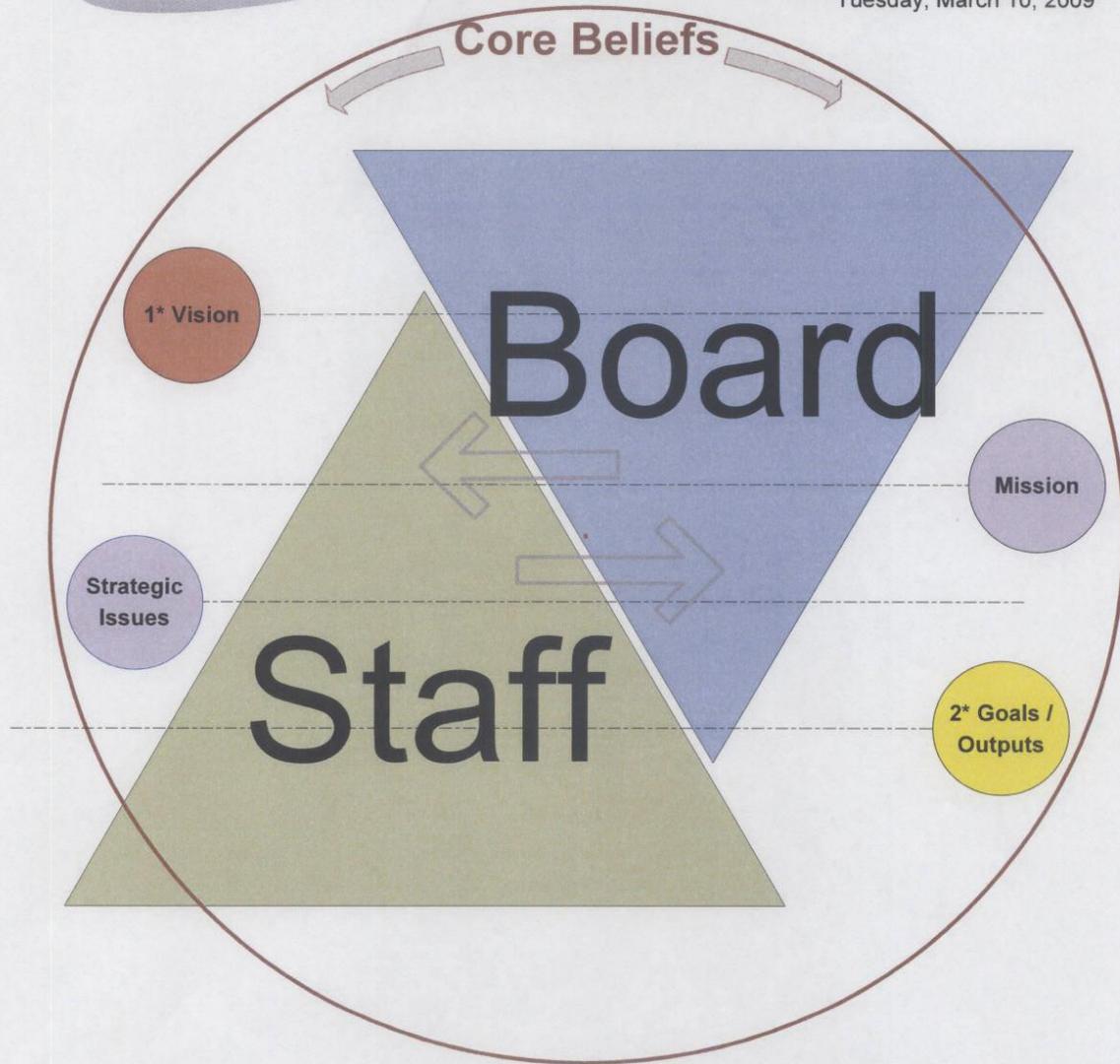
**To summarize, the basic functions of the County Board are:**

- Involve and represent the public
- Set policies
- Regulate
- Oversee County operations
- Provide services
- Levy taxes
- Cooperate with other governments
- Be accountable to the public

**A comparison of the policy role of the Board versus the operational focus of staff is summarized below.**

- | <b>Policy</b><br><i>(Board)</i>  | <b>Operational</b><br><i>(Departments &amp; Staff)</i>   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Related to overall mission and purpose</li><li>• Addresses key issues</li><li>• Strategy development</li><li>• Longer term</li><li>• Requires vision</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Day to day operations</li><li>• Related to smaller functions</li><li>• Addresses department or individual issues</li><li>• Implementation of policies and strategies</li><li>• Shorter term</li><li>• Requires attention to detail</li></ul> |

The graphic on the following page provides a visual representation of the integrated process of policy making - beginning with development of the strategic plan, which directs the priorities of the organization. This provides direction for the budget process and allocation of resources to meet the organizations strategic need.



**\*An Integrated approach through process:**

1. - Staff provides input on Vision as an informed specialist / stakeholder
2. - Board provides guidance on desired outcomes to define a successful program

## **Communications**

All County Board members have a physical mailbox located in the County Clerk's office on third floor. Any time the building is open, you have access to this mailbox. Please check it frequently as it may contain correspondence and information that is not time sensitive. In addition, you will be issued an Ipad that will be used for reviewing agendas, agenda packets and email. You will also be issued a county email account. Please use the county address for all county business situations.

## **Compensation**

Each supervisor shall be paid a per diem of \$30.00 for each committee or county board meeting he or she attends, except for committee meetings scheduled within 1 hour prior to a county board meeting or held during a county board recess. No per diem shall be allowed to any supervisor for attending the meeting of a committee to which he or she has not been appointed as provided by resolution or ordinance unless the chair of the committee certifies in writing that his or her attendance was requested. Any supervisor failing to answer at least half of all roll call votes at any meeting of the board shall be considered absent for per diem payment

The compensation for each member of the county board shall be paid monthly by the county treasurer on the payroll date falling no earlier than the 7th day but not later than the 20th day of each month as follows:

- Chair: \$4,675 per year at \$389.58 per month
- First vice chair: \$1,836 per year at \$153 per month
- All others: \$1,326 per year at \$110.50 per month;

All compensation will be made through direct deposit once a month\*

**County board mileage allowance.** Each supervisor shall, for each day he or she attends a meeting of the board or for attendance at not to exceed 2 committee meetings in any 1 day, receive a mileage allowance for each mile traveled in going to and returning from the meeting by the most usual traveled route at the rate established in the Employee Policy Manual as the standard mileage allowance; but subject to the limitations in the Employee Policy Manual for out-of-county committee meetings. The standard mileage allowance shall be paid to any county supervisor who travels to a meeting, which is cancelled due to a lack of a quorum.

(samples of forms are located on the county board resources page for reviewing and printing)

## **Meals**

Meals will be reimbursed if the employee is attending an approved meeting, convention or seminar (unless the meal(s) are included in the convention costs). The claim for meals will represent actual, reasonable and necessary costs expended for meals, not to exceed the following including tax and 20% maximum tip.

- Breakfast.       Maximum of \$8 for trips requiring the employee to leave before 6 a.m.
- Lunch.            Maximum of \$10 for trips requiring the employee to leave before 11:30 a.m. and return after 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner.           Maximum of \$20 for trips requiring the employee to leave before 4:30 p.m. and return after 6:30 p.m.

Maximum daily total of \$38.

Receipts are required for all meal reimbursement requests .

No reimbursement will be made for the cost or tip on alcoholic beverages.

**Claiming Reimbursement of Authorized Expenditures.** All claims for reimbursement of authorized expenses must be submitted within 30 days on a Travel and Expense Reimbursement Form provided by the Finance Department. (see copy)

## **Meeting Schedule**

The County Board meets at 7 p.m. in the Eau Claire County Board Room Chambers (Room 1277) as follows:

2 meetings per month (First & Third Tuesdays) of March, April, May\*, Oct., November and December  
1 meeting per month (Third Tuesday) of January, February, June, July August and September

\*At one or both regularly scheduled county board meetings in May in even numbered years, there will be a county board working session to consider and review the strategic plan. Said meetings will commence at 5 p.m. with the county board meeting to follow at 7 p.m.

The meeting on the Tuesday after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of November in each year shall be the annual meeting at which time the board shall conduct a public hearing on and thereafter adopt the county budget and tax levy for the ensuing fiscal year. The only exception to this is if Veterans Day falls on the Tuesday after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of November, then the board will move it's meeting to the following day.

## **Agendas**

Agendas are created and posted in compliance with the Open Meetings law <sup>(1)</sup>. To meet the mandatory posting requirements agendas are published in the official county newspaper and posted at two separate locations within the Eau Claire County Courthouse.

Agendas are distributed with supplementary documentation to supervisors who serve on various committees in advance of the meeting, and agendas are posted electronically on the Eau Claire County Website at [www.co.Eau Claire.wi.us](http://www.co.Eau Claire.wi.us) as a courtesy to constituents.

## **Minutes**

Meeting minutes are also subject to Open Meetings / Records requirements. Typically, minutes of a previous meeting are approved at the subsequent meeting of the governmental body. Draft minutes are distributed to supervisors serving on the committee for review and approval. Draft minutes are subject to the open records requirements and are available upon request.

After minutes are *approved* they are officially posted with the County Clerk, and electronically posted on the Eau Claire County website as a courtesy to constituents.

Minutes only reflect action taken. They are not a summary of dialog and discussion.

**Additional queries regarding agendas or minutes should be directed to the County Clerk.**

<sup>(1)</sup> Wisconsin State Statutes, Chapter 19, General Duties of Public Officials; Subchapter V, Open Meetings of Governmental Bodies; specifically, §19.83, §19.84, and §19.85.

## ROLE OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### AGENDA

- ✓ Chairperson is responsible for the agenda. *Staff assist in physical preparation and assist in bringing potential agenda items to the attention of the Chair.* The agenda and amendments to the agenda should be approved by the Chair.
- ✓ Members may place items on agenda.

### RUNNING THE MEETING

- ✓ Chairperson has all the rights of participation, including making and seconding motions, and voting.
- ✓ Chairperson is responsible for administering the group's deliberations.
- ✓ Announces issues and keeps members on track.
- ✓ Restates motions for clarity.
- ✓ Recognizes members.
- ✓ Seeks balance.
- ✓ Enforces group's rules.
- ✓ Asks for votes on each side and announces outcome.
- ✓ Responds to requests.
- ✓ Rules on points of order.
- ✓ Maintains decorum.
- ✓ Keeps the discussion centered on the listed agenda topics.

### PRE-MEETING AND FOLLOW-UP (*can be designated to staff*)

- ✓ Notifies Board Chairperson of appointments.
- ✓ Is notified by committee members when they are unavailable for scheduled meetings.

### SOURCES

A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure for Local Governments in Wisconsin. Larry Larmer. 1998

Wisconsin County Supervisor's Handbook. Wisconsin Counties Association. 2004

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Madison, WI 53703