



# Richland County Administrator's Office

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To: Richland County Board — Marty Brewer; Chair

Subject: Notes and Report from the WCA 2022 Legislative Exchange

## **03 Feb 2022 — Executive, Administrator and Coordinator Meeting:**

Discussion on Protective Placement - A work group to study protective placement expenditures is being assembled from Northwest members with hopes of working with WCHSA and WCEA to work out a unified recommendation on state funding for some of the expenses associated with crisis placement. More to follow.

Discussion on Ground Water Initiative — Chippewa and Keweenaw counties will be working with the association to bring a ground water educational session to Stevens Point sometime in the next few months. Details to follow.

Presentation from Boston Mutual — Partners with WCA in providing voluntary employee benefits packages. They are approaching counties again with an opportunity for counties to join with peers in waived required medical examinations.

Presentation from Johnson Controls — Solicitation for consideration when undertaking safety, security, air quality, design or HVAC projects.

Presentation from Wisconsin Policy Forum — Referenced their recently released “Dollar for Dollar” study focused on municipality and county revenue sources in context to historic changes in revenue share with the state, and in comparison to other states revenue designs. <https://wispolicyforum.org/research/dollar-for-dollar-where-does-wisconsin-rank-in-local-government-spending/>

Round Table Discussion: Notable statements from other Executives, Administrators or Coordinators:

1. Use the tools you have: Wheel-tax exception, “Emergency Medical Services Exception?” share Services and Consolidate with other county or municipality, prioritize services and control expenditures

(Note: follow up with Adam from Sheboygan County on comment on Levy Exception for Joint Emergency Medical Services Exception, what does this mean. Can dispatch and ambulance be considered under this?) May allow for an exception to levy limits to displace emergency services operation expenses. It has not been explored and Adam feels it may be a tool to consider, though it would come at increased property tax as a revenue.

2. Expressed concerns with underfunding or not funding state mandated services. Imposed local expenses regarding the court was discussed in length. Discussion was had on reflecting on population demographics and changes and adjusting services to meet projected needs.
3. Discussion was had on the limited state support that comes to the county for jail and police operations in contrast to other states. (Referenced slide from Forum Presentation)

A reminder was given that if you have requests for legislative priorities, make a proposal through WCEA secretary, Administrator Larry Bierke, Iowa County.

### **08 February 2022 – Exchange, Day #1**

**Opening Remarks** — Welcome and promotional video of WCA accomplishments. Emphasis given on lobbying and legislative efforts. Welcome from CEO Mark Graham.

Jeff Meyers, Wisc. Politics: and Charles Franklin, Marquette University with the Marquette polling organization: **Discussion on politics.** National picture: unemployment down, COVID-19 down, wages are up – Why is President Biden's' polling numbers down? 1) Afghanistan withdrawal. 2) 3) Inability to move agenda with two majorities. 4) Opposition party sees the economy as bad condition; there is no movement towards economic upturn on either party voters. The President's Party historically always loses legislative seats; and the correlation and linkage to state seats is increasing = nationalization of elections. It's harder for representatives to carve out an identity separate from national party identity. Does the famous Wisconsin Independent Exist? Truly independent electorate is about 10% without party identification or leaning towards a party. Several questions were taken from the audience regarding polarization on items like: masking mandates, election fraud, etc.

### **Coffee Talk with the Governor —**

Governor Evers stated he was honored in taking on the role. The Governor takes the garbage out of the Wisconsin Executive Residence. Most proud achievements in last three years? Impacts on public education. Proud of low unemployment rate. Acknowledgement of all the public health workers. We have lowered taxes in Wisconsin. We have brought broadband to 350,000 households. At a National Governors Convention Governor Evers talked with a foreign ambassador that made the observation that the rest of the world is watching the U.S. as the example and case study for the existence of our form of government in context of polarization.

Regret from the last 3 years; more support for public health. Parting thoughts: take care of your public health workers.

## **Comments from Mark Graham —**

Leadership perspective: Life Lessons of the Graham House

1. An opportunity to make your case. Example of son trying to make a case for going to the movies on a school night. Teach child, or teach subordinates that making a case for a desire/action. Leadership can change their minds and position.
2. Don't let people make decisions you know they will regret: Example: Child that wanted to quit violin. Sometimes you let the child make a mistake, other times you don't because you know they will regret it.
3. Control your perspective. Moving Rocks: Identifying that you have little say in what you want to do. The children only have ability to control their perspective and how they felt about it.

Motivation with use of: Hope Anger, Fear or Greed but it requires the individuals decision to allow the influence.

People: 10% are negative, 10% are positive, and 80% are influential. Don't spend 90% of your efforts on 10% of the negatives, they won't be a part of the team. The 80% in the middle is who you are trying to get moving and on your team. One of those ways is relating to the qualities and attributes as a leader.

Exercise: List: The audience provided:

Attributes that you like in other people: honesty, compassion, sincere, confident, morale, respectful, kind, forgiving, optimistic, forward thinking, open minded, courteous, good looking, communicator,

Attributes we don't like: self-serving, self-centered, lying, negative, vindictive, volatile, close-minded, deceitful, unorganized, passive-aggressive, inconsistent, narcissistic, bullying, incompetent,

Question: If we demonstrate these qualities, will people find us as an attractive leader?

Question: If these are the qualities we want to display, then why don't we choose to always display these? Answer, we are human and we will fail on occasion.

The challenge: take ten of the positive qualities that you are not, but wish you were – and ten of the negatives you are and wish you were not; and

Take one hopeful quality and in the morning challenge yourself to be patient and commit to it. "I am not patient, but today I am going to be." Do it for two weeks.

Take one negative and in the morning challenge yourself, “I am a vindictive person, but today I am not.” Do it for two weeks.

### **Legislative Exchange – (Kyle, Dan, Marcy, Chelsea)**

Review of current legislative session. Promoting local officials reaching out directly to WCA team. That means a lot.

Themes of legislative session:

1. Fractured State: Legislative majority and Governor Office doesn't communicate
2. Despite that they moved some big legislation
3. Federal funds: Cares Act and ARPA
4. Requirements for K12 (70%) matching for other initiatives
5. Continual movements on elections// election reform, audits, efforts to decertify.
6. The rainy day funds are highest it has ever been

Reality:

1. Came together to pass a state budget on a bipartisan nature
2. 132 bills have passed
3. 25 bills awaiting – may reach close to 200 by the end of the session
4. State policy on pharmaceutical change bi-partisan
5. Opioid Settlement was bi-partisan
6. Shovel ready projects for local roads
7. 911 funding was included
8. State funding for subsidized guardianship

Left out, hasn't been solved yet in this session:

1. Redistricting – awaiting final maps
2. Taxed cuts (Governor wants K12 and tax cuts) probably won't yet this session
3. Likely state tax overhaul in early next session – language with tax cuts
4. Justice Gablemen Findings probably won't be published until next session
5. Wisconsin Relator Bills will likely not make it though this session, WCA opposes 8/10

Non-legislative Items of Note:

- 1) Brown County Sales Tax Court Ruling; awaiting court decision to see implications on other counties. 2) Final Ruling on ARPA funds – 3) redistricting for state and federal maps – 4) Federal Vaccination Mandates –

Bills:

Power plant decommissioning — transition from coal to renewable (solar and wind). What happens when plant decommissions and aid payments begin 5 year phase out:

The bill: 1) defines decommission

Regional Planning Commissions: provides property tax exemption for these orgs to rent space to incubator businesses.

Tax Proceeds: from tax deed property. Share proceeds with owner. All like homestead properties.

Subsidized Guardianship – Highlights of the new program. When program came out it was supposed to be cost neutral for counties. The popularity to the program puts more expenditures on counties. AB503/SB491 became Act 32 : funds will be released to county through a method yet to be determined.

Mental Health: Providing services in least restrictive environment, the Emergency Mental Health Services Program / Crisis Line has to be available 24/7. Part of this is the emergency detention of a person deemed to be a threat (Chapter 51). Crisis across the state are increasing but options for placement is very limited. Grants can be obtained through DHS for criteria of “reducing the number of emergency detentions in inpatient facilities.” WCA is looking for feedback on how each county would best use these funds.

Judicial and Public Safety:

Body Worn Cameras – AB 335 creates a grant program for purchase of units (cameras, storage of data, retrieval of data) one camera with data = estimated costs of \$5,000 for 5 year of life.

Law enforcement Package – attempt to increase the number of officers while increasing compensation to retain. ARPA funds from the state would give a bonus payment.

Mandatory Minimum for Retail Theft AB829: minimum of 180 days sentencing for third offense.

Next Gen 911 and GIS: SB673 grant program for counties. DMA would have the primary responsibility. Currently is spread out across, DMA, DOA, and DHS. This bill has intentions of what we need to move forward with Spillman GIS module. Awaiting Governor to sign the legislation. How long before funds become available?

Protective Status for Jailors: Legislation may be represented to include, there may be efforts from WCA to meet in the middle on WRS and other entitlements.

Transportation and Public Works —

SB509/AB507

Flagger Rights: They can report an egregious driving condition. Flagger can report and the law enforcement can issue. It's based on license and not the driver. Challenges against it.

Green Light SB508/ AB

Study of adding the neon/caution green to highway vehicles. = impact on our trucks if we have to repaint.

Electric Charging Stations: SB573/AB588

In order to have this you need to be a utility. Convenience stores and gas stores want to do this. The bill allows them to offer at a charge. One amendment is to preempt local governments from being able to do this activity. CONCERNS on preemption. Bill will likely pass but face veto.

Questions:

Any efforts by WCA to push state surplus into transportation? Answer: not really.

Question: Allowing electors to conduct elections rather than local elected officials? Answer, most bills are dead on arrival.

Question: Are there any bills on childcare appropriations or EMS services? Answer, optimistic it will be part of the conversation. Sarah will be working with some counties on trying to study the Wisconsin issue to report to Feds on solutions for grant process. EMS – there is a bill out there.

### **Connection Wisconsin / “Wisconsin Tomorrow”—**

Business community is in a different place than before, we get and keep workers if we don't have communities with services they need and want. What we do in the next few weeks sets the tempo for the next generations.

Vision:

Problem/Opportunity: We don't have enough workers, families and people. They pay for public services.

Goal: Slides presented were very small print and illegible.

Recommendations: 8 areas in which appropriation of ARPA funds could be used to help us compete / investment into these areas = more attraction.

1. Workforce Recruitment and Retention
2. Broadband
3. Early Childhood Care and Education
4. Housing
5. Transportation
6. Healthcare
7. Rural Resurgence
8. Energy
9. Community Quality of Life and Opportunity

My concern = State level problem of balancing “hope” before now in policy and expenditures. Probably need 1) a realistic future vision and a hopeful vision, 2) need to map both outlooks, 3) decide on decision points to obtain visions in-between, 4) reasonably decide

### **Forward Thinking, Dale —**

Solar energy (Green Energy) may increase future financial sustainability of family farms. Farms from 2000 to 2035 will see a leveling loss of family farms. Agra-Solar farms like in Japan and owners plant under the panels.

Projection 2035: 40% of sales will be electric cars.

Projection 2035: 40% of energy consumption will be from solar. (Where does this leave gas tax and revenues for roads?)

Projection 2035: Everyone in the state has broadband.

Projection 2035: Delivering Education through more teleconferencing format = multiple districts and regions connecting with teachers remote with local assistants.

Projection: Population decline has leveled with older population trends more north by 2035.

Rural School populations continue to fall: plateau declines by 2035.

Projection: Remote work will help the north and rural areas retain families because they can seek high wages without relocation.

Projections: Stabilization of population decline. Increased diversity at 45.2%.

Projections: Unstained model of overreliance on property taxes, shifts to ... encouragement for more towards sales tax with local governments allowed to impose more sales tax. [how do we administer this]. Broadened taxes on services like barber.

Mark and Dale took some hypothetical questions from the floor.

Clint's Concern: the Visionary transition from lower property tax offset by higher sales tax may not help counties like Richland as many of our homes are second homes. We will lose revenue on them that may not be offset by sales with the transit owners that live there. Other concerns are I'm not convinced we have more folks coming in to purchase vs. our residents traveling outside to purchase. Report this concern to WCA. This will need more study. I will communicate with northern counties to further understand their thoughts.

### **Legal Questions, Andy Philips —**

Encouraging Strategic Development in the next three months, develop a program to invest time into the new board to get new members of the Board. Partake in COWS

training through WCA. Look out to resources, contact Andy and WCA to have them come in to give a perspective on what they think it takes to get business done.

Opioid Settlement: Reminder that litigation still remains with manufacturers and retailers. Only settled with distributors.

Immigration efforts: what does it take financially to bring in a foreign workforce? Recommendation to get an immigration Lawyer. Attolis does not handle it.

Opioid Settlement: How are expenditures going to be tracked to ensure compliance? Answer: we have to follow the list of approved expenditures. Andy's goal was to make it broad. It's all on the front end. There is no current legal review by the settlement, equals back-end audit. However, through the legislator the state took action to ensure that it is separated by fund. If necessary, the State reserves right to audit.

What can a Board do to stop a supervisor with poor behavior? Make rules (code of conduct) and enforce. Subject by removal under Chapter 17. For cause. A county Board has the ability to censor (public shaming) a supervisor, if you have rules you could unseat them from Chair or Committee. A resolution to take a statement that you don't agree. You can also start a recall drive.

Suggestion that new supervisors understand a quorum and a walking quorum. What constitutes a walking quorum? A walking quorum can be a majority number of a minimum quorum needed for the body. Reality: the more you try to understand how a vote is going to go prior to the meeting, the more danger you may be in.

Question: How should counties handle being asked to take positions on political type issues? (Example: Gun Sanctuary, Abortion, etc.) The county is an extension of the state. The County can make proclamations on positions but can't contradict state or federal laws.

### **Investment of Assets — John Huber from PMA**

The Pandemic followed two recessions. Spoke on social factors that are impacting investments. Civil unrest, violent crime and global fear of terrorism. Point being: feelings are real and can drive investing. Overall impacts is that there is a growing lack of social trust in the economy. Gun sales up and trust in media down.

Point:

1. Stop weaponizing our discourse
2. Wealth gap is growing: the have's and have nots = this is globalization

Growing political polarization = does this grow with wealth gap?

The doomsday clock - feeling of always ticking.

Bottom line: social unrest correlation with distrust in investing and the market.



## 09 February 2022– Exchange, Day #2

### **Legislative Conversation —**

Question for legislators: Assembly and Senate Speakers and Leaders

What should we do with revenue surplus?

- Tax rebate, reduction in income tax rate.
- More to local government support.
- School funding.
- Keep as a surplus in not knowing impacts from inflation and raised ceiling
- Investment in childcare

Some political bantering, but relatively mild finger pointing. Some promising exchanges on pointing out commonalities the relationship between Senator LeMauhieu and Senator Bewley. Ending praise for local government.

Further understanding in relationships in Madison, but did not take away actionable information.

### **The Association Perspective —**

Why is association work to important (context on industries)?

- Associations bring the efforts together in a common direction.
- Advocacy and cenergy
- Approaching legislation with a unified recommendation and sorting out the interests. Almost as a sub-committee of the public body.

Further understanding in relationships between the groups and their advocacy and lobbying, but did not take away actionable information. Example, medical field interest and impacts regarding crisis intervention, emergency detention, and law enforcement.

No actionable information.

### **Roads and Jobs —**

Discussion on “how do we ready infrastructure for the future”?

Study suggestion: electric vehicles and smart fees may bring on less carpooling, more vehicles and many of them will not have drivers. Gas tax is used as a subrogated user service fee. “How do you fund transportation”? Gas tax will be significantly reduced. Option: 1) user fee (vehicle miles, or toll) or 2) state sales, state income tax. DOT secretary and Milwaukee Executive.

Political Debate —

Review on candidates for State and Federal candidates. Insights and opinions on outlooks on elections. No actionable information.

Sincerely,  
Clinton Langreck  
County Administrator