

8.0 INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION/COORDINATION

Overview

Intergovernmental cooperation/coordination may be defined as verbal or adopted arrangements between two or more units of government to facilitate achievement of common goals and laws or to further common interests. These arrangements are useful as the town implements its comprehensive plan because they facilitate efficient use of services along common municipal boundaries. There are two types of intergovernmental agreements used by towns that may be helpful in comprehensive plan implementation; cooperative boundary agreements and intergovernmental cooperation agreements, authorized under section 66.0231, 66.0233 and 66.0303 respectively, of the Wisconsin Statutes.

School District

The Town helps fund two school districts being Chippewa Falls and Bloomer. The Chippewa Valley Technical College also gets funds from the Town. The people in the Town are able to take advantage of the expertise and technical assistance from the Chippewa Valley Technical College which is located in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation funds and maintains US Hwy 53, which runs north and south through the entire Town.

The Chippewa County Highway Department provides funding to build and maintain County Roads B, C, F, HH, N, S, and Q within the Town.

Existing Areas of Cooperation/Coordination

Existing cooperative agreements fall under Section 66.0303 of the state statutes. This type of agreement allows any municipality to contract with another municipality for services or to exercise joint power of duties. The term “municipality” in section 66.0303 refers to State, counties, cities, villages, towns, school districts, sanitary districts, public library systems, regional planning commissions, and other governmental and quasi-governmental entities. The requirements of Section 66.0303 are minimal and are intended to be liberally interpreted among the agencies involved. Agreements under section 66.0303 are often undertaken for common provision of essential public services such as solid waste management, police and fire protection, public libraries and public transit. Intergovernmental cooperation should be undertaken whenever an opportunity exists to provide essential public services and achieve economy of scale, which reduces the cost of such public services.

Chippewa County provides law enforcement and judicial services, emergency planning and communications, public health, nursing, human services, soil conservation services, zoning administration, solid waste and recreational facilities.

The Chippewa County Highway Department and the Town work cooperatively regarding the PASER Program, which is a highway rating and evaluation system; bridge petition program and LRIP which is a Local Road Improvement Program. The town and county highway departments have also worked out agreements regarding road maintenance such as paving, seal coating and crack filling.

The Town provides fire services to the community through their own fire department. It should be noted that a mutual aid agreement was recently signed among all fire departments within Chippewa County.

Ambulance service is provided to the Town through agreements with the Chippewa Falls Fire & Emergency Service and the Bloomer Ambulance Service. Service areas have been defined to provide citizens with a reasonable response time from both agencies. It should be noted that the Town is a partial owner of the Bloomer Ambulance Service.

The Town currently works with five other units of government (four towns and Chippewa County) regarding road maintenance agreements. The Town exchanges work on small sections of roads with the Towns of Howard, Eagle Point, Wheaton and Woodmohr. Work primarily includes snowplowing and ditch mowing.

The Town works cooperatively and coordinates with Chippewa County on its recycling program. By doing so, grant funds are obtained to help support this service.

The Town presently shares the cost of publication fees with the Town of Eagle Point for election notices. This saves money for both municipalities.

Areas to Explore for Additional Cooperation

The Town of Tilden should explore how intergovernmental coordination and cooperation with surrounding towns, the City of Chippewa Falls, Chippewa County and other governmental agencies might help to meet the town's goals, objectives and policies. Other areas of cooperation would be to continue to explore road maintenance options to efficiently use staff and equipment.

The Town of Tilden's definition of coordination requires agencies to give prior and early notice of any plan or action to us, to take under consideration any plan or policy in order to determine whether there is inconsistency between other governmental entities position to them, consider alternatives of action which would resolve any inconsistencies between government entities and to make every practical effort to resolve those inconsistencies unless prohibited by law.

Process to Resolve Conflicts

Sometimes the Town may address intergovernmental issues and find out that neighboring communities have different visions and ideas. Many techniques exist to resolve conflicts and the Town should consider using mediation first to resolve a dispute. A mediated outcome is often more favored by both sides of the disputing parties, settled faster and costs less than a prolonged lawsuit.

If mediation does not resolve the dispute, there are more formal dispute resolution techniques that may be able to end the conflict. The following are a list of different techniques:

- Binding arbitration
- Non-binding arbitration
- Early neutral evaluation
- Focus group
- Mini-trial
- Moderated settlement conference
- Summery jury trial

Dispute resolution techniques are usually used to resolve conflicts and tense situations, but they can also be used to avoid conflict. It may be easier in the long run to prevent disputes, thus avoiding the time, trouble and expense of resolving the dispute, by maintaining open communication. Presently no conflicts exist with other governmental units. Unwritten but enduring agreements between other municipalities offer testimony to the strong possibility of creating ongoing, trusting relationships. Through both continuing and improved communications, potential conflicts should be minimized or avoided.