

7. Intergovernmental Cooperation

Introduction

Intergovernmental Cooperation is critical to well-planned County government operations. Local government has limited resources, so collaborating whenever possible is in the interest of all.

The Intergovernmental Cooperation Element provides information regarding the status of relationships between Bayfield County, local, tribal, regional, state, and federal jurisdictions, and guidance on how to enhance them. The Element concludes with a systematic conflict resolution process, should intergovernmental conflict arise in the future.

All requests for assistance and cooperation should be given a high level of consideration. Bayfield County will encourage and promote regular and frequent opportunities for interagency collaboration at all levels. This will include:

- Participation at bi-monthly Towns Association meetings
- Quarterly Tribal County Relations meetings
- Semi-annual city, village, and school district meetings
- Annual meetings with state and federal agencies operating in Bayfield County
- Regular communications with state and federal legislators

Bayfield County commits to providing serious review and consideration to all intergovernmental requests.

Existing Relationships

Relationships exist at varying levels between school districts, municipalities, county and state and federal agencies, and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The incorporation of frequent and regular intergovernmental meetings designed to develop collaborative plans and agreements will enhance the relationship of the County with adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions and ensure effective and efficient delivery of government services. Enhanced communication and collaboration will result in additional mutually beneficial intergovernmental agreements.

Adjacent Jurisdictions

Bayfield County strives to maintain a cooperative relationship with all units of government. Bayfield County and all entities benefit from increased dialogue and collaboration. Existing and future land use activities and community facility development planning are good opportunities for units of government to collaborate. As the need to provide services to a growing and changing population, cooperative relationships between the County, municipalities and federal and state agencies are beneficial. This is especially important in workforce housing development. Housing is increasingly expensive and limiting the regions' ability to attract high quality workforce

applicants to the area. This is not just a Bayfield County issue. Populations between Bayfield and Ashland County cross county lines on a daily basis.

The topic of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has become a very serious intergovernmental issue in Bayfield County. EMS is statutorily a municipal issue. However, when a Countywide EMS is formed, County spending authority is exempt from the levy lid. Bayfield County has 10 EMS agencies serving the County (including the recently established Countywide EMS). These agencies meet the emergency medical service needs of the region every day. The historic commitment and dedication of responders is exemplary. More recently, however, the ability for these agencies to recruit and retain responders has been more challenging. Together, municipalities and the county must come together to problem solve for this critical, lifesaving service.

Tribal Nation: Bayfield County has a special relationship with the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Bayfield County recognizes the Sovereignty and Treaty Rights of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Bayfield County and Red Cliff have a strong history of collaboration including land repatriation, law enforcement, health departments, protection of water, and food sharing. The future goal is to continue and improve upon these collaborative efforts using the County/Tribal Relations Committee or direct communications as needed.

Schools

The County works collaboratively with school districts. Actions to enhance the collaboration with school districts are identified.

County and Regional Agencies

Under Wisconsin's comprehensive planning legislation, each regional planning commission must also develop a Comprehensive Plan. Under this law, regional planning commissions will be responsible for developing and enhancing the relationship of the County with all adjoining and overlapping jurisdictions.

The Bayfield County Comprehensive Plan is a plan that takes on a regional aspect. In development of this regional plan, it is important the County and jurisdictions serving the County be solicited for input.

In addition to housing, water quality is a topic area impacting all jurisdictions and one ranked above all others. This topic area has far reaching implications as it relates to all governmental agencies and the services they provide. This topic area demands attention at future intergovernmental meetings.

State and Federal Agencies

Bayfield County communities have strong and ongoing relationships with all State of Wisconsin agencies including but not limited to the:

- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
- Wisconsin Department of Administration
- Wisconsin Housing & Economic Development Authority
- Wisconsin Economic Development Association
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Bayfield County interacts with these agencies during the annual Superior Days event in Madison and throughout the year on a specific project basis.

In addition to state agencies, Bayfield County works very closely with both the National Park Service and the USDA Forest Service. The Park Service operates the Apostle Island National Lakeshore. The Chequamegon National Forest manages over 270,000 acres of forest lands within Bayfield County.

The County and the USDA Forest Service work together on all hazard emergencies like floods, wildfire, and wind events. The County, State, National Park Service and National Forest have plans in place to address disaster response.

Open communication and participation in land use and transportation decisions remains an important priority for intergovernmental cooperation in the future.

Agreements

The following list of intergovernmental agreements is not all-inclusive, but provides a general list of agreements and collaborations between Bayfield County and surrounding jurisdictions.

- Bayfield County, State of Wisconsin, National Forest: timber sale agreement with Bayfield County Foresters providing assistance on sales
- Bayfield County, LaPointe, City of Ashland: Ice angel cost share
- Bayfield County Forestry: Road maintenance assistance for town forest roads
- Bayfield Countywide Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Bayfield County Libraries and cost sharing agreements with adjacent county libraries per state statute 425
- Bayfield County Collaborations with cities and towns, assisting with grant applications, most recently, WEDC grant applications by County for individual businesses (Wild Rice, St. Johns Social)

- City of Washburn: ARPA cost sharing/partnership arrangements for sewer reroute for business expansion in City
- County facility backup generator service offerings to municipalities during power outages
- Bayfield County and Red Cliff: Tribal County intergovernmental agreements regarding lands
- Bayfield County: sharing of facilities
- Bayfield County, City of Washburn: Housing Development, County Lands within the City of Washburn.
- Bayfield County, Ashland County: Human Services and Child Services agreements for joint assistance
- Bayfield County, Ashland County, City of Ashland; CODY Law Enforcement Records Management Agreement
- Bayfield County, Ashland County: Joint 911 dispatch
- Law Enforcement collaborations
- Highway Department Collaborations
- Bayfield County and Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center

Existing and Potential Conflicts

According to the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Element shall identify existing and potential conflicts between Bayfield County and other governmental units. While the list may not be fully representative of all conflicts, it does identify the major conflicts between Bayfield County and other local units of government.

Existing Conflicts

- Statutory limits on certain service agreements.

Potential Conflicts

- Unwillingness/hesitancy to transfer services to another entity.

Conflict Resolution

Should intergovernmental conflict arise in the future, it will be important to have a systematic process in place to resolve these disputes in a manner that is efficient, respectful, and mutually beneficial.

- 1. Internal Resolution**
- 2. Mediation**
- 3. Binding or non-binding arbitration**

Intergovernmental Cooperation Programs

There are many ways communities can cooperate. The following programs or actions were taken directly from the Intergovernmental Cooperation Guide published by the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

- **Voluntary Assistance**
- **Trading Services**
- **Renting Equipment**
- **Contracting**
- **Routing County Services**
- **Sharing Municipal Staff**
- **Consolidating Services**
- **Joint Use of a Facility**
- **Joint Purchase and Ownership of Equipment**
- **Cooperative Purchasing**

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