



## STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION

Resolution No. 07 - 16

### RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY OPPOSE THE UW-COOPERTIVE MULTI-COUNTY REORGANIZATION PLAN

1           This resolution is presented to the County Board to state Chippewa County's formal  
2 opposition to the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization plan currently being  
3 proposed by the Chancellor of UW Colleges and UW-Extension to reorganize UW Extension. If  
4 approved, this resolution will be provided to the governor, legislators and other statewide  
5 officials to express Chippewa County's opposition to the plan.

6           County Administrator Frank Pascarella is requesting that Chippewa County oppose this  
7 reorganization plan for a number of reasons. First, the budget reduction target being sought by  
8 the State is \$1.2 million and that does not justify unilateral action by the Chancellor. In  
9 addition, counties have been excluded from the process of developing a response to the  
10 revenue reduction, instead of being engaged as partners to consider all options to share the  
11 costs. Further, the reorganization plan imposes drastic changes to the current UW Extension  
12 system, while actually adding bureaucracy. The plan reduces flexibility, decreases local  
13 relevance and removes accountability to elected officials, partners and participants. Also, larger  
14 counties are more likely to bare a larger burden for unreimbursed support services including  
15 Information Technology, Human Resources and Financial administration, while smaller counties  
16 are more likely to receive less service than urban centers as more time is devoted to the travel  
17 required to cover a larger geographic area. Finally, a multi-county UW Extension system of  
18 shared faculty being proposed is not sustainable because it jeopardizes the continuation of the  
19 county levy support for UW-Extension, since Counties are unlikely to continue the current level  
20 of tax levy support to pay for reduced services.

21

**RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY OPPOSE THE UW-COOPERTIVE MULTI-COUNTY REORGANIZATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the process used to develop the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization plan was flawed, not transparent, provided little opportunity for meaningful consideration of county concerns, including asking counties for options to address any share of revenue shortfall that is used to justify the imposition of the plan, and raises many unanswered questions; and

WHEREAS, the plan for reorganization likely jeopardizes the partnership between the UW-System and Wisconsin Counties, which implies working together to find solutions, not simply accepting a plan unilaterally imposed by a decision of the Chancellor of UW Colleges and UW-Extension; and

WHEREAS, the current Cooperative Extension system has a proven track record of success for more than 100 years as a single county-based model for governance, locally set levy contribution and individual county determined educational programming priorities under the policy guidance of each County Extension Committee designated by the elected County Board; and

WHEREAS, the reduction target allocated by the plan to Cooperative Extension of \$1.2 million annually, is about 5.8% of the Total \$20.46 million county levy support for Extension by the 72 counties, and does not justify the complete dismantling of the current county-based Cooperative Extension system when there are multiple options to address the budget shortfall; and

WHEREAS, Chippewa County’s share of the budget decrease would be approximately \$18,788 per year which equals 8.07% of annual tax levy support; and

WHEREAS, there are up to 40 current faculty/academic staff educator vacancies within the system, providing sufficient savings to allow for an inclusive examination of cost saving options with counties engaged as full partners, to consider whether individual counties are willing to contribute their proportionate share of the revenue decrease, or identify other non-levy revenue or expenditure reductions to make up their share of the shortfall allocated to Cooperative Extension by each county; and

WHEREAS, the reorganization plan imposes drastic and reckless changes on the current system, eliminating 80 local faculty education positions, a reduction of nearly 50% in direct education staff, while adding an unnecessary bureaucratic layer of at least 18 “area-leader-director” positions who will not provide any face-to-face service and will not be accountable to local elected officials, community partners, program priorities, community needs, volunteers,

66 funders or participants; and

67

68 WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties are unlikely to continue the current level of county tax  
69 levy support in future years if direct educational services are decreased by up to 50%, thereby  
70 making the proposed multi-county educational delivery structure financially unsustainable;

71

72 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board does hereby  
73 oppose the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization Plan approved by  
74 Chancellor Cathy Sandeen on February 10, 2016; and

75

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County Board calls upon University  
77 System President Ray Cross and the UW-Board of Regents to direct the Chancellor of UW  
78 Colleges and UW Cooperative Extension to retract all portions of the plan imposing a multi-  
79 county system on County/Tribal Extension offices and engage county/tribes as equal partners  
80 to consider individual county options to address their share of the \$1.2 million reduction target,  
81 approximately 21 cents per capita state-wide, which is equal to 1.93% of \$62,071,049 total  
82 state/federal direct and indirect support plus County Extension tax levies, while maintaining the  
83 current County Extension system; and

84

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Chippewa County is not willing to continue providing  
86 local tax levy funding at the current level if direct educational faculty services are decreased by  
87 up to 50% as described in the plan, while eliminating accountability to the County Extension  
88 Committee and County Board; and

89

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chippewa County UW-Extension Department  
91 Director and Chippewa County Administrator are hereby directed to provide input to the UW-  
92 System regarding local concerns about the detrimental impact of the proposed multi-county  
93 reorganization plan from the local partner organizations and program participants and  
94 volunteers in the four program areas: Agriculture, 4-H & Youth, Family Living, and Community  
95 Natural Resources & Economic Development; and

96

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all 72  
98 Wisconsin County Boards/Extension Education Committee Chairs and County Extension  
99 department heads, the Wisconsin Counties Association, County Executives and Administrators,  
100 Governor Scott Walker, University of Wisconsin System President Ray Cross and the Board of  
101 Regents, State Senator Terry Moulton, Representatives Tom Larson and Kathy Bernier,  
102 Assembly Speaker Robin Vos and Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald.

103

104 Forwarded to the County Board by the Executive Committee.

105

106 **FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

107 There is no fiscal impact to Chippewa County by passage of this resolution.

108

109 **RESULT:** **ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**  
110 **MOVER:** Doug Ellis, District 12  
111 **SECONDER:** Chuck Hull, District 14  
112 **AYES:** Michels, Shakal, Stimeling, Sikorski, Zwiefelhofer, McIlquham, Goettl, Albarado,  
113 Willkom, Gerrish, Skwierczynski, Ellis, Leisz, Hull, Darrow

114  
115 History:  
116 03/01/16 Executive Committee FORWARD TO COUNTY BOARD

117  
Approved as to Form:

*James B. Sherman*  
James B. Sherman, Corporation Counsel 2/24/2016

*Melissa J. Roach*  
Melissa J. Roach, Finance Director 2/24/2016

*Frank R. Pascarella*  
Frank R. Pascarella, County Administrator 2/24/2016

118