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

County Administrator Frank Pascarella is requesting that Chippewa County oppose this reorganization plan for a number of reasons. First, the budget reduction target being sought by the State is $1.2 million and that does not justify unilateral action by the Chancellor. In addition, counties have been excluded from the process of developing a response to the revenue reduction, instead of being engaged as partners to consider all options to share the costs. Further, the reorganization plan imposes drastic changes to the current UW Extension system, while actually adding bureaucracy. The plan reduces flexibility, decreases local relevance and removes accountability to elected officials, partners and participants. Also, larger counties are more likely to bare a larger burden for unreimbursed support services including Information Technology, Human Resources and Financial administration, while smaller counties are more likely to receive less service than urban centers as more time is devoted to the travel required to cover a larger geographic area. Finally, a multi-county UW Extension system of shared faculty being proposed is not sustainable because it jeopardizes the continuation of the county levy support for UW-Extension, since Counties are unlikely to continue the current level of tax levy support to pay for reduced services.
RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY OPPOSE THE UW-COOPERATIVE 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,
WHEREAS, Wisconsin counties are unlikely to continue the current level of county tax
levy support in future years if direct educational services are decreased by up to 50%, thereby
making the proposed multi-county educational delivery structure financially unsustainable;

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

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

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

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

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

Forwarded to the County Board by the Executive Committee.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
There is no fiscal impact to Chippewa County by passage of this resolution.
RESULT: ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Doug Ellis, District 12

SECONDER: Chuck Hull, District 14

AYES: Michels, Shakal, Stimeling, Sikorski, Zwiefelhofer, McLlquham, Goettl, Albarado, Willkom, Gerrish, Skwierczynski, Ellis, Leisz, Hull, Darrow

History:

03/01/16 Executive Committee FORWARD TO COUNTY BOARD

Approved as to Form:

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

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

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