



In the Board Room – Administration and Organization

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Why are we having this discussion?

- Wisconsin county government structure is unique
 - No public sector comparable
 - No private sector comparable
 - No nonprofit comparable
- Without clarification and understanding of organizational roles, there is confusion and opportunity for discord
- What we do as counties is too important to not take our jobs incredibly seriously



Counties Under the Wisconsin Constitution

- Article IV, Section 22: “The Legislature may confer upon the boards of supervisors of the several counties of the state such powers of a local, legislative and administrative character as they shall from time to time prescribe.”
- Article VI, Section 4 identifies county officers, as well as the conditions of their election, removal and terms of office. The constitutionally specified officers are sheriffs, coroners, registers of deeds, district attorneys, judges and clerks of circuit court, treasurers and county clerks.



Administrative Home Rule

- **Wis. Stat. § 59.03(1):** Every county may exercise any organizational or administrative power, subject only to the constitution and to any enactment of the legislature which is of statewide concern and which uniformly affects every county.
- Limitation Example: County with County Administrator cannot place appointment authority with board
 - AG Opinion January 28, 2010



Organizational Forms of County Government

- County Executive (s. 59.17)
- County Administrator (s. 59.18)
- Administrative Coordinator (s. 59.19)



County Form of Government

Rev. 01-2021

Full Time Dedicated Positions: 52 Counties

12 Elected County Executives (CE)

33 Appointed County Administrators (CA)

7 Appointed Administrative Coordinators (AC)

Dual Role Positions: 20 Counties

10 AC/County Clerks

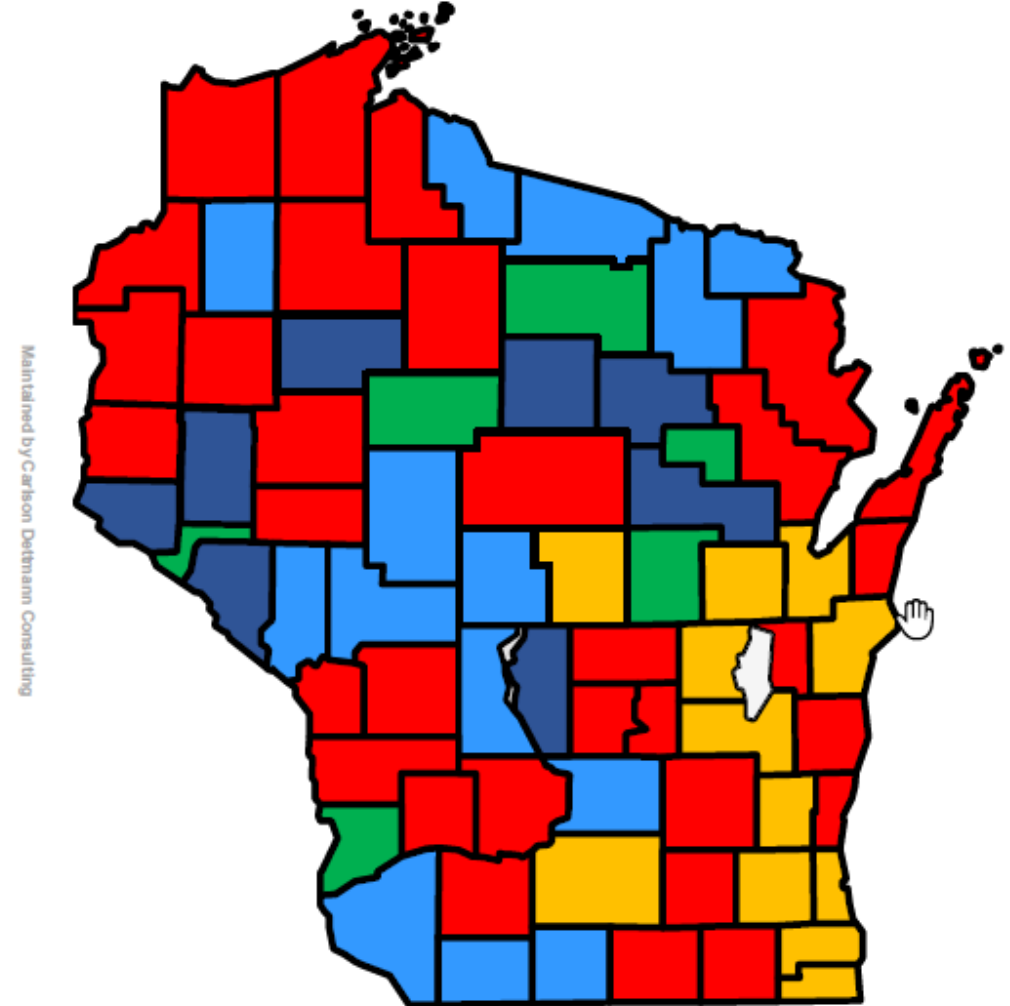
4 AC/Board Chairs

3 AC/Human Resources

1 AC/Finance Director

1 AC/Human Services

1 AC/Highway Commissioner



County Administrator

County Executive

Administrative Coordinator (Sole Job)

Administrative Coordinator (Dual Staff Role)

Administrative Coordinator (Elected Official)

County Executive

- Appoints and supervises department heads subject to board confirmation
- Appoints members to Boards and Commissions
- Submits an annual budget to the county board
- Coordinates and directs all administrative and management functions of the county government
- Has veto authority
 - may veto ordinances and resolutions
 - has broader veto authority than Governor
 - county board can override veto with 2/3 vote



County Administrator

- Chief administrator of the county
- Responsible for coordinating all administrative and management functions not vested by law with other officers
- Appoints and supervises Department Heads (board confirmation)
- Appoints members to boards and commissions (board confirmation)
- Submits annual budget



Administrative Coordinator

- “The administrative coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating all administrative and management functions of the county government not otherwise vested by law in boards or commissions, or in other elected officers.”
- Similar to county administrator but does not have appointment authority and coordinates rather than supervises. (WAIT ... WHAT?)
- Some counties meet the requirement by appointing an elected official.



	Executive	Administrator	Admin. Coordinator
	(Sec. 59.17, Wis. Stats.)	(Sec. 59.18, Wis. Stats.)	(Sec. 59.19, Wis. Stats.)
HOW CREATED	Board resolution, petition, and/or referendum	Board resolution, petition and/or referendum	Board resolution or ordinance
HOW CHOSEN	Spring election every four years (non-partisan)	Appointed by majority vote of County Board	Appointed by majority vote of County Board
QUALIFICATIONS	U.S. Citizen, 18 years of age, county resident	Training, experience, education (no consideration for residence, nationality or political affiliation)	Elected or appointed County Official Other qualifications set by County Board Note: The Attorney General's Opinion of Incompatibility issued in October 2011
SOURCE OF POWERS	State statutes	State statutes	Limited State statutes and board resolution/ordinance
REMOVAL	By Governor for cause	By County Board (majority)	By County Board (majority)
BUDGET AUTHORITY	Prepares & presents to board	Prepares & presents to board	Only as authorized by board
VETO BOARD ACTIONS	Yes	No	No
DEPT. HEADS	Appoints (Subject to board confirmation) Removes at pleasure	Appoints (Subject to board confirmation) Removes at pleasure	No authority unless granted by County Board
ADVISORY COMMITTEES ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS	Appoints & removes (Subject to Board confirmation unless waived or made under civil service)	Appoints & removes (Subject to Board confirmation unless waived or made under civil service)	No authority unless granted by County Board
COORDINATE DEPARTMENTS	Yes	Yes	Only management functions not assigned depts. by ordinance or law

County Board of Supervisors

- Supervisors serve primarily a legislative function
- The legislative function is largely limited to policy making, law making, budgetary approval and cooperative decision making
- No operational control resides with individual supervisors
- Supervisors authority is collective versus individual
- When appointed to a committee chair position, a supervisor has the authority to set the agenda for committee meetings, preside at meetings and make reports and recommendations on the committee's behalf
- So are “supervisors” clearly authorized to actually “supervise” anything?



County Board Functions

- Involve, represent and be accountable to the public
- Determine which services are to be provided
- Adopt the annual budget and levy taxes
- Hire, evaluate and retain good Administration
- Regulate within statutory authority
- Cooperate with other levels of government
- Focus on long-term rather than past or short-term
- Conduct strategic planning addressing key issues and opportunities
- Determine overall mission and purpose
- Establish county's vision
- Establish long-term desired results



The Dual Roles of Board and Administration

Dual Role of the Board

- Enact policy
- Hold administration accountable for implementing policy

Dual Role of Administration

- Implement policy
- Provide information and advice to Board to allow for an informed policy decision



ICMA – Six Governance Roles

1. Strategic Vision – Big Picture Thinker
2. Trustee – Steward
3. Representative – Constituent Advocate
4. Community Builder – Bringing People Together
5. Decision Maker
6. Oversight

*Where does your Board sit on the list in terms of priorities?
Where should your Board be? How can Administration help?*

Getting to Great: Defining the Roles of the Governing Body and Local Government Manager, Novak, Briley and Nalbandian (Aug. 1, 2022)
https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/getting-great-defining-roles-governing-body-and-local-government-manager?_zs=6BCwi1&_zl=sqSG9



Additional Comment



Questions?



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