Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives

Service Optimization and Process Review
August 2011

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Executive Summary

In February 2011, the Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Service Initiatives (JCSSI) engaged the services of Craig Rapp, LLC to conduct a review of the Commission's processes and to facilitate the development of a revised mission, a new set of projects and revised operating approaches.

The JCSSI had in place a collaboration process that had been used for five years, and had developed actionable projects; however, the Commission was concerned about the efficacy of their approach and the prospects for long-term sustainability. For those reasons, this project focused on delivering three primary outcomes:

1. An update (if necessary) of the Purpose and Mission of the JCSSI;
2. A revised process for three jurisdiction collaboration, including the identification of a new set of shared service opportunities;
3. Recommendations for long-term sustainability of the JCSSI in line with the Commission's purpose.

Between March and August 2011, four facilitated workshops and a series of outreach activities were conducted. Outreach activities included an online survey of elected officials and staff in the three jurisdictions, and focus groups with a variety of citizens.

During the first two workshops, the Commission considered, refined and adopted a new Mission Statement:

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Joint Commission on Shared Services is to provide visionary leadership in delivery of collaborative public services. We will accomplish this by identifying opportunities and challenges, engaging the multiple constituencies, and developing strategies to support collaboration in areas of common interest among the governmental bodies.

The survey, focus groups and facilitated workshop discussions yielded 41 collaborative opportunities with the potential to enhance service delivery, reduce costs, or both. These were evaluated and then ranked by the Commission- resulting in a list of six priority projects for detailed follow-up:

Priority Partnership Opportunities (Projects)

- Combine Information Technology (IT) & communications technology functions
- Share administrative functions
- Include the school district in joint purchasing program
- Joint healthcare insurance program
- Combine land record systems including GIS
- Share administrative space and facilities

The Commission also considered long term sustainability and the need to renew and implement projects over time. Following adoption of the new mission statement and a review of its work processes, a

change in operations was deemed appropriate. The first change was to approve the six priority projects as the work program for the next two years.

In addition to adopting the six priority projects, the Commission agreed to pursue a more focused agenda with fewer meetings. Beginning with the September, 2011 JCSSI meeting, revised agenda and project review procedures will be considered, and if approved, forwarded to the respective governing bodies for adoption.

It was also decided that new ideas would be developed either from the list generated by this process, or from new concepts offered by Commission members, or periodically acquired via surveys and outreach methods employed during this process. All future efforts will be administered by the Commission and staffs of their respective organizations.

Introduction

The Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Service Initiatives (JCSSI) is a collaborative effort between the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire Area School District. It was initiated in 2005 by the City of Eau Claire and Eau Claire County for the purpose of identifying and developing opportunities to share resources and improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of government service delivery. Over the past six years, many projects have been implemented via the JCSSI process.

In late 2010, the JCSSI began discussing the need to reexamine how it had been operating, including updating and refining how it developed new projects.

Following a period of discussion and consideration, the three jurisdictions hired Craig Rapp, LLC to lead the effort to review the JCSSI's operations. The project team was led by Craig Rapp, and supported by Marc Hugunin of Pepin-Hugunin & Associates.

Project Purpose

The JCSSI Steering Commission's goals for the project were:

1. An update (if necessary) of the Purpose and Mission of the JCSSI;
2. A revised process for three jurisdiction collaboration, including the identification of a new set of shared service opportunities;
3. Recommendations for long-term sustainability of the JCSSI in line with the Commission's purpose.

Project Methodology

To achieve the goals established by the Commission, the following project methodology was used:

I. <u>Facilitated workshop with Commission- mission, purpose, and vision of success</u>. A facilitated workshop with the JCSSI was conducted to familiarize members with the concept of service optimization and to discuss strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. The half-day workshop focused on reexamining/confirming the vision, purpose and mission of JCSSI, and in particular, the goals it sought to achieve. This meeting was also used to review outreach tools and to establish the process for the remaining activities. *(See Appendix A, Page 16)*

II. <u>Survey on collaboration, consolidation and alternative service delivery.</u> A web-based survey of employees and elected officials from across the three jurisdictions was conducted to elicit ideas for projects and to gauge receptivity to various service sharing and collaboration/consolidation concepts. *(See Appendix B, Page 17)*

III. <u>Facilitated workshop with the Commission – survey review, outreach process development, mission statement adoption.</u> A half-day workshop to review survey results, review and adopt mission statement, and conduct planning for outreach activities. *(See Appendix C, Page 21)*

IV.   <u>Focus groups to elicit new ideas and reactions to project proposals.</u> Focus groups were conducted to seek the opinions of a cross section of citizens, uncover ideas, to determine the level of acceptance or support for various concepts, and to gather reactions to projects under consideration. *(See Appendix D, Page 34)*

V.   <u>Facilitated workshop with the Commission- focus group review, initial project evaluation, final project ranking process.</u> A half-day workshop was conducted to discuss focus group results, discuss the project ranking scorecard, and begin the project ranking process. *(See Appendix E, Page 35)*

VI.   <u>Facilitated workshop with the Commission-finalize project ranking, long-term implementation process.</u> A half-day workshop was added to the original scope to finalize the ranking of projects for implementation and to determine long-term adjustments to the operation of the Commission. *(See Appendix F, Page 53)*

VII.   <u>Summary Report.</u>   This summary report, detailing the process, including the project rankings, recommended projects and new mission statement, is provided to the Commission.

Purpose and Mission

In order to define the proper functioning of the JCSSI, it was necessary to secure an agreement on the Commission's purpose and mission. The group had previously defined its role and purpose; described how it would operate, and had officially adopted statements that each organization executed as a commitment to those roles and purposes.

Over the course of the 2011 process, the Commission not only reexamined their statements and commitments, but also engaged in a frank discussion of the **Commission's core purpose:** *examining the strengths and weaknesses of their current approach and whether it was achieving their vision of success.*

A brainstorming session occurred as part of the facilitated workshops- identifying core concepts and outlining a common foundation for a revised mission statement. The notes from that brainstorming session are attached to this report as **Appendix A**.

A subcommittee of the Commission was charged with the responsibility of drafting a new mission statement in line with the concepts identified at the workshop. At the second workshop, the Commission considered the subcommittee's proposal and a new mission statement was adopted.

The adopted Mission Statement is listed below. The new statement specifically acknowledges that it is responsible for visionary thinking about collaboration, while at the same time acknowledging a responsibility to engage stakeholders and develop specific strategies for collaboration. The primary tension regarding purpose and mission that surfaced during the brainstorming session was the conflict between the desire to provide visionary leadership and new ideas, and the responsibility to stay focused on the tasks associated with review and implementation of priority projects.

> ## <u>Mission Statement</u>
>
> The mission of the Joint Commission on Shared Service Initiatives is to provide visionary leadership in delivery of collaborative public services.
>
> We will accomplish this by identifying opportunities and challenges, engaging the multiple constituencies, and developing strategies to support collaboration in areas of common interest among the governmental bodies.

Commission-Workshop Process

As referenced previously, the project involved a series of workshops and outreach activities. The original scope of work proposed three workshops, however as the project progressed, a fourth workshop was added to provide the Commission with enough time to finalize the ranking of projects and discuss long-term sustainability.

The first workshop was held on March 17, 2011. The Commission used this meeting to become familiar with the concepts of service optimization, discuss the mission and purpose of JCSSI, and launch the survey of employees and elected officials.

The second workshop was held on May 10, 2011. At this meeting, the Commission reviewed the survey results, which yielded a list of 41 possible projects for consideration. The projects were discussed and reduced to a list of eighteen for further consideration. This list was used for project discussions at the focus groups which followed. Focus group makeup, recruitment and locations were discussed and approved. The Commission also reviewed the subcommittee proposal for a new mission statement, which was adopted.

The third workshop was held on June 21, 2011. This meeting was primarily focused on reviewing responses from the focus groups, and establishing projects to be evaluated via the project scorecard matrix. Lengthy discussions regarding the definition of projects took place. A nominal group technique was used to prioritize the project ideas that were identified. The group's efforts yielded eleven projects for final consideration.

A fourth and final workshop was held on August 9, 2011. The Commission reviewed the consultants ranking of the eleven projects identified for final consideration, using the JCSSI matrix scoring methodology. The Commission spent considerable time evaluating the scoring decisions, including the weight and validity of scores. A consensus on the top six projects was achieved. The Commission also reviewed the long-term sustainability and operating approach – agreeing to focus on the top six priorities as the two-year work plan and to revise the meeting schedule- beginning with a discussion at the September 2011 Commission meeting.

Outreach Activities

In first identifying, and then evaluating possible shared services among the three jurisdictions, a significant program of outreach to elected officials, employees and citizens was implemented. There were two specific phases in this outreach effort.

1. Elected officials and employees of the City, County and School District were surveyed. The primary purpose here was to identify opportunities for local government collaboration, but also to gauge receptivity to collaboration and consolidation ideas.

2. Five focus group discussions were held among various citizen groups. The purpose was to solicit additional ideas for shared services programming, while also seeking to understand public awareness and preferences concerning local government and school district service delivery.

Survey of Elected Officials and Employees

A total of 449 surveys were submitted representing elected officials and staff in the three jurisdictions. A detailed list of projects suggested in the survey is contained in **Appendix B**. A summary of the survey respondent reactions and preferences are contained in **Appendix C.**

Focus Groups

Five focus group discussions were held between June 1 and June 8. A report, summarizing the findings and responses provided in the focus group report is contained in **Appendix E.**

Shared Service/Collaborative Project Opportunities

The survey of elected officials and employees from the three organizations produced 41 project ideas as well as a wide variety of suggestions and comments. Twenty-two projects (listed below) were suggested multiple times, therefore they were judged to merit highest priority consideration. The full list of 41 projects, along with the comments and suggestions, is contained in **Appendix B**.

Top Project Ideas- initial survey

1. Combine IT functions among all three entities
2. Merge the City and County Housing Authorities
3. Combined or regional law enforcement agency
4. Consolidate county based land records system
5. Combine administrative services- including finance, payroll, etc
6. Centralized fleet maintenance
7. Include School District in purchasing agreement
8. Combine City-County Parks & Forestry
9. Combine City/County Planning
10. Combine Human Resources- all entities
11. Combine GIS management and services
12. Specialized equipment sharing- all entities
13. Combine specialized units (including tactical) in the Sheriff's Office and Police Department (SWAT)
14. Joint staff training (particularly mandated training)
15. Consolidate redundant functions that can be done by one office
16. Share space/facilities- all jurisdictions (joint administration center)
17. Snow plowing- city-schools
18. Joint health care insurance
19. City and school district share garbage services
20. County - city develop a homeless shelter
21. Shared custodial services- all entities
22. Transit collaboration between the City – and School District (ECASD) - high school and vulnerable populations

The twenty-two projects were reviewed and considered at the second workshop session. The list was reduced to eighteen for discussions at the focus groups. Following the focus group process, the list was further reduced by the Commission to a group of eleven for final ranking, described below.

Top Project Ideas – for final ranking

1. **Combine IT technology and functions defined broadly to include communications technology such as audio/video, broadband, videoconferencing, etc.; also including technology training.**

    This project as constituted envisions the consolidation of technology and communications functions across the three jurisdictions to achieve better economies of scale for expensive infrastructure and to provide improved support and client service.

2. **Share administrative functions such as human resources, payroll, safety, training and safety training.**

    This project envisions the combining of these functions across all three jurisdictions. The potential advantage will be to achieve economies of scale, reduce duplication, and consolidate office space.

3. **Include the School District in the City/County joint purchasing program.**

    The City and County are currently collaborating on a joint purchasing program. This project would expand the effort to include the School District. The benefit of this would potentially be to expand purchasing power, which may yield better outcomes/lower prices and contracts.

4. **Joint healthcare insurance**

    This project envisions all three organizations combining their healthcare insurance programs to increase the size of the group, which may improve buying power and experience rating.

5. **Combine land record systems including assessments, taxation, buildings/permitting; all parcel-based data and systems; including but not limited to GIS.**

    This project includes only the City and County. The project proposes merging all land/parcel-based data from both organizations. The potential advantage of this consolidation is the creation of a comprehensive database that can be queried and accessed by all departments in each organization. An initial investment would be made-presumably paid back quickly with improved efficiency, and possibly reduced staffing. It would also presumably improve efficiency and reduce errors.

6. **Share administrative space and facilities including storage and evidence storage.**

    This project consists of creating a shared administrative facility for all three jurisdictions in one building. Specifically, this would include administration departments, as defined by the City, County and School District, and would also include general file storage and law enforcement evidence storage.

7. Share specialized public works equipment.

This project primarily involves the sharing of equipment between the City and County, who each have public works or road maintenance departments. The School District however, may benefit from sharing its specialized equipment. The potential improvement here relates to the fact that specialized equipment such as street sweepers, backhoes, plows and graders are both expensive and not utilized 100% of the time.

8. Merge City and County housing authorities.

This project consists of merging/consolidating the City and County housing authorities into one agency that services the needs of all eligible clients within the service area. Although there are some differences in funding and services provided, the overlap of geographic area and services is seen as an opportunity to gain economies of scale and perhaps improve services and policy direction overall.

9. Centralize City, County and School District fleet maintenance.

This project involves all three organizations and envisions the consolidation of fleet maintenance activities in one central garage or under one operational authority. Economies of scale, improved scheduling, purchasing and maintenance are all possible outcomes. Improvement potential relates to the fact that this area requires specialized training, the need to maintain parts inventories, detailed bid specifications and garage facilities. Variations in workflow suggest that efficiencies might be gained by increasing size of the operation.

10. Combine City and County planning and zoning departments.

This project, similar to the merging of the housing authorities, involves only the City and County, and would consolidate programs that have a similar, but not identical focus, and would cover the combined geographic area. As with the housing authority merger, the potential exists to gain economies of scale, improve service, and better coordinate policy decisions by virtue of ongoing communications with both organizations.

11. Joint building inspections.

This project relates to only the City and the County. It would merge the two building inspection departments, which have similar responsibilities and an overlapping geographic territory. Although the requirements enforced by the respective jurisdictions are not identical, the benefits would potentially accrue from achieving economies of scale, and by improving the dialogue between jurisdictions regarding the regulation of the built environment.

<u>Top six projects – recommended</u>

A ranking of the top eleven projects was conducted by the consultants using a project scorecard. The scorecard, which consists of ten weighted categories arranged in a matrix format, is fully described in **Appendix F**.

The Commission at its final meeting on August 9, 2011 reviewed the rankings of the top eleven projects submitted by the consultants. A detailed review of the each project was conducted, including the rationale for the consultant's rankings; the Commission then conducted a ranking of the eleven projects. The rankings are depicted in the scorecard matrix on the following page.

The six top-ranked projects were approved by the Commission for further consideration, and will constitute the group's work plan. The top six projects:

1. Combine IT & communications technology functions

2. Share administrative functions

3. Include the School District in joint purchasing program

4. Joint healthcare insurance program

5. Combine land record systems including GIS

6. Share administrative space and facilities

Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Service Initiatives
2011 Proposed Projects

Criteria (across) Project (down)	Quality	Cost Savings	Only Way	*Transfer*	Spin-Offs"	Short-Term Manage	Long-Term Manage	Public Sup-port	Govt. Support	Measure	Pts.	Rank
Weight	15%	15%	5%	7.5%	7.5%	10%	10%	12.5%	12.5%	5%		
Combine IT technology including communications	B	A		A	B	C	B	A	A	A	327.5	1
Share administrative functions	C	B		A	B	C	B	A	A	A	297.5	2
Include school district in purchasing	C	B		A	B	B	B	A	B	A	295	3
Joint healthcare	B	B		A	B	B	C	A	C	A	287.5	4/5
Combine land records/GIS	B	B		B	B	B	B	B	A	B	287.5	4/5
Share administrative space and facilities	B	B		A	B	B	B	B	B	B	285.5	6
Share specialized PW equipment	D	A		A	C	C	B	B	B	B	272.5	7
Merge city-county housing authorities	C	B		B	C	C	B	B	A	C	260	8
Centralize fleet maintenance	D	B		A	C	B	B	B	B	B	255	9
Joint building inspections	C	C		B	C	B	B	B	C	B	240	10
Combine city-county zoning	C	C		B	C	B	B	B	C	B	232.5	11

(See Appendix F, Pages 53 - 57, for explanation of criteria, weighting and evaluation.)

Sustaining the Effort

The JCSSI identified long-term sustainability as a priority outcome of this project. As noted previously, this related to two issues- the process by which new project opportunities are identified, and second, the way in which the Commission conducted its business.

The Commission determined that the process that was used to identify new projects during this project was very effective, and should be continued into the future. Further, the Commission stated that the six projects ranked as the highest priority should form the basis for a two-year work plan.

With respect to Commission operations, it was agreed more effort would be focused on a defined work plan, and that the Commissioners should spend most of their meetings reviewing project reports, providing support and assistance to the chief administrators and staff, and providing valuable representation and interface duties to ensure swift implementation of projects.

It was further determined that fewer meetings were preferable- perhaps reducing to quarterly or bi-monthly meetings. It was suggested that at least one meeting each year should be devoted to brainstorming and reviewing the general environment, to make sure that unique opportunities will not be missed, or that new ideas are properly considered.

To fully implement changes in operations, including changes to roles and the Commission's meeting schedule, the following follow-up actions were put forth:

1. Review and reconcile Commission by-laws for consistency with future direction.

2. Create a work plan for project management, oversight and accountability. The Chief Administrators shall include a process for presenting project feasibility within this work plan.

3. Prepare a joint recommendation on priority projects and Commission operations to the three governing bodies.

As a final clarification of how the Commission will sustain itself, it was stated that as part of their underlying purpose, the Commission would function, at least part of the time, as a forum for innovation and "out of the box" idea generation. This was identified as a key activity to keep JCSSI on the forefront of service delivery improvement and to feed the project pipeline.

APPENDIX A

Purpose- Vision of Success
Brainstorming Notes

March 17, 2011

Purpose
- Maximize resources to be the best
- Innovative leaders
- Visionary leadership
- Explore shared services opportunities
- Optimizing services
- Improving quality
- A forum for cross-organizational dialogue
- Political umbrella
- To help the public understand the interrelationships among/between governments
- Broaden the conversation
- In-sourcing forum
- Elevate the work of the public sector
- Advisory group for collaborative projects
- To inspire action
- To influence action on multi-jurisdictional projects

Vision of Success
- More consolidations
- Bold concepts would have been explored
- Integrated/common Comp Plan element
- Premier cross-jurisdictional body (go-to place), first place for getting things done
- High quality of life and services in Eau Claire/ incomes have improved
- Concrete accomplishments

APPENDIX B

Potential Projects Identified –from Survey Responses
Comments offered by Survey Respondents

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARED SERVICES

1. Do you have any recommendations for new opportunities for collaboration/sharing service delivery with other units of local government in either your immediate work group or in your organization generally?

Highest Priority ideas- minimum four responses - all respondent categories

1. Combine IT functions among all three entities
2. Merge the City and County Housing Authorities
3. Combined or regional law enforcement agency
4. Consolidate county based land records system
5. Combine administrative services- including finance, payroll, etc
6. Centralized fleet maintenance
7. Include School District in purchasing agreement
8. Combine City-County Parks & Forestry
9. Combine City/County Planning
10. Combine Human Resources- all entities
11. Combine GIS management and services
12. Specialized equipment sharing- all entities
13. Combine specialized units (including tactical) in the Sheriff's Office and Police Department (SWAT)
14. Joint staff training (particularly mandated training)
15. Consolidate redundant functions that can be done by one office
16. Share space/facilities- all jurisdictions (joint administration center)
17. Snow plowing- city-schools
18. Joint health care insurance
19. City and school district share garbage services
20. County - city develop a homeless shelter
21. Shared custodial services- all entities
22. Transit collaboration between City – ECASD - high school and vulnerable populations

Additional ideas- all respondents

23. Consolidate interpreter services for Hmong and Latino populations
24. 911 Dispatch with Chippewa County/City of Chippewa Falls
25. Collaboration or shared environmental services
26. Building and zoning inspections
27. Establish a county wide emergency planning committee, which is more than the current LEPC structure
28. Sharing of a city or county employee that can assist with website development.
29. Combining Park & Recreation departments in multiple cities/towns so that this is a county service maintained similarly as county parks
30. For middle school sports, share services with the YMCA, parks and recreation, and the school district
31. Parks and Recreation- YMCA
32. City-County brush disposal site
33. Meals on Wheels
34. Video conferencing system
35. Combine the highway and street departments
36. Share school district media services with the public library and the CESA library
37. Technology services/upkeep of equipment/training shared with UW-EC, CVTC, public library, etc
38. Combine local government print shops
39. Doing collaborative purchasing--food/supplies/services
40. Sharing of communication networks: city hubs, schools, UWEC, CVTC, etc. should share their expanded technologies and coordinate efforts
41. School kitchen could make meals for the jail or meals on wheels

Detailed comments offered by survey respondents

- I believe like-employee discussion groups would be beneficial, if not for the ultimate result of pooling services, perhaps discussing best and most efficient practices.

- I would love to see a stronger partnership between schools and public health - low income families often use schools as a first point of contact when children are sick as they can't afford health care, don't have health care or cannot miss work. We also have many families on Free/Reduced lunches, but there are still many 'gray' area families who do not qualify and yet struggle.

- Sharing information can benefit all workgroups when trying to achieve outcomes. Human Services and the School can work with little Johnnie's family to achieve a desired outcome. The City can assist with services needed for the family, such as housing or transportation.

- I would like to see more attention given to AODA services/treatment and Mental Health Services for youth and their families. Maybe a Family Court approach so that the family feels more invested and a part of the treatment process.

- The School District has passed their referendum and will be renovating some facilities. The City should be included in this process to determine shared building/property use. For example, Putnam Heights, winter rink access with possible school access as the warming facility. Similar to the agreement set up with Flynn.

- Consolidate interpreter services for Hmong and Latino populations. Governmental dept's could share interpreters to reduce costs of each dept. recruiting, orienting, scheduling and paying irregular part-time interpreter staff. A centralized system would be more efficient for all. Consider consolidating like services that are administered at both city and county level such as law enforcement, printing, and purchasing. This works extremely well for the health dept. and employee health and safety.

- Within the school system, I see a need for the school district and the city to come together in a more collaborative way in regard to the school district using city services such as ice rinks and baseball fields, as two examples. I understand that budgets are tight for both groups, but in the future, the school district may not be able to afford some of the current city rates for things like ice, baseball fields, etc...I know that the city is also struggling with budget issues, but I think the city and the school district really need to come together and look at innovative and collaborative ways to help both sides meet their needs. It's a difficult situation to ask such high fees for ice and fields when the district is facing huge budget cuts and knows that ice and fields can be much cheaper at Fairfax Fields and Altoona Hobbs Ice Center, just as two examples. I see the school district wanting to continue with Eau Claire city services, but as both an educator and a parent with students involved in athletics, the city needs to understand that parents would rather save an athletic program by renting cheaper ice and fields than lose any part of an athletic program due to the cost of facility use. I would like to see our school district continue to partner with the city, but if city fees are nonnegotiable, my fear is that the city will lose out on revenue because of school district program loss or the district exploring other options.

- There are probably more opportunities to share services between city and county agencies. Police and fire protection are some that come to mind. In general, educational institutions don't have that much in common with other governmental agencies. Perhaps that is why CVTC and UWEC are not part of the shared services group.

- Transportation and high schools issue Collaboration of ECASD and Eau Claire Transit Align routes with students needing transportation that don't qualify for busing through ECASD. Many high school students still have to walk greater distances to and from school. Some neighborhoods do not have public access to transportation to provide a reasonable time and route to school.

- Maybe a survey like this every year....I think every year because we are in a very hard place right now and need to stay on top of it. When you ask a lot of people these questions you might be surprised to get a right answer.

- I would love to see a stronger partnership between schools and public health - low income families often use schools as a first point of contact when children are sick as they can't afford health care, don't have health care or cannot miss work. We also have many families on Free/Reduced lunches, but there are still many 'gray' area families who do not qualify and yet struggle.

- I'm thinking of partnerships that benefit homeless students and families, immigrant families and social services with families in need.

2. Are there services or activities in your immediate workgroup or organization in which you would not support collaborating/sharing service delivery with other units of government?
Custodial (2)
Cooks (2)
Police and Sheriff's office
Combining protective services (police and fire)
Finance and Treasurer
Highways
Confidential matters- collective bargaining, employee information
Facilities management
Areas where it is legally prohibited
Income maintenance
Direct classroom instruction and support
Zoning
Legal
Resetting survey monuments
Elected offices- until they are appointed
Internal services
Network services
Charter schools
Business/private sector partnerships with education
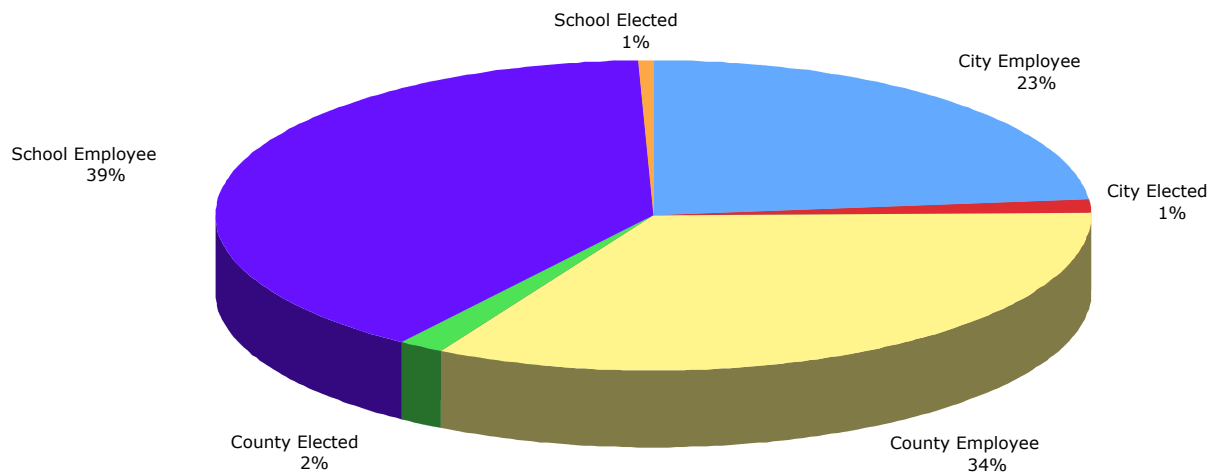School management
Snow removal
Transportation
Private sector dealing with vulnerable populations

APPENDIX C

## Survey Results- PowerPoint Presentation Summary

The results of the survey of elected officials and staff of the three organizations was presented at the second workshop session- the PowerPoint summary slides are presented on the following pages.

Survey Respondents

School Elected
1%

City Employee
23%

School Employee
39%

City Elected
1%

School Employee
39%

County Elected
2%

County Employee
34%

A total of 449 surveys was submitted--433 by city, county and school district employees.

Quality of Life in Eau Claire

Fair
4%

Poor
0%

Excellent
39%

Good
57%
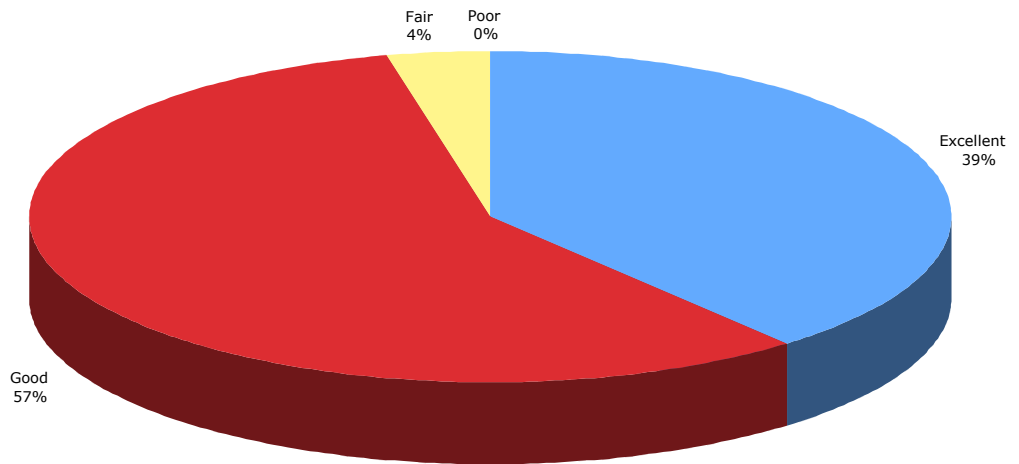
How would you rate the overall quality of life in the greater Eau Claire community? Would you say that it is....
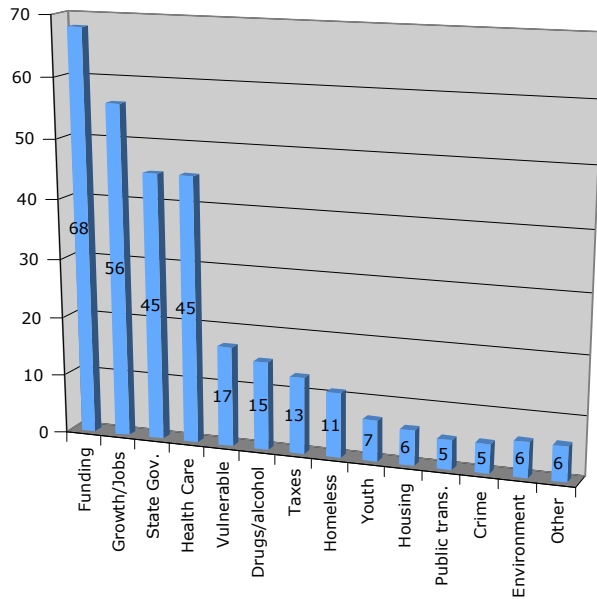
Quality of Life in Eau Claire
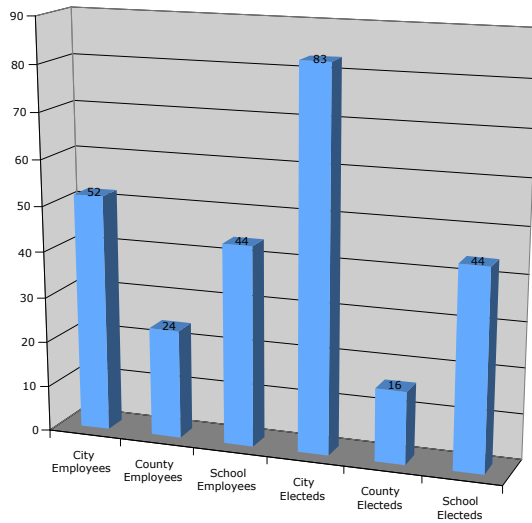
The chart shows the percentage of respondents from each category who rate the quality of life in the greater Eau Claire area as Excellent. The percentages range
- From a high of 83 percent among City Electeds
- To a low of 17 percent among County Electeds

The Most Serious Issues

	Funding	Growth /Jobs	State Gov.	Health Care	Vulnerable	Drugs/ alcohol	Taxes	Homeless	Youth	Housing	Public trans.	Crime	Environment	Other
Series1	68	56	45	45	17	15	13	11	7	6	5	5	6	6

The value shown is the percent of respondents who selected each of the issues. Respondents were asked to select up to 3 issues.

The Most Serious Issues

- "What do you feel are the most serious issues facing Eau Claire at the present time?"
- A large majority selected four issues
  - Funding for education and public services
  - Economic growth and job creation
  - State government
  - Affordable, accessible health care
- Public transportation and Support for low income or vulnerable population was among the top three choices of City Electeds and School Electeds, respectively

Experience with Shared Services
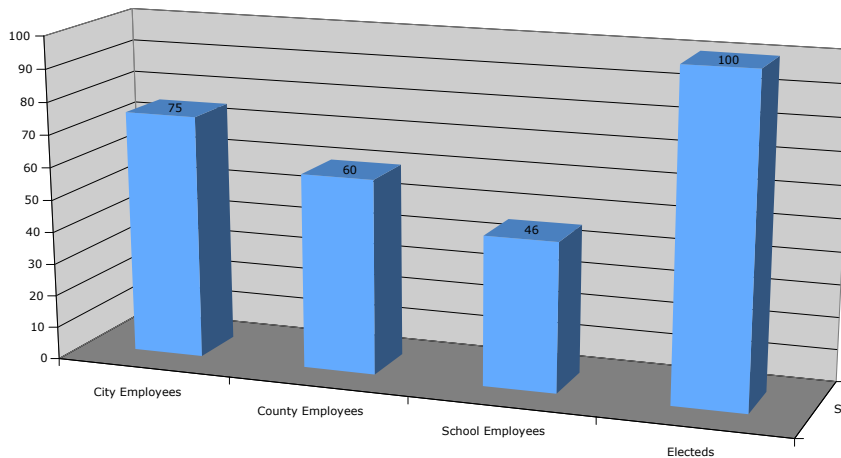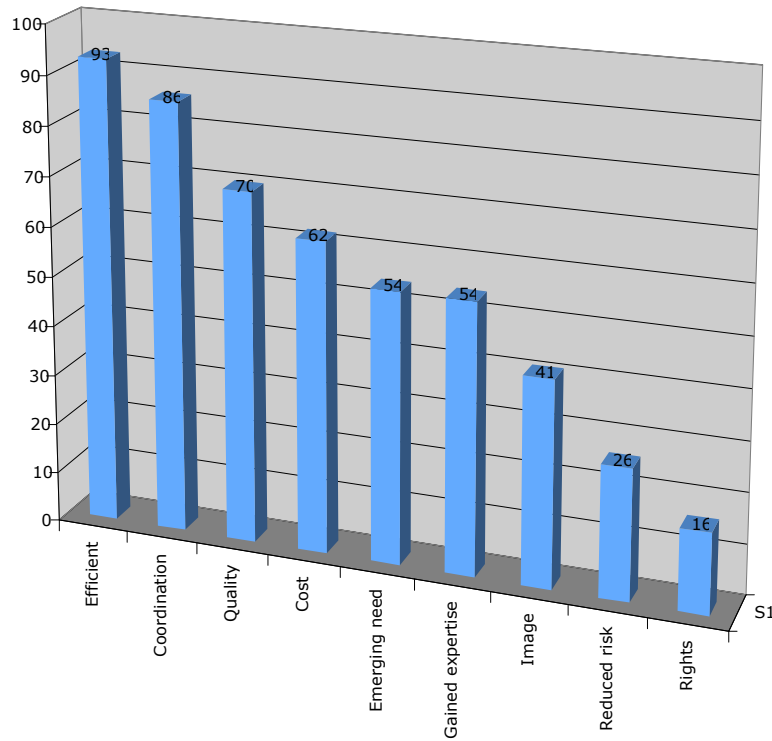

The values represent the percentage of respondents who report experience with shared/collaborative service delivery

Results of Shared Services
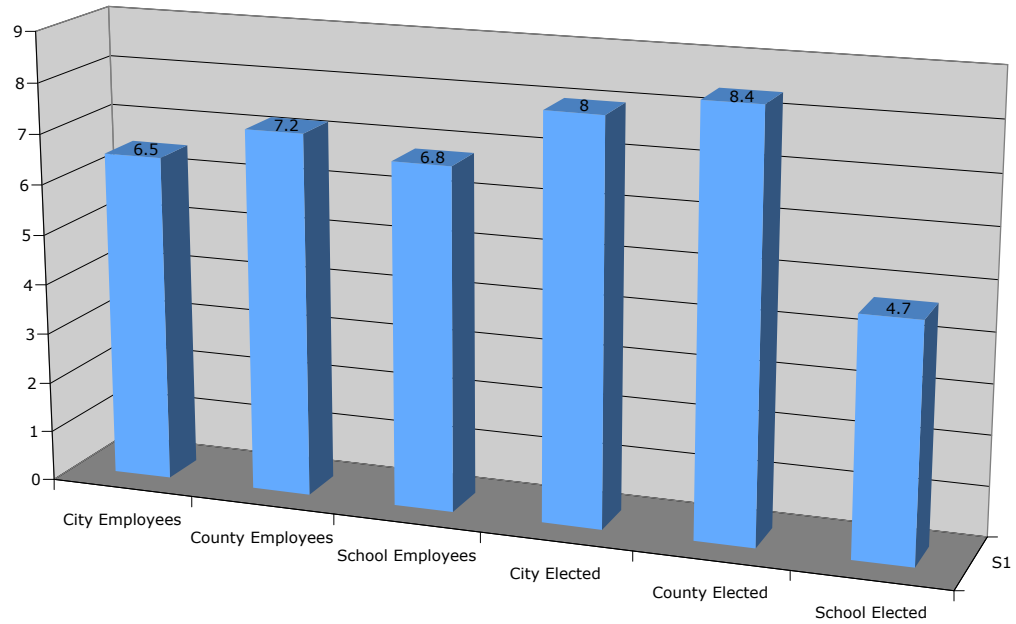
"How satisfied have you been with the results of these partnerships?," rated on a scale from 1 to 10.

Why Sharing *Is* Successful?

"In what way was is/was the partnership successful?" Respondents were invited to select 3 ways.

Why Sharing *Not* Successful?

Different Expectations	50
Lack of Resources	43
Bureaucracy	42
Resistance to Change	34
Lack of Trust	27
Lack of Commitment	24
Lack of Expertise	14
Loss of Identity	7
Loss of Jobs	7
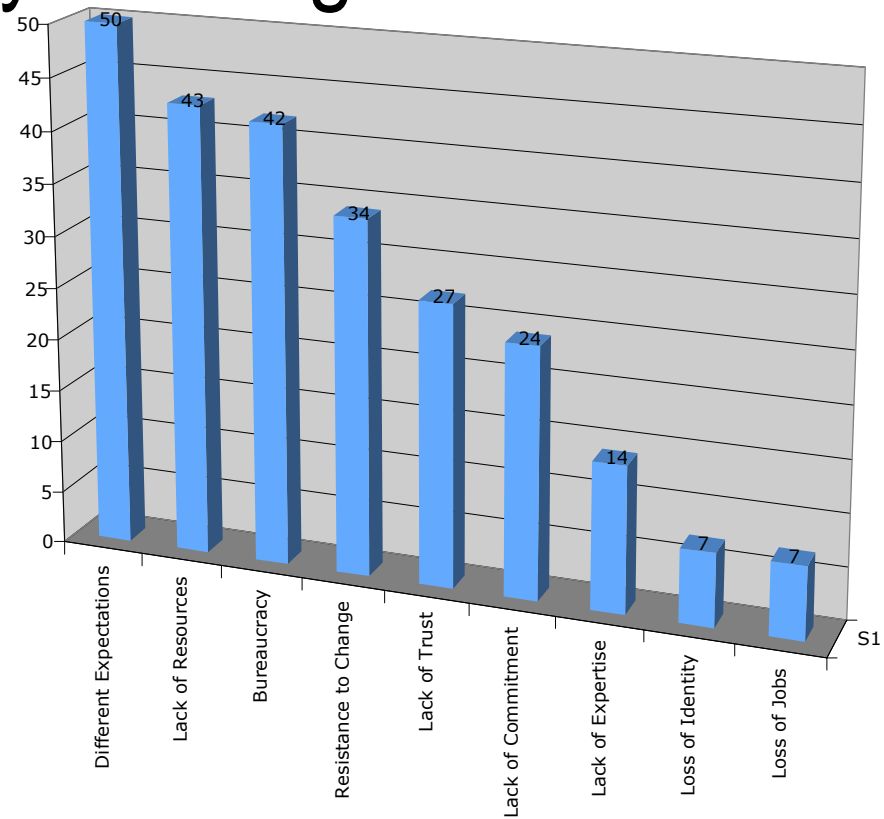
"In what ways was this partnership not successful?" Respondents were invited to select 3 ways.

Why Collaborate?
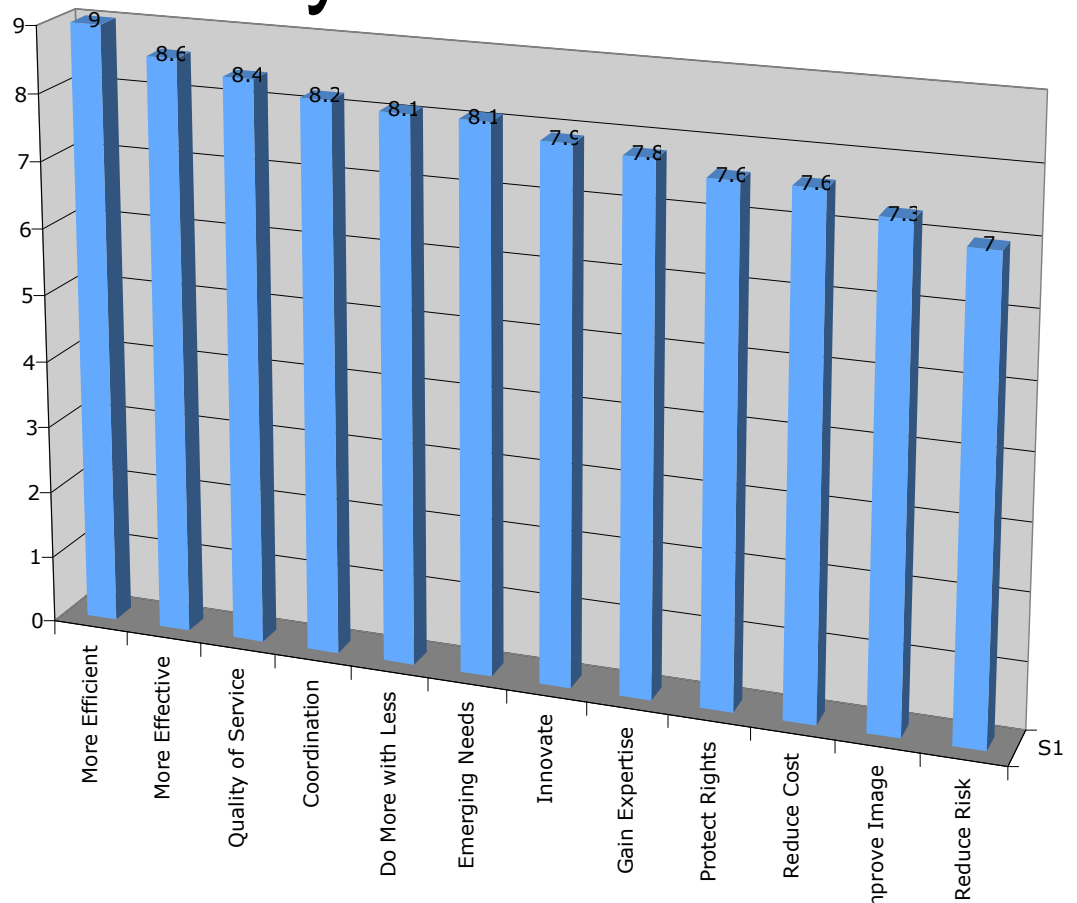
Please rate the importance of the following goals and outcomes (of collaboration) on a scale from 1 to 10….

Why Collaborate?

#1 Rated Factor
- All 3 employee groups--More efficient
- City Electeds--More effective
- County Electeds--Protect rights of citizens
- School Electeds--More efficient

Why Successful/Why Collaborate?

Why Successful
(in the past)?
- More efficient
- Better coordination
- Quality of service
- Reduce cost
- Emerging need
- Gain expertise

Why Collaborate
(in the future)?
- More efficient
- More effective
- Quality of service
- Better coordination
- Emerging need
- Do more with less

Why not Collaborate?
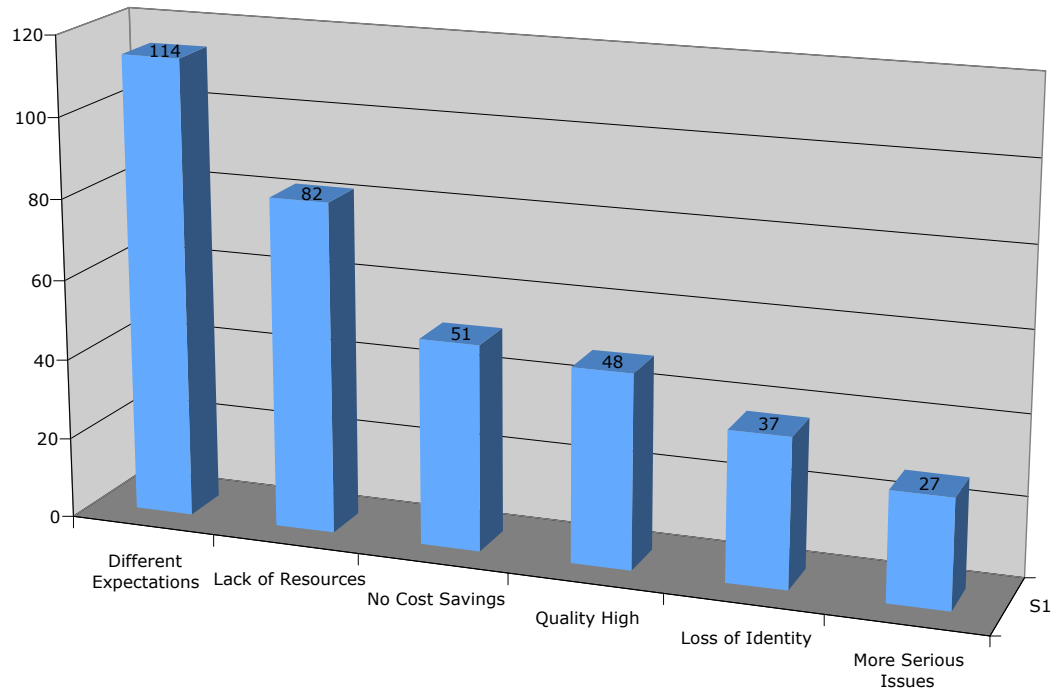
What are the primary barriers to success in collaborations with other Local Government Units (LGU)? Respondents were asked to select three barriers.

Why Unsuccessful?Why Not?

Why Unsuccessful?
- Different expectations
- Lack of resources
- Bureaucracy
- Resistance to change
- Lack of trust

Why Not Collaborate?
- Different expectations
- Lack of resources
- No cost savings to be had
- Quality is already high
- Loss of identity/ autonomy

Barriers to Collaboration
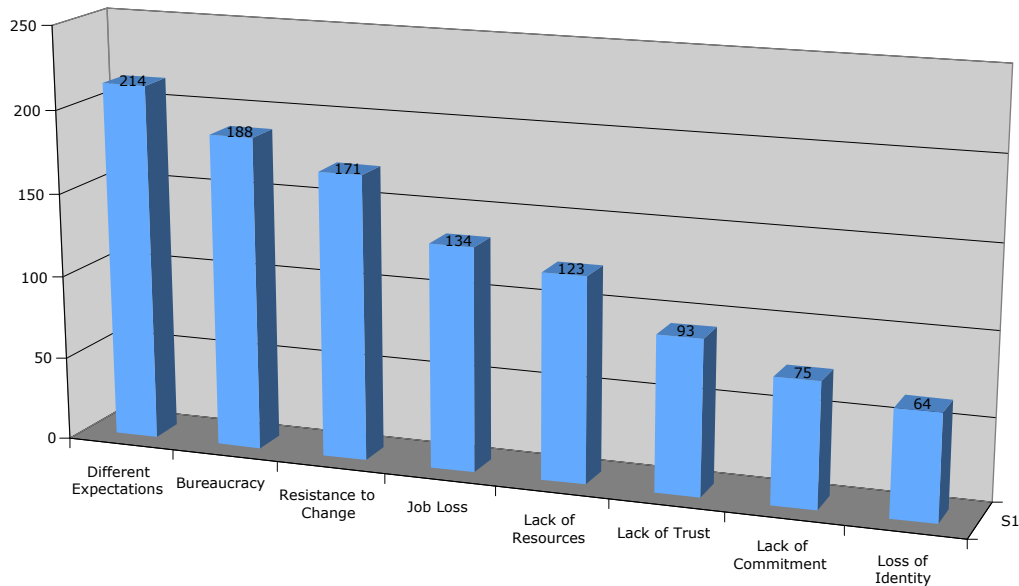
What are the primary barriers to success in collaboration between LGU? Respondents were invited to select three answers.

Why not Successful? Why not Collaborate? Barriers?

Different expectations was the #1 obstacle in 8 of 9 sub-groups

- School employees rated bureaucracy and lack of resources more highly as reasons why collaboration (in the past) was not successful
- Electeds rated bureacracy, lack of commitment, resistance to change more highly

Should We Do More?
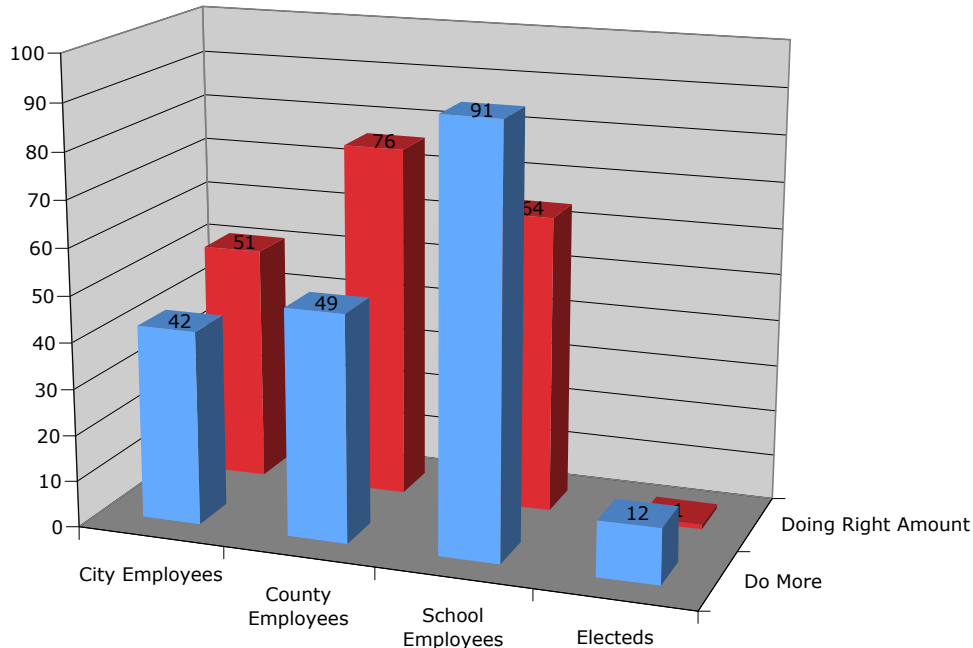
APPENDIX D
Focus Group Invitation- Proposed Projects

Dear Focus Group Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to attend a discussion concerning opportunities for local government partnerships among the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire School District. The city, county and school district are exploring opportunities to work together improve the quality of government services, or reduce their cost, or both.

Before your scheduled discussion, we hope you will take a few minutes to read through the following descriptions. Also, please bring this sheet with you to the discussion. At the discussion, you will be asked for your opinion of the 18 opportunities for collaboration in nine categories of service that are listed below.

Thank you again for your participation in this important project. Marc Hugunin of Pepin Hugunin & Associates is our consultant for these focus groups and will be leading your discussion. If you have any other questions, you may ask Mr. Hugunin at the time of the discussion itself, or feel free to call __(name)_____ at __(city, county, school district?)__ at __(phone number)__.

Partnership Opportunities for Discussion

√	Category	Summary Description/Examples
	Administrative Functions	• Consolidate administrative functions such as finance, payroll, human resources, training • Share space/facilities
	Housing	• Merge the city and county housing authorities
	Information Technology	• Combine IT functions • Consolidate land records systems • Combine GIS management and systems
	Law Enforcement	• Create a combined regional law enforcement agency • Combine specialized units such as SWAT
	Parks	• Combine city and county parks and forestry departments
	Planning	• Combine city and county planning departments
	Public Works	• Centralize fleet maintenance • Share specialized equipment • Coordinate snow plowing • Combine custodial services • Share waste collection services
	Purchasing	• Include the school district in the existing city/county joint purchasing agreement • Purchase health care insurance jointly
	Transit	• Collaboration between the city and school district on transit for school populations, as well as elderly and vulnerable populations

APPENDIX E
Focus Group Report

Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Services
Focus Group Report
June 21, 2011

The Eau Claire Joint Commission on Shared Services sponsored a series of 5 focus group discussions from June 1 through June 8, 2011. The purpose was to sample public opinion about the idea of the City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County and the Eau Claire School District delivering services on a shared services model and on related issues.

I. The Participants

A total of 42 citizens of Eau Claire County participated in the 5 discussions, from a low of 7 participants in 2 of the discussions to a high of 10 who participated in 1 of the discussions. 22 of the participants are female and 20 male.

27 of the 42 participants listed an organizational affiliation on the sign-up sheet.

• 10, or almost one-quarter of the total, represented non-profit organizations, mostly in the area of social services. 3 more represented the faith community.
• 3 represented town government.
• 2 each represented the business community and Chippewa Valley CTV.
• 1 each represented a variety of organizations from the airport to higher education and the medical field.

15 participants did not report any organizational relationship on the sign-up sheet. But from the personal introductions, it is estimated that about one-quarter of the participants live outside the City with a majority of those residing in the Town of Washington.

II. Opportunities for Local Government Collaboration/Shared Services

A. Rating/Ranking the Opportunities

The participants were given a listing of 18 possible opportunities for shared services among the city, county and school board in 9 categories. They were asked to place a "plus" mark next to 3 of the categories—indicating which categories they thought represented "a good idea" for a shared delivery model. And, they were asked to indicate which 3 seemed to them to represent "not such a good idea" for shared services. The results of this exercise are as follows.

Category	Group 1		Group 2		Group 3		Group 4		Group 5		Total	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
Purchasing	6	1	5	1	6	1	5	-	4	-	**+26**	**-3**
IT	6	2	4	-	6	1	1	1	4	2	**+21**	**-6**
Admin	4	3	2	3	7	1	5	1	1	3	**+19**	**-11**
Public Works	1	4	5	3	3	1	2	-	3	-	**+14**	**-8**
Transit	4	2	5	-	2	3	3	4	1	4	**+15**	**-13**
Parks	1	5	2	-	2	4	1	2	3	3	**+9**	**-14**
Planning	2	4	1	2	3	5	2	1	1	4	**+9**	**-16**
Housing	4	3	2	3	2	6	2	3	1	4	**+11**	**-19**
Law Enforcement	5	5	1	6	1	4	-	3	4	1	**+11**	**-19**
TOTAL											**+135**	**-109**

So, in other words, 26 participants put a plus sign next to "Purchasing," indicating their perception that joint purchasing might be a fruitful example of shared services, enabling the participating units of government to save money and possibly enjoy other benefits, while only 3 thought that joint purchasing might not be a good idea.

Caveat. The caveat to this exercise is that this is qualitative, not quantitative, research. Our main interest here is not in the numbers themselves as much as it is in the discussion of ***why*** they rated these categories the way they did. What did they envision happening in the way of sharing, collaboration, etc., and why did that strike them as a good or a bad idea? Also, we do not know whether we can safely project these results to the general population of the Eau Claire area.

However, it is probably not too much to say that Purchasing is probably seen as a more fruitful area for shared services than, say, Law Enforcement by many throughout the community. Certainly among the focus group participants this is so. We would characterize the focus group participants as viewing the idea of shared services in these various categories as:

• Favorable: Purchasing, IT and administrative functions
• Somewhat favorable: Public works and transit
• Less favorable to somewhat unfavorable: Parks, planning, housing and law enforcement

It should be noted that *several participants reported having difficulty coming up with any "minuses" because "all of these areas should be explored." Many of the "minuses," then, simply mean that those areas are seen as "less promising than other areas,"* rather than indicating any actual objections to collaboration and consolidation in those areas.

As a result, while the participants were asked to indicate an equal number of plusses and minuses, in fact a total of *135 plusses and 109 minuses* was recorded.

This may correctly be taken as an indication of the overall attitude expressed toward local government collaboration and sharing of services. Overall the attitude was positive and supportive.

There was a notable lack of consensus on certain strategies for implementing shared service delivery models, however—including reduction in service levels, reduction of the head count of government employees and privatization.

Support for shared service delivery varied significantly by category of service, as is shown by the chart on the previous page.

B. Purchasing (26 +, 3 -)

The participants overwhelmingly regarded joint purchasing as a very fruitful area for sharing among local units of government—and not only among the City, County and School District. One respondent said, "We shouldn't just look at the City, County, and Schools, but also the University, CVTC, etc." Another said, "I would love to say that I will take care of…northwest Wisconsin."

The benefits of collaboration in this area were very generally described as "economies of scale." "The more you buy, the better the rate." "You get better pricing if you buy together." One respondent noted, "The City and the County (already) have a combined purchasing department."

Health care insurance was an area of particular interest. Many felt that this was something that should be pursued because "this is one of the largest costs for all employers." One respondent noted that the cost of health insurance in the Altoona school district had increased 485 percent (over some undefined period of time), "and no one blinked."

Another respondent said, "With health insurance, you might be able to become self-insured."

Barriers to collaboration in this area generally focused on health care insurance. One group might be reluctant to partner if one group is perceived as healthier and another as less healthy. And, there might be constraints to partnering in some union contracts.

C. Information Technology (21+, 6-)

Here again, the respondents were highly favorable to the idea of sharing services in the area of information technology. Mostly this was based on what many participants characterized as the vast importance and influence of information technology in society.

• "Technology is bringing people together."

• "My population can't wait to learn how to Skype so that they can see their grandchildren living five states away."

The implication of this is that we can not only achieve "some efficiencies" in managing information technology, but we can also be more effective. "If used properly, it's an incredible enhancement to what's going on. There are huge opportunities to that."

Others disagreed, however.

• "I don't think technology necessarily unites us because there is so much less face time."
• "People skills are lacking" because of the increasing dependence on technology.

Areas of opportunity include sharing software ("Software is expensive."), servers and sharing IT management positions, especially among more specialized areas of IT.

One respondent did not oppose sharing of IT services but saw "different kinds of software" as a barrier to sharing…. Commonalities with software (would have to be created) so they are more compatible and able to share resources." Another noted that "systems may be different (but) networks and support can be (managed) remotely."

Those who objected to sharing in the IT area said:

• "Each entity (has) some specific needs."

• "If you have a large, combined system that were to go down," would sharing IT infrastructure make it more difficult to recover?

• "My concern (with a shared system) would be less speed in getting things done."

At least one participant thought that sharing in the IT area should go beyond the city, county and schools. "The university system enables UWEC to get the latest and greatest in technology. Perhaps if combined together, discounts could be obtained with Microsoft, for example. Servers could also possibly be combined."

D. Administrative Functions (+19, -11)

The participants were generally supportive of the idea of sharing administrative functions such as human resources, payroll, safety and safety training, and of sharing "space and facilities."

• "This is the number one thing they should look at for saving money."

• "There's no reason why payroll shouldn't be done in one place."

• "Sharing space and facilities makes a lot of sense. I'm not that familiar with other functions (but) HR training might be easy to share.

• "Sharing space and facilities is a good idea. It would be worth checking the possibility of administrators having offices in elementary schools."

• "School buildings are huge and can house a few more people."

Several respondents cited examples from the private sector as evidence that sharing in these areas could be successful.

• "Luther/Mayo combined with the Mayo Health System. This is an example of the end result being a positive."

• "Dayton's consolidated with Target. I didn't think it would work, but it worked very well."

The benefits of shared administrative services are generally seen as increased efficiency and productivity—in other words, cost savings. "It would be a good thing to be able to do more with less."

• "Payroll and HR software—there could be some financial gain in combining those."

Certain management practices were seen as necessary to the success of sharing in these areas or (if not necessary) at least helpful toward realizing the goal of efficiency and cost. In the area of human resources, for example, "We need to change the old paradigm of the 40 hour work week—possibly by job sharing, for example….. Many improvements in HR management have occurred."

• "It should be easy to coordinate with today's technology and (if they also are) sharing space."

• "They could consolidate administrative rules to make each institution more in line with each other…."

At least one respondent thought that the towns should be brought into this opportunity. Another said, "I do not find it difficult to envision ways for the City and County to collaborate, but I am having difficulty figuring out how the School District fits in." Another said, "Perhaps they (the School District) would be more in the collaboration on group purchasing and storage space."

A variety of objections to sharing of administrative services was voiced. Mostly they revolved around differences in process and outcomes that might exist among different jurisdictions.

• "I am skeptical. So many administrative programs are tied up politically. There are different functions for different populations. Checking and balancing is needed."

• "Some positions are required by State Statutes."

• "Will there be fighting about who pays for what? Will everyone pay their fair share?"

• One participant thought that the same functions in different jurisdictions "have many different duties and, although they (also) have similarities, there would be a problem with ethics and conflicts of interest."

• One participant thought that rather than economies of scale, consolidation into larger units might create inefficiencies. "If Human Resources would be combined, would it take longer to get staffed? With Human Resources, people can make things complicated. It would be difficult to do."

• "It depends on the organization. They are so specific, that it would be difficult to combine their job functions."

• "The City and County are sharing in some areas. There are some job functions that are so specific. It is not as easy as it sounds."

E. Public Works (14+, 8-)

Collectively, the participants were mildly favorable toward sharing in public works. All participants agreed with some type of sharing of specialized equipment. "Why should every entity have the same equipment?"

One participant offered the example of patching equipment owned by the City of Altoona that is also used by the City and County of Eau Claire. "Collaboration amongst different units of government is as good as the cost that is shared, and equipment can be expensive."

Others thought that coordination of snow plowing would make sense. "The Town of Washington shares snow plowing with the City of Eau Claire, but not with the County."

These latter two comments again raise the question of sharing beyond the City, County and School District.

Another said, "In order to cut costs, possibly you have to look at job sharing. The biggest cost in operations is personnel."

Barriers to collaboration include:

• "There are differences in equipment in plowing urban vs. rural roads."

• "In some areas, the townships do a better service than the City or County. This can affect how some people feel in getting the proper service."

• "Residents pay different tax rates in the Town of Washington vs. the City of Eau Claire."

• There is some concern about the scope of the project. "Would this be efficient for the taxpayers?"

• "Don't cut for cut's sake. Look at the whole picture."

F. Transit (15+, 13-)

The respondents were divided on the prospects for sharing transit services. Many participants felt that there is a need for better service for school children and for seniors and other vulnerable and transit-dependent members of the community. Yet, the prospects are for reductions rather than improvements in service. "There is a population that depends on transit, and it's in jeopardy of being cut."

• "If hours are cut so buses are done earlier in the day, people won't be able to get home from work."

• "If you measure the need by increases in (utilization of) homeless shelters, community table, etc., there is a (growing) need to accommodate the vulnerable population."

Given the fiscal constraints, the participants were at somewhat of a loss as to what improvements could or should be made.

• "We need to extend the bus routes, but a revenue source has to offset this. And, more partnerships would be helpful—e.g. UWEC."

• "There may be an opportunity for collaboration between the City and the School District. Student Transit is a private company, taking taxpayer dollars."

Objections to sharing of transit services include:

• "I'm concerned that the School District transit population and the elderly population have such different needs. How would we provide for that? I wouldn't want the degradation of Tender Care Transport."

• "There is a lack of commitment from the State Government."

• "I can't see how they could combine."

G. Parks (9+, 14-)

Those who felt combining the City and County parks and forestry departments would be a positive indicated that they believed the main jobs in these departments would be comparable, which could lead to efficiencies.

• "Parks and forest functions are basically maintenance functions. A tree is a tree, no matter where it is. I see it as something that could very easily be combined."

Many participants did not think that the tasks were comparable, however, noting that City parks include places like Carson Park, Boyd Park and Owen Park; County parks would be Coon Forks or Big Falls.

• "They would have different jobs to do. The City crews would be responsible for mowing lawns, garbage, etc. and the County crews would have to check camper registrations and camp fires."

• "Forest management, for example, would be very different than mowing lawns."

One participant felt there would be potential synergies by combining the City and School District's work on athletic fields, as well as buying things in bulk such as cleaning supplies and oil for fleet vehicles.

Others thought that there would be opportunities to share equipment, "Equipment is the biggest cost. Consolidate equipment purchases. Have staff that specialize, but reduce the amount of space needed to store equipment."

Others thought that there was not enough potential savings in play.

• "I didn't think parks would be a place where much money is spent. There are probably other places to start."

H. Planning (9+, 16-)

Those who were favorable to sharing in the planning area gave the following examples and reasons.

• "The 'plus' functions that I would think of would be inspections, purchasing, and the GIS system."

• "Software sharing equals cost savings."

• "The permitting process is complicated. It may be less painful if that process could be combined."

Many thought, however, that "there is a big difference in urban and rural housing."

• "The City and County are considerably different, and it would be difficult to combine that."

• "It's easier when the City and County are separate. If they were combined, it would lead to bigger issues."

• "The City and Towns are different, and Towns are different from each other. There can be conflicts between the City and the Towns. Does consolidation with the County mean that the County is, ultimately, calling all the shots for decision making?"

• "The difference between townships and the City is night and day."

Not everyone agreed that the towns and cities could not work together. The towns have in fact asked for combined zoning with the City and County.

• "With planning and inspections, you can get approval from the County, and the City can turn you down. This should be the highest priority and the easiest thing to combine."

I. Housing (11+, 19 -)

One participant said that the skill set to deal with housing must be virtually the same for the City and County. Another said, "Housing is not different between the City and the County."

Another participant disagreed saying, "The County has a housing authority and inspectors and the City does, too. How would it help to combine services when both are overworked?

Another responded that, "It was the same process that would be used so one person would do the data entry. Functions can be combined using the same tools and software. There would be efficiencies in the process."

But another said that there was duplication of effort, which is both inefficient and confusing to the public. "There are some situations where the City/County Health Department is doing inspections for the same kinds of complaints that the Housing Authority takes care of."

Additional **barriers to collaboration** might include "protectionism" of jobs. Others noted that "the geographical area is so large, it might make it more difficult. Eau Claire County includes Augusta, Fairchild, etc., so it might be hard to coordinate people from those areas. This would be no different than issues with the police and sheriff departments."

A participant responded that "the County does all its housing work from the Courthouse so it is already centralized."

Several respondents also noted that **homelessness** is a growing issue in the community.

• "There is a growing number of issues in the community dealing with homeless people. The Homeless Partnership Network has been educating the public about homelessness. It was suggested that it would be helpful to set up a system so that in special, emergency situations there would be one place the homeless could get assistance and find out about available resources."

• "When trying to help the homeless population, it is very confusing as to whom to refer them to. It would be easier if they were together."

J. Law Enforcement (11+, 19-)

Some of the participants saw opportunities for sharing and collaboration in specialized service areas such as SWAT, detectives, evidence storage and other space sharing, and information systems. Others mentioned that mutual aid should continue and perhaps expand, and that sharing of facilities could be expanded.

Others thought that more needs to be done in the area of public safety and, given the resource constraints that exist today, the only way to do that is on a collaborative basis. In many cases, this does not mean City Police and County Sheriff, but rather other community groups and volunteers engaging as volunteers in things like the neighborhood watch.

But, generally, the participants were not optimistic about opportunities for cost savings or service enhancements through collaboration and sharing.

A major theme of the discussion was, in fact, resource constraints. Several respondents said that the Sheriff, Police and State Patrol are already overworked and understaffed and too busy, and "to ask them

to do anything more," such as administering collaborative programming, "would be stepping over the line for safety."

• "If both (departments) are short staffed, how would it help to combine services?"

• "Considering there isn't enough manpower already, I don't think it would be very cost efficient."

• "I have several friends who work in the department and they're stressed to the max."

Another said that at one time there were 40 deputies and now there are 28. "At any given point in the day there are 5 deputies driving cars in the county…. If there is a traffic stop and 2 deputies show up, then 2 of the 5 deputies that are out on patrol are utilized."

Some of the participants were alarmed by comments like these. One said, "There has to be a way to increase resources…."

But another participant who lives in a township said he didn't want to pay for the same level of services that someone in the city wants to have. "I have a hard time seeing the sheriff and police force operating as one unit. The level of service for the County would have to match the City and vice versa, and nobody wants to pay for it.

Other barriers to collaboration were thought to include:

• "Compensation is different for all entities—different unions."

• "Look at how large an area it is for all of the entities to cover. If resources were centralized in Eau Claire, the response time to the rural areas would be huge."

• "Fire and rescue units in the various entities are different. Most of the time in the rural areas, the fire and rescue team is volunteer vs. paid in the City of Eau Claire."

• "Emergency response would be difficult to manage (from a single, central source.)"

• Finally, as one respondent said, ***"You can't put a price tag on safety."***

K. Other Opportunities

The respondents were asked what other ideas for collaboration and shared services came to their minds. Only three "brand new" ideas were raised.

Arts/Culture. "Eau Claire is a thriving community of a cross section of age groups and backgrounds. Many people appreciate the arts. This (promoting arts and culture) would assist with revitalization of the downtown area."

Waste hauling. "Trucks could be coordinated. Why not divide the city and have only one company take care of each area on a certain day, rather than all the trucks driving back and forth on the streets."

EMS. Another suggestion was the privatization of emergency medical services. The Fire Department has lost $2 million since taking over the county areas.

L. Other Requirements

The respondents could more easily list actions that might help make any efforts at collaboration and sharing go better.

1. Educate people.

• "People run for office who don't have a clue."

• "We need to get the information out. My wife works at the Expo Center. Many people don't even know what the Expo Center is."

• "Letters to the Voice of the People show that people don't know what's going on."

2. Coordinate/standardize ordinances/best practices.

• "For some of these things to be combined, you would need to coordinate ordinances and administrative rules."

• "You could coordinate zoning regulations and law enforcement with uniform ordinances related to snow, etc.

• "The City/County Health Department is a good model."

III. Issues

In responding to questions about service delivery in specific categories of service, the focus group participants of course discussed the values and beliefs and issues that inform those responses. Much of that is discussed above, but certain categories of values and beliefs were discussed at such as length as to deserve a separate presentation.

A. Attitudes Toward Government

Concerning the social and political environment, certain themes stood out.

1. "Times Are Hard"

Preeminent among the beliefs about the social and political environment is the belief that we are experiencing "hard times," but that things will get better. Government lacks the resources presently to meet certain social needs, and we need to manage through this period of time. But things will get better and progress will be resumed at some time in the not-too-distant future.

In a sense, this belief supports the idea that extraordinary action might not be needed, that radically new and different expectations and ways of doing things might not be called for because, again, things will get better and will return to normal within the foreseeable future.

• One participant said (and many others echoed), "The average family doesn't have the kind of money they used to have given the hikes in gasoline, groceries, etc. People aren't able to start college funds or save for vacations…. The average citizen is scrimping to get by, and to ask for more money or impose new fees on citizens would be hard."

• Another participant said, "The public is demanding that the government live within its means, too."

• Another participant who works in the social services field thought that the "hard times" called for a different conclusion, however. "I regularly get calls from people who are destitute and need assistance. The community has to act rather than sit back and do nothing."

• But another responded that the economy needs some growth and the community needs to attract good jobs and industry. This, rather than government action, will solve the problem.

The participants were asked, "Is it inevitable that services will get worse in the next years (before they get better)"?

• "What the population needs will change in the next 25 years. There will be improvement in some areas, and degradation in others."

• "There could be a shift in the way it looks. It doesn't necessarily need to mean a lack of services or loss of services. We need to look at processes and understand where the disconnects of processes are."

One participant said that in his experience, "There is typically resistance to change, but things can still be done….Yet, most of the time something will suffer somewhere down the line. Sometimes combining responsibilities may allow some things to fall through the cracks. Or things that have been done before won't be covered as well because someone with less experience may take that over."

2. Can Government Do Good, and Do Well?

Opinions are predictably mixed on this question.

• "Yes, but there is a common perception with budget shortfalls (that it cannot)."

• "Even with the budget shortfalls, every year they seem to balance the budget and everything stays the same." In other words, government perhaps performs too well and so that when it pleads poverty, people are skeptical that it is truly lacking in resources.

• "Some services have already degraded to some degree. I worry about the aging population. If we don't do something soon, it will get worse fast."

• "We need to pay more taxes and increase the revenue."

• "We need to start creating things again in the community."

• "You need to get the word out to people. There should be more talk about positive things and less negative talk."

3. Cost Savings vs. Quality of Service

In this environment, then, which objective of local government collaboration and shared service delivery models is more important—cost savings or quality of service? Responses were mixed. One the one hand:

• "There is an urgency to save money."

• "The subject of cost is paramount. We all want quality, but costs are becoming prohibitive."

On the other hand, there is not a definitive preference for high quality services, but a desire to find the right level of services that are "acceptable".

• "We have to decide if we want elite service or satisfactory service. People have to understand that they may not get the same level of services."

• "It depends on the services being provided."

• "We will have to decide if it is acceptable if services are not as good as they were in the past."

• "(A reduction in some services) may be the practical reality that we will have to accept. But you can take the cost out of the administrative/behind-the-scenes functions in order to maintain the level of service at the service provider level."

Some thought that there is altogether too much emphasis on government efficiency and on "government running like a business."

• "Democracy is not inherently efficient. Government can run like a business, but it would be run less democratically."

B. Strategies for Change

1. Span of Control/Economies of Scale

Shared services implies economies of scale as the primary strategy for managing in "hard times." Most respondents seemed to accept and agree that this is the primary management strategy to meet the unique needs of the present time.

• "You see that all the time in the private sector, with company mergers. As a general rule, where you can, eliminate some levels of administration."

• "There is lots of opportunity for (changes in) management. The technology area provides for more flexibility."

But some respondents disagreed.

• "You hear that sentiment all the time. In the School District, some principals oversee 50-60 people, and that is just unmanageable. Be careful when suggesting that administration be cut."

• "Are you willing to live with listening to 10 minutes of recorded instruction before the possibility of speaking with someone? Spans of control are huge. My wife has 40-45 people that report to her, but when I started in manufacturing the span of control was 10-15 people."

2. Expand the Scope of Sharing

It has already been noted above that many respondents see no reason why this initiative is limited to the City, County and School District. Various participants thought it should be expanded to include:

• The townships
• The university and technical colleges
• The airport
• The entire Chippewa Valley from Menomonie to Chippewa Falls and beyond to all of "northwest" Wisconsin

At least one participant thought that the School District has not effectively exploited shared services, though participants disagreed whether the School District or the City and County are more at fault for that.

3. Privatization

Attitudes toward privatization are mixed, specifically in the sense that many respondents are ambivalent about it. But there are also a significant number of participants who are generally unfavorable toward privatization.

a. Ambivalent

• "It's a mixed bag. Just privatizing things doesn't mean that you get better or more efficient services. (But) I am in favor of a healthy private sector."

• "It depends on what we're talking about. There hasn't been a reasonable discussion about what we want government to be. Look at the number of government employees. (But) there are some bad examples of what has happened because of privatization."

• "It depends on the situation. Sometimes it makes sense and sometimes it does end up costing more."

b. Opposed

• "This is not a good idea. Governments provide services that cannot be provided any other way. That's why I pay taxes. We share sacrifices as a society."

• "I cannot think of a government service that was privatized that didn't end up screwed up."

• "When my mother had to go through some health issues, such as senior care, it wouldn't have been good to be privatized."

• "There's a reason contractors want those contracts. They want money with less oversight. There are some complaints that there are too many levels to go through, but without these levels, things don't get done right."

• "I'm not sure that the private sector would be able to provide the service with more efficiency."

4. Head Count

The participants were asked, "Is this about cutting headcount? Does the number of public employees need to be reduced? Is that a good thing? Or, is that a bad thing?"

Most thought that reducing head count was not in itself an objective.

• "This would be the wrong direction to approach it."

• "It would send the wrong message and wouldn't go anywhere. This shouldn't be the focus. The focus should be how it can run efficiently. In the future, we don't have to grow these positions."

But others thought that reducing head count was necessary.

• "How can we be a mean machine moving forward?"
• "We need to save money. Shared services will create efficiencies…."

5. Early Retirements/Volunteering

Some respondents thought that early retirements are unfortunate. One said, "By retiring at 55, I became part of the problem. Many people are retiring early so entities are working with fewer people and those people have less experience. Several people I know who retired early, they loved their jobs but with recent changes in Wisconsin, they felt they had to do that. So, there are fewer people working in government offices because of budget cuts. The people who are working are stretched to the max, and the new employees are being asked to pick up more responsibilities with fewer people working." What, she said, is the cost-benefit of that?

One respondent said that with so many people retiring when they are 55-60 years old, they should be encouraged to take on other projects that can provide meaning for themselves and the community to make it better for future generations. There are places that could really utilize their good talents such as the schools, jail, etc. Another respondent noted that hospitals make very extensive use of volunteers now to do things that staff used to do.

C. About This Process

1. Yes, Stay the Course

The respondents were asked how they feel about this process—of evaluating opportunities for local government collaboration and of the focus group discussion as a part of the larger process.

A participant said she considers herself well-read but she learned a lot through this process. She thought if the general public was aware of some of the issues in the community, they might be more responsive. She said the most positive thing she has seen recently in the community was the passing of the school referendum. She felt that was great and said a lot about the community.

Another added that the Commission should be honest with the public about its findings and should share the information it obtains. He felt the community would be more supportive if they are given the information ahead of time and are knowledgeable.

A participant said he attended many similar community meetings last summer where the public provided input. He said after the process was completed he asked what was used from those meetings and he was told nothing was used. He felt the public would not keep coming forward to give feedback if nothing was ever used. He said the Commission should let the groups know what feedback they used.

Another participant said the Commission shouldn't try to get consensus on everything before action is taken. There will always be some who won't agree with everything.

Several respondents voiced optimism that a shared services concept could realize cost savings, efficiencies and better service to citizens of the community. "Hopefully, with time and energy, these efforts will pay off."

A participant stated that "government leaders have to be more creative given these difficult times. It is easy to be negative but it is encouraging that there are still some change agents in government leadership who have done great stuff with less money. People have to be willing to accept change. "

2. Reach Out to the Towns

One participant said, "There needs to be a specific outreach to towns." Another stated she had no clue there was such an effort among the City, County and School District. "Towns need to be at the table too. Townships could have a big role in collaboration opportunities."

• Another responded, "But we can't have a community where one entity funds 100 percent of certain areas like special needs, the elderly, etc. Costs need to be shared with all entities. Entities can't divorce themselves from other units of government."

• One respondent considering the previous statement to be an attack on the towns. "Rural residents don't want to be dictated by City of Eau Claire. There is pride in living in the townships."

• "I hope all of the entities will work together. Currently, each entity protects its own area."

3. "A Good Thing"

There was a general, though not unanimous, consensus that this process is "a good thing."

• "I think that the consolidation of services is usually a good thing."

• "It may be difficult for all three entities to combine on all things. There are opportunities for the County and City, but not necessarily the School District."

• "Look for where there is the best opportunity for the biggest impact. The minuses may still be good options, but they just aren't as good as the plusses. There should be a way for services to be combined."

But another participant said, "The combination of services does not always provide better service. It's not clear that a combination would be more efficient."

IV. Final Words

In closing, the participants were asked what they most wanted their City, County and School officials to know from the discussion. What are the key points? Three themes were re-emphasized by multiple participants: public engagement, the importance of efficiency, and opposition to privatization.

A. Continue to Engage Citizens in This Process

Most frequently, the participants said that local government officials should "keep up the fight" to engage citizens in this process. Many thought that local government officials work hard and work earnestly to do so, but that citizens do not readily engage. Others thought that local government officials do not do enough to engage citizens. Citizens, they said, are discouraged when they do engage and their input is not utilized.

• "Elected leaders and administrators have been making a gallant effort to get people involved with only limited success. They need to keep up the fight."

• "I'm the most disillusioned at the state and federal level. At the local level there is more opportunity, but we have to exercise our ability to speak in those forums."

• "Take our comments seriously. Don't be afraid to change."

One of the groups had a lengthy discussion triggered by the comment that "sometimes doing things quietly is a good thing," to which another respondent agreed: "Quiet is better." The point being that doing things quietly might forestall opposition to the project. But others disagreed with this idea.

• "Sometimes we need to toot our own horn. Some people don't even know that we have a shared purchasing manager."

• "The more conversations, the more engaged everyone will become."

B. Cost-Efficiency Is Not the Only Consideration

Secondly, respondents talked about efficiency. "Efficiency has to be the key," one said.

• "Talk about what is really affecting us. Go to those things that are really costing us the most. When you use that much on one aspect of our lives, there is no money left for other things."

Others responded that "efficiency is good, but understand that it's not always the best thing for all of the people. There is always a positive and a negative. We need to see the upside and the downside (of efficiency)."

• "Continue looking for efficiencies, but be careful that important services aren't cut."

C. Privatization

Two respondents wanted to emphasize that privatization is not a panacea.

• "We appreciate the public sector not being privatized."
• "It's important that government not be left behind to do vital and important things."

APPENDIX F
Project Ranking Scorecard/Matrix

The project evaluation scorecard matrix, described in detail below, includes ten ranking criteria, which are weighted and divided into two categories:

1. ***What is the nature and the magnitude of the potential success?*** If cost savings are anticipated, for example, how significant are they? If the quality of service is expected to improve, how substantial is the potential improvement?

2. ***What is the likelihood of success?*** Is the project easy to manage, or difficult? Does the partnership require a large commitment of resources up front? Is the collaboration likely to have the support of citizens and other stakeholders?

What is the magnitude of the potential success?

1. Quality of service. To what degree will the collaboration result in a significant improvement in the quality and effectiveness of the services provided?
• Effectiveness: Will the service be more effective? Will it result in better outcomes for those who receive the service?
• Improve customer service: Will citizens perceive the higher quality of service? Will the service be more responsive to citizens' needs and expectations?
• Better coordinate service: Will the partners—whether Eau Claire, jurisdictions or townships, or other agencies of state, local and federal government—provide a better coordinated, more seamless service?
• Accessibility of the service: Will the service be more readily and more conveniently available to those who need it? Is the responsiveness to special or unusual needs enhanced?

2. Cost of service. To what degree will the partnership result in a positive impact to the cost of the service?
• Reduce the cost: Will the partners be able to deliver the service at a lower total cost? What is the magnitude of the potential cost savings?
• Efficiency: Will the partners be able to serve more citizens for the same cost? Will the cost per customer or transaction be reduced?
• Do more with less: Will the collaboration allow the partners to continue to provide a high quality of service despite cuts in funding and/or other resources?
• Reduce risk: Will each of the partners experience a reduction in their exposure to financial and other risks associated with providing the service?

3. There is no other way to provide the service. Emerging issues—such as the illegal manufacture and use of methamphetamine—may be regional in scope. No one jurisdiction may have the ability to cope with such an issue. Or, perhaps state or federal laws mandate a regional or sub-regional approach.

4. Transferability. Does the collaborative service approach have the potential to be adopted by many different units of local government?

5. Qualitative advantages. Are there other, "softer" advantages that may result in additional "harder" advantages later on?
• Gain expertise, understanding: Do the partners have the opportunity to learn new skills or gain new knowledge about the issue or service in question?
• Build relationships: Will the partners have the opportunity to build relationships that may help uncover additional opportunities for Joint Commission on Shared Services Initiatives?
• Innovation. Does the partnership have the potential to cultivate a culture of innovation?

What is the likelihood of achieving success?

6. Short-term manageability/ease of implementation. How complex is this effort? How difficult will it be to launch a new, collaborative approach to this service? A typology describing different levels of complexity of public policy and implementation issues is presented on the third following page.
• Resources required: What is the cost in terms of dollars, human resources and time that are required to manage this project?
• Expertise: Do the potential partners have the experience and expertise to make a new approach work?
• Leadership: Is the leadership skill and capacity available that is necessary to make this collaboration work? Who will provide the leadership needed to make this collaboration work?
• Standards and expectations: Are the standards of service and other expectations of the potential partners compatible with one another? Is it common that different communities have different standards and expectations concerning the proposed service? Is that a problem?

7. Longer-term manageability issues. What, if any, longer-term management issues are there?
• Timing: How long will it take before the benefits of the collaboration are realized?
• Flexibility: How much and how rapid of flexibility is needed in this service area? Does the collaborative approach allow for enough flexibility in managing the service long-term?
• Accountability and control: Does the proposed collaboration provide for appropriate control over the delivery of the service? Is accountability for the quality of the service clear to citizens and to local officials (elected and staff)? Are accountability and control appropriately aligned?

8. Political feasibility and support among the public. What are citizens' preferences? Is there a reason to believe that citizens will support this particular effort?

9. Political feasibility and support among elected and appointed officials. Is there enthusiasm for this particular opportunity such that leaders are likely to step forward to bring this opportunity to a successful conclusion?

10. Measurement. Can the outcomes be accurately measured? How difficult is it to measure results in this area?

Weighting

Ranking criteria are weighted based upon the importance determined locally. Of particular importance are the following criteria:

• Criteria 1 and 2, which describe the anticipated outcomes of the project
• Criteria 6 and 7 which address the complexity of successfully launching the project
• Criteria 8 and 9, which assess the consistency of the proposed project with the wishes of citizens, and of public officials

While the system uses a numerical rating methodology, it is nonetheless a qualitative rating and ranking system. It is not recommended that project rankings be solely determined on a point system. The score is more appropriately seen as directional rather than decisive with regard to a project's desirability.

Evaluation

The ten criteria are combined on the scorecard- an example is shown below. The final list of identified opportunities for collaboration is rated against each of the criteria.

Each opportunity is evaluated on each of the ten criteria and assigned a letter grade from A through F. The weights and letter grade for each opportunity is converted to a numerical score. The letter grade (A through F) was converted to a four-point scale, and those points are multiplied by the weight. For example, an "A" (4 points) on a criterion weighted at 17.5 equals 70 rating points. Total points available equal 400.

Scorecard Key: Evaluation Criteria and Grades

Quality of Service
A = quality may improve significantly
B = quality may improve some
C = maintain existing quality of service
D = reduce the quality in order to save money, or because people don't really care, etc.)
F = reduce the quality significantly

Cost Savings
A = save a lot of money
B = save some money
C = maintain current spending, but get more service for the same price)
D = spend more
F = spend a lot more
No Other Way to Deliver the Service
This item is rated as a Yes/No.

Transferability
A = every organization could benefit
B = two organizations could benefit
C = one or two organizations could benefit
D = one organization could benefit
F = no organizations could benefit

Qualitative Advantages
A = lots of/very significant spin-offs e.g.-centralized 9-1-1 could yield new deployment schemes
B= some spin-offs
C = not clear
D = probably not
F = might even constrain future flexibility in other areas

Short-Term Manageability
A = this is easy and not very costly to do
B = somewhat easy and/or costly
C = significant complexity and/or costs (but not both)
D = significant complexity AND costs
F = extremely complex and or costly

Longer-Term Manageability
A = easy to manage longer-term and organizations retain flexibility
B = easy to manage longer-term OR organizations retain flexibility
C = some management complexity OR organizations lose some flexibility
C = some management complexity and organizations lose some flexibility
F = significant management complexity and organizations lose much flexibility

Political Feasibility
Support for the opportunity among the general public, and among government officials and employees are evaluated separately. But the letter grades may be interpreted similarly. The grades are based primarily (but not solely) on the surveys, public participation and focus group discussions.
A = significant support for this opportunity, and no known opposition
B = some support; and while there is no known opposition at this time, this type of project has generated opposition elsewhere
C = some support was expressed, but some concerns and/or opposition also was voiced
D = either a lack of support or demand, or definite opposition
F = a lack of support or demand, and definite opposition

Measurement
A = very easy to measure results, to determine whether successful or not
B = easy to measure
C = not easy to measure, may not be able to fully determine success
D = difficult to measure
F = impossibly to measure, to know whether successful or not

Project Evaluation Scorecard

Criteria	Wt.	Project Rating					
What is the magnitude of the potential success?	**50%**						**Pts.**
1. Improved quality of service Effectiveness Improve customer service Better coordinate service Accessibility of service	15%	F	D	C	B	A	
2. Reduced cost of service Reduce the direct cost Efficiency Do more with less Reduce risk	15%	F	D	C	B	A	
3. There is no other way to deliver the service.	5%	F	D	C	B	A	
4. Transferability	7.5%	F	D	C	B	A	
5. Qualitative advantages Gain expertise, understanding Build relationships Innovation	7.5%	F	D	C	B	A	
What is the likelihood of achieving success?	**50%**						**Pts.**
6. Short-term manageability Resources required Expertise Leadership Standards and expectations	10%	F	D	C	B	A	
7. Longer-term manageability Timing Flexibility	10%	F	D	C	B	A	
8. Political feasibility and support among the public	12.5%	F	D	C	B	A	
9. Political feasibility and support among elected officials and local government staff	12.5%	F	D	C	B	A	
10. Measurement	5%	F	D	C	B	A	
Total Points This Project							___