

A PRIMER: DECISION-MAKING ROLES FOR BOARD SUPERVISORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS



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Adapted from a presentation developed by Dan Hill, UW-Extension's Local Government Center

Survey of Decision-Making Process in Your County



- ⌘ Please take 5 minutes to fill out this survey
- ⌘ For each item, consider who in your county generally takes responsibility for making the first level decision (excluding appeals)

How the Board Sets Policy



- Ordinances
- Resolutions
- Budgets

Protocol for Placing Issues Before the Board for Action

- Each Board sets its own rules
- Board members, citizens and departments may request
- Various models for referring issues for consideration
 - Board chair decides
 - Executive committee recommends
 - Committees take up on their own

County Board Functions

- Involve the Public
- Set Policy
- Regulate
- Develop and approve annual budget
- Provide Services
- Levy taxes
- Cooperate with other governments
- Oversee county operations
- Be accountable to the Public

Service Decisions



- Will a service be provided?
- At what level will the service be provided?
- How will the service be provided?
- How will the service be paid for?

County Officers



- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Sheriff
- Coroner
- Clerk of Circuit Court
- Register of Deeds
- Surveyor
- District Attorney (WSS.978.01)

Other County Departments

- Human/Social Services
- Aging
- Highway
- Planning & Zoning
- Finance
- Personnel
- Information Services
- *Others
- *Land
- *Veterans Affairs
- *Corporation Counsel
- *Parks/Recreation
- *Administrator
- *University Extension

Decisionmaking vs. Managing



Basic Department Head Functions

➤ Administrative Duties

- **Administer state and local laws**
- **Carry out Board and central administrative directives**
- **Serve county clients**
- **Bring department spending and revenues in line with annual budget**
- **Formulate annual budget within guidelines**

➤ Policy Recommendations

- **Conduct studies of policy options**
- **Gather data and impacts on existing and proposed programs**

County Administrator Powers– Sec. 59.18



- Chief administrative officer of the County
- Observe, administer and enforce laws
- Coordinate & direct administrative/management functions
- Appoint & supervise department heads
- Appoint members of boards & commissions
- 18-19 counties have chosen to enact Administrator model???

Shared Oversight



- Conformance to policy
- Follows budget guidelines
- Performance evaluations
- Relationships among & between units
- Employee Recognition
- Complaints
- Continuing improvement
- Strategic considerations

Basic Rights of Every Board Member



- Right to be included in process
- Right to exchange information
- Right to certainty of procedures
- Access to staff research and information
- Access to outside experts

Basic Responsibilities of Members

- Should attend all required meetings of Board
- Accountable to larger constituency
- Accurately represent policy to public
- Do homework before making decisions
- Be constructive in problem solving
- Maintain high ethics
- Recruit and educate new members

Essential County Committees

*Executive/
Policy*

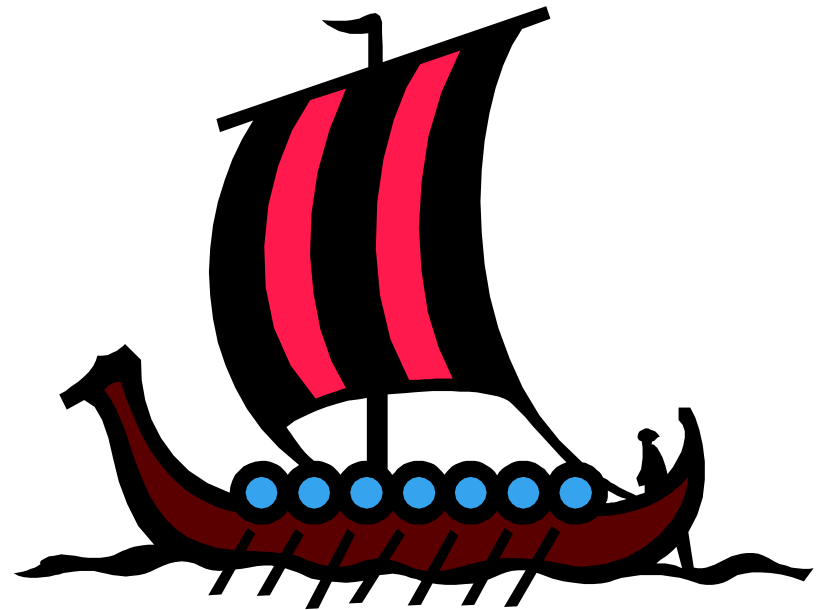
Finance/Audit

Personnel

Standing

Policy Making vs. Micro-Managing

- Steering vs. Rowing
- Goal setting vs. Means to achieving
- Budget parameters vs. Implementation
- Personnel evaluation vs. Direct intervention

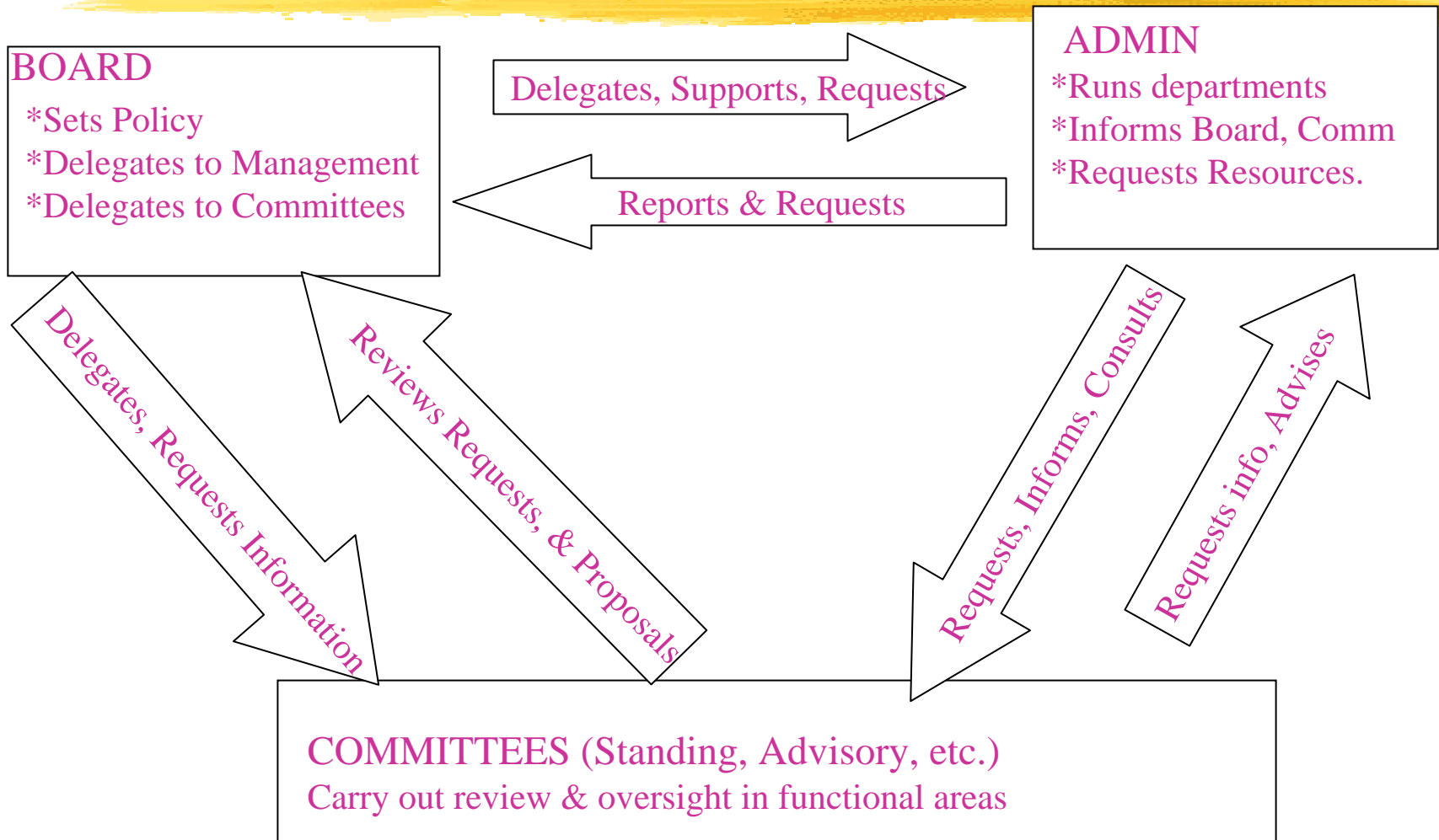


Potential Sources of Board/Staff Conflict



- **Poor communication**
- **Blurred lines of authority**
- **Highly visible personnel disputes**
- **Board/Staff “end-runs”**
- **Financial crisis**

Information Flow Model



Mathis' “Symptoms of a Troubled Board”

- All Board energy stays focused on one issue
- Minority views are more effective than majority views
- Administrator is only cure or reason for Board problems
- No clear annual Board goals and objectives
- Inner Board bickering and conflict more important than the issues
- Board values and integrity are compromised, but not recognized
- Board members “know it all” & constituency not consulted

How To Improve Relations



- Regular orientations for new members
- Community/County tours
- Retreats or social events
- Strategic planning sessions
- Annual Board evaluations
- Employee recognition ceremonies
- Ongoing training opportunities for all officials

A few final thoughts...



- ⌘ Change brings challenges and opportunities
- ⌘ Challenge: improve communication, role definition
- ⌘ Opportunity: freedom to look out into the future, think strategically about the BIG picture

For more information

⌘ <http://www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm>

⌘ <http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/program/netresc.htm>
(scroll down the page for website listings)

⌘ For a copy of this presentation:

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/cnred/index.html>