Buffalo County Resolution

Drafted By:
Sonya J. Hansen
Presented Month/Year:
March 2016
Involved Committees:
Finance

County Department:
Administration
Fiscal Impact: YES / NO

AC Approved: YES / NO

RESOLUTION # 16-03-05

A RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE UW-COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MULTI-COUNTY REORGANIZATION PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, Wisconsin Counties are unlikely to continue the current level of County Tax Levy support in future years if direct educational services are decreased by up to 50%, thereby making the proposed multi-county educational delivery structure financial unsustainable.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors opposes the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization Plan approved by Chancellor Sandeen on February 10, 2016.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors calls upon University System President Ray Cross and the UW-Board of Regents to direct the Chancellor of the UW Colleges and UW Cooperative Extension to retract all portions of the plan imposing a Multi-County system on County/Tribal Extension offices and engage Counties/Tribes as equal partners to consider individual County options to address their share of the $1.2 million reduction target, approximately 21 cents per capita state-wide, which is equal to 1.93% of $62,071,049 Total State/Federal Direct and Indirect Support plus County Extension Tax Levies, while maintaining the current single County Extension system.

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

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, that the Buffalo County Ag & Extension Committee is hereby directed to solicit input to the UW-System regarding local concerns about the detrimental impact of the proposed multi-county reorganization plan from the more than 80 local partner organizations and 7,500 of program participants and volunteers in the four program areas: Agriculture, 4-H & Youth, Family Living and Community Resources & Economic Development.

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all 72 Wisconsin County Boards/Extension Education Committee Chairs and County Extension Department Heads, the Wisconsin Counties Association, County Executives and Administrators, Governor Walker, President Ray Cross and the Board of Regents, Senator Vinehout, Representative Danou, Assembly Speaker Vos and Senate Majority Leader Fitzgerald.

Adopted at a duly called and noticed meeting of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors on the 28th day of March, 2016.

Roxanne Halvison
County Clerk

ATTEST:

Douglas Kane
County Board Chairperson

Respectfully Submitted:

Finance Committee

Larry Grisen

Don Hillert

Douglas Kane

Yes- appeared remotely
David Danzinger

David Eddy

ANTICIPATED FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Total Tax Levy 2016	$	159,686
2016 Tax Levy Paid to UW System	$	95,647