

## Agenda

**County Administrator Search Committee  
Jefferson County Courthouse  
320 S Main St, Room 112  
Jefferson, WI 53549**

**April 9, 2013 @ 11:00 a.m.**

Committee Members: Paul Babcock, James Braughler, Richard Jones, Rick Kuhlman, James Mode, John Molinaro, Donald Reese, Amy Rinard, Pamela Rogers

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Certification of compliance with the Open Meetings Law
4. Review of the Agenda
5. Citizen comments
6. Approve Minutes from March 19, 2013 meeting
7. Communications
8. Discussion of the Proceedings Report of "Input by the County Department Heads on Ideal Characteristics of a County Administrator"
9. Update from Springsted, Inc. (via Skype) regarding the recruitment process
10. Convene into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85 (1)(c), to discuss and select applicants to interview for the County Administrator position and possibly develop interview questions
11. Reconvene into open session
12. Consult with Springsted, Inc. regarding next step(s) in the interview process for the County Administrator position
13. Set next meeting date and agenda
14. Adjournment

**Next scheduled meeting: Tentatively April 22, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. and April 24, 2013 at 10:30 a.m.**

The Committee may discuss and/or take action on any item specifically listed on the agenda

**Individuals requiring special accommodations for attendance at the meeting should contact the County Administrator's Office 24 hours prior to the meeting at 920-674-7101 so appropriate arrangements can be made.**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD  
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**March 19, 2013**

**County Administrator Search Committee**

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Molinaro at 11:00 a.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**County Administrator Search Committee Members**

Members present: Paul Babcock, James Braughler, Richard Jones, Rick Kuhlman, James Mode, John Molinaro, Donald Reese, Amy Rinard and Pamela Rogers.

Others Present: Tammie Jaeger – Administrative Secretary; Terri Palm-Kostroski – Human Resources Director; Lydia Statz – Daily Union Reporter; David Unmacht and Sharon Klumpp - Springsted Incorporated.

**3. Certification of compliance with Open Meeting Law Requirements**

Administration staff certified compliance with the open meeting law.

**4. Review of Agenda** No changes were made.

**5. Public Comment** None

**6. Approve Minutes from February 14, 2013 meeting**

Motion made by Supervisor Kuhlman; Second by Supervisor Rogers to approve the minutes from February 14, 2013 meeting as printed. (Ayes-All) Motion Carried.

**7. Communications:**

- a. County Administrator Ad Information
- b. Candidate Matrix
- c. Working Timeline

**8. Discussion with Springsted Incorporated and possible action setting forth the interview details, including but not limited to the process, timeline, summary of the applications received and an assessment of department head feedback**

Dave Unmacht informed the committee that 46 applications were received so far. Currently they are conducting the applicant screening. The applications will be reviewed and narrowed down to 8-15. A questionnaire will be sent out to these applicants as a second screening. After the second screening, a spreadsheet will be prepared for the committee containing a summary of information for those candidates. The committee is comfortable with having Springsted and the HR Director review the applications to select 8-15 candidates. David Unmacht reviewed the screening questionnaire and candidate matrix with the Committee. The matrix and the questionnaire should be available for the committee to review during the first week in April. Telephone interviews and reference checks will also be conducted. The committee will review this information and determine how the final candidates should be selected for interviews. The committee suggested a meet and greet with the final candidates, department heads and County Board Supervisors.

Motion made by Supervisor Rogers; Second by Supervisor Braughler to close the posting on April 1<sup>st</sup>. (Ayes-All) Motion Carried.

**Input by the County Department Heads on:  
Ideal Characteristics of a County Administrator**

**PROCEEDINGS REPORT**

**March 11, 2013  
UW-Extension, Room 102  
1:45 - 2:45 p.m.**

**Facilitated and Compiled By:**

Steve Grabow, Professor and Community Resource Development Agent  
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County Office

March 12, 2013

## AGENDA

### County Administrator: Questions to Guide Input for the Identification of the Ideal Administrator

*This facilitated session consists of input by County Department Heads at their March 11, 2013 staff meeting. The purpose is to provide input to the Search and Screen Committee and the consultant who is assisting the County in the process for selecting a new County Administrator. Input is captured as close as possible to the words and phrases used by the participants. The participants were also invited to provide additional ideas to Linda Woolridge or the facilitator subsequent to the workshop. The workshop was intended to be interactive.*

Listed below are prompting questions that could help stimulate input and dialogue about some of the important characteristics or attributes of the ideal Jefferson County Administrator. Respondents might be interested in addressing all of these questions or just some of these.

#### General Strengths and Experiences

1. What are the most important assets or strengths that you are looking for in the Jefferson County Administrator?
  - a. What type of background and prior work experiences would be most important in preparing a candidate to be Jefferson County Administrator?

#### Limitations or Concerns

2. What are features that would make you hesitant to hire a candidate for Jefferson County Administrator? (i.e. characteristics or background to avoid)

#### Ideal Leadership Characteristics and Trust

3. What are the leadership characteristics that are most important to be the Jefferson County Administrator?
4. What are the characteristics of a candidate that are most important in gaining the trust and respect of County Department Heads?
5. What are the attributes of a candidate that are most important to gain the trust and respect of County Board Supervisors and other elected officials?

#### Wrap-up

6. What are other thoughts you have on characteristics or attributes of the ideal County Administrator?

## Strengths and Experience

Participants provided their ideas in the area of “General Strengths and Experiences”, and were prompted by these questions:

- *What are the most important assets or strengths that you are looking for in the Jefferson County Administrator?*
- *What type of background and prior work experiences would be most important in preparing a candidate to be Jefferson County Administrator?*

*After the ideas were generated, the facilitator asked for the participants to nominate ideas that warranted special emphasis. Those ideas are listed in bold font below. It should be noted that time did not allow a rigorous process to determine the extent of overall agreement or consensus on these ideas. Also, some of the ideas were organized by apparent theme, category or affinity subsequent to the workshop by the facilitator. This is intended to make the report more understandable.*

### **Ideas with Special Emphasis**

- a. Professional training in administrative management at County level.**
- b. Experience as a professional in a larger city or county.**
- c. Good communicator; proactive; good listener.**
- d. Experience in handling County Board supervisors (diplomatic skills).**
- e. Strong budgeting and financial management background.**

### **Planning Skills/Positive Vision/Creativity**

- f. Skills in long-range planning (future thinking).
- g. Somebody who has “fresh ideas”. Some good innovations require creative solutions.
- h. A positive vision for the future.
- i. Somebody who can show how to use existing plans (and where the info came from in making the plans).
- j. Candidate has “buy-in” to existing vision (supportive of existing good work).

### **Other**

- k. Wisconsin county experience.
- l. Experience with legislation and working with laws.

## Limitations and Concerns

*Participants provided their ideas in the area of “Limitations and Concerns”, and were prompted by this question:*

- *What are features that would make you hesitant to hire a candidate for Jefferson County Administrator? (i.e. characteristics or background to avoid)*

*After the ideas were generated, the facilitator asked for the participants to nominate ideas that warranted special emphasis. Those ideas are listed in bold font below. It should be noted that time did not allow a rigorous process to determine the extent of overall agreement or consensus on these ideas. Also, some of the ideas were organized by apparent theme, category or affinity subsequent to the workshop by the facilitator. This is intended to make the report more understandable.*

### **Ideas with Special Emphasis**

- a. Avoid someone who sits in office, and willing to visit other offices/departments.**
- b. Need an effort to know what departments do.**
- c. Avoid those who assume they know what departments are doing.**
- d. Avoid people who are “command and control”; dictatorial.**
- e. Need a good “steward” who puts the County needs first.**
- f. Avoid someone who is indecisive and inconsistent.**

### Other

- g. Someone committed to be here awhile (not just interested in a year or two).
- h. Opposite of “strengths”, i.e. avoid someone who doesn’t listen well.
- i. Avoid someone who only wants to work from 9 to 5.
- j. Prefer someone who lives in the area or is willing to move here.
- k. Avoid a “yes person”, i.e. to County Board.
- l. Without a “criminal background”.
- m. Avoid someone who delegates too much, i.e. someone who understands the full extent of the position and understands what should be delegated.
- n. Needs to lead by example, i.e. if asking for cuts, demonstrate cuts.

## Leadership and Trust

Participants provided their ideas in the area of “Leadership and Trust”, and were prompted by these questions:

- What are the leadership characteristics that are most important to be the Jefferson County Administrator?
- What are the characteristics of a candidate that are most important in gaining the trust and respect of County Department Heads?
- What are the attributes of a candidate that are most important to gain the trust and respect of County Board Supervisors and other elected officials?

After the ideas were generated, the facilitator asked for the participants to nominate ideas that warranted special emphasis. Those ideas are listed in bold font below. It should be noted that time did not allow a rigorous process to determine the extent of overall agreement or consensus on these ideas. Also, some of the ideas were organized by apparent theme, category or affinity subsequent to the workshop by the facilitator. This is intended to make the report more understandable.

### **Idea with Special Emphasis**

- a. Someone not caught up in the “dogma” of a particular ideology, i.e. nonpartisan/non-ideologue.**

### Ethical/Honest

- b. Open, honest and fair.
- c. Ethical person.
- d. Someone who acts with integrity; who walks the talk”.
- e. Someone who can admit when they are wrong, and can learn from mistakes (high level of maturity).
- f. Someone who will admit “what they don’t know”.

### Team/Involvement

- g. Make sure things add up; a “can-do” attitude; a sense that “we are all in this together”.
- h. Someone who is a “team player” and can work for the “common good”.
- i. Somebody who will approach County departments when considering budget changes; involve the departments in budget change considerations.

### Positive/Motivational/Respectful of Workforce

- j. Someone who understands “motivation”; building on strengths; facilitating positive change.
- k. Someone who can gain the employees’ trust and who is respectful to the work force.

### Quality/Methods

- l. Someone who understands framework for continuing quality improvement (e.g. LEAN).
- m. Somebody who recognizes...just because it works someplace else, it may not necessarily be right for Jefferson County.



## Other Thoughts

*Participants provided their ideas in the area of “Other Thoughts”, and were prompted by this question:*

- *What are other thoughts you have on characteristics or attributes of the ideal County Administrator?*

*It should be noted that time did not allow a rigorous process to determine the extent of overall agreement or consensus on these ideas.*

### Presentation Considerations

- a. Need a writing sample; research background; consider having candidates give a formal presentation on: “Their Vision for the County, Leadership and Building Trust”. See our “Building Relationships and Trust” documents which resulted from the most strategic issue in the County Government Strategic Plan:
  - Building Trust and Relationships Report
  - UW-River Falls - County Governance Assessment Survey and Report
  - Question: How would you address this?

\*This was suggested as an important concept to incorporate into the interview process. We should know why they are looking for a new job.

### Other

- b. Did individual have support of people in prior jobs (reference type check).
- c. Background: Rural? Urban? Possibly a good understanding/mix of rural and urban (because of our location).
- d. Understanding that we are in the midst of Milwaukee and Madison (while a “Central Park” of green space and agriculture.)
- e. Person has a “glass half-full” philosophy perspective (a positive thinker).
- f. Can make hard decisions and not afraid of confrontation.
- g. Does what they say; straight follow-through.

# **“Trust and Relationship Building”**

***Jefferson County***  
**Administration and Rules Committee**  
**Exercise-October 26, 2011 and Observations-January 25, 2012**  
**and**  
**Department Heads**  
**Exercise-January 11, 2012 and Observations-February 22, 2012**

## Participants

**Jefferson County  
Administration and Rules Committee:**

John Molinaro  
Jim Mode  
Greg David  
Paul Babcock  
James Braughler  
and  
Gary Petre, County Administrator  
Barb Frank, County Clerk

**Jefferson County Department Heads:**

Kathy Eisemann  
Andy Erdmann  
Donna Haugom  
Dennis Heling  
Stacie Hoffman  
John Jensen  
Stacey Jensen  
Rob Klotz  
Terri Palm Kostroski  
Tonia Mindemann  
Joe Nehmer  
Jeff Parker  
Gary Petre  
John Rageth  
Phil Ristow  
Rhonda Rohloff  
Carla Robinson  
Gail Scott  
Mark Watkins  
Roland Welsch

Facilitated and Compiled By:  
Steve Grabow, Professor and Community Development Agent  
University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County Office

February 28, 2012 Draft

# Trust and Relationship Building

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**Jefferson County  
Administration and Rules Committee  
October 26, 2011**

**AGENDA**

(Facilitated as part of the committee's monthly meeting)

**Jefferson County  
Administration and Rules Committee  
January 25, 2012**

**AGENDA**

(Facilitated as part of the committee's monthly meeting)

and

**Jefferson County  
Department Heads Workshop  
January 11, 2012**

**AGENDA**

- Review handout on "Trust" (1 minute)
- Review Executive Summary: "Governing Assessment Report" (3 minutes)
- Exercise: See Question
- Review handout of Administration and Rules Committee Exercise (1 minute)
- Follow-Up
- Adjourn Exercise/Workshop

**Jefferson County  
Department Heads Workshop  
February 22, 2012**

**AGENDA**

- Review "Trust and Relationship" Proceedings Report
- Provide suggestions or ideas to emphasize

**Section 1**  
**Trust and Relationship Building Ideas By**  
**The Jefferson County Administration and Rules Committee**  
**And**  
**Jefferson County Department Heads**

*This “Proceedings Report” documents the ideas for addressing the issue of trust and relationship building in County government from two separate, facilitated workshops. The first workshop was convened with the Administration and Rules Committee with input by the County Clerk. The second workshop was comprised of County Department Heads at one of their monthly meetings convened by the County Administrator.*

*The Jefferson County Government Strategic Plan (Approved 2010) identified the topic of communication/education/trust as the most strategic issue facing Jefferson County Government. A follow-up on-line survey and report entitled, “Jefferson County Governance Report” by the UW-River Falls Survey Research Center concluded that “...overall results from this survey suggest a need for on-going efforts to improve communications and trust on the County Board and throughout the government structure.”*

*The County Board Chair and County Administrator have supported this workshop series as a way of beginning the dialogue around ideas and options for addressing the issue of trust and relationship building.*

*This report organizes the ideas from the two workshops by themes or categories. The report also indicates whether the idea was generated by the Administration and Rules Committee (AR) workshop or Department Heads (DH) workshop. For each workshop, the same discussion question, shown below, guided the idea generating exercise. This report does not indicate the extent to which there was agreement or disagreement with each idea. Similarly, there has not been any dialogue around the relative importance or priority of these ideas.*

**Discussion Question: What are some ways to address the issues and needs of “trust” and “relationship building” in Jefferson County government?**

**Visit of Departments/Orientation/Training/Education**

- a. Consider a “Mentor Program” for new supervisors (make it more formal). (AR)
- b. Encourage (via Administration and Rules Committee) new supervisors to visit County departments for 15 to 30-minute visits. (AR)
- c. Continue formal orientation program for new supervisors. (AR)
- d. Work with the department heads to design an on-site visitation/orientation program for new and existing supervisors. (AR)
- e. Suggest training for our “leaders” on civic responsibility and the public interest. (DH)
- f. Educate the public about the role of County Government through things like Youth Government Day; Park tours/walks; etc. (DH)

- g. Encourage all Supervisors to attend the “orientation” every two years. (DH)
- h. Educate/emphasize that Supervisors represent the whole County. (DH)
- i. Orientation Ideas: Video clips giving synopsis of Departments. (DH)
- j. Department Heads should explore new ways to educate Supervisors. (DH)
- k. Develop video program on all 23 Departments (use service from County board meetings or UW-Whitewater students) or supplement those videos produced for Youth Government Day. Needs to be short clips! (DH)

### **Outreach Programs/Groups/Citizen Involvement**

- a. Implement the “Speaker’s Bureau” notion of making others aware of County government. (Seek interest from other supervisors/department heads to participate in this.)
  - Template presentation (AR)
- b. Determine the “list” of potential groups with whom we need better communication and relationships. (AR)
- c. Determine mechanism to “retain” input by public at committees (supplemental information).(AR)
- d. Supervisors avoid bad behavior to citizens at public meetings. (DH)
- e. Motivate citizens to “contact” their Supervisors. (DH)
- f. Recognize those dedicated Supervisors who do a good job of reaching out to the citizenry. (DH)
- g. Give Supervisors ideas on how to reach out to citizens. (DH)
- h. Follow meeting protocol to respect citizen input (example: Rock River Clinic hearing at Finance/Human Resources). (DH)

### **Committees/Relationships/Department Head Interaction with Supervisors**

- a. Expand opportunities with for County committee chair meetings to address relationship building. (AR)
- b. Design a dialogue among department heads and committee chairs on meeting and agenda setting. (AR)
- c. Use the Committee Chairs Committee to bring together Department Heads and Committee Chairs. (DH)

- d. Encourage County Supervisors to speak to Department Heads on important issues (create a bridge for Supervisors to meet with Department Heads). (DH)
- e. Encourage Supervisors to talk to Department Heads on “budget amendments” that have big impacts on Department operations (become familiar; get it out in the open; etc.). (DH)
- f. Supervisors avoid attacks on Department Heads in an inappropriate manner. (DH)
- g. Have the Department Heads come up with many ways to reach out/communicate with our Supervisors. (DH)

### **Resource Materials/Preparation/Background Information**

- a. Supervisors show respect of work done at the Committee level (and do homework on the reasons). Note: Some Supervisors do! (DH)
- b. Have Supervisors bring the “resource materials” provided by the Department to the meetings. (DH)
- c. Help Supervisors change their attitude so that they are prepared for meetings. (DH)
- d. Department Heads should look at ways that we can do a better job of providing key rationale for resolutions/recommendations (short bullet points). (DH)
- e. Department Heads should provide better background information on issues that go before Committees – more “guest speakers”. (DH)

### **Getting To Know Each Other/Interview**

- a. Provide opportunities for County Board members to know each other on a personal level. (AR)
- b. Interview new individual supervisors (by Board Chair) to get know them. (AR)

### **Strategic Plan (SP)**

- a. Identify our “successes” in implementing parts of our Strategic Plan. (Determine who and how to keep track of our successes.) (AR)

### **Workforce/Relationships**

- a. Figure out ways to improve relationships between County Board members and the general employees/workforce.
  - Determine ways that provide opportunities for workforce individuals to feel “comfortable” approaching and engaging County supervisors
  - Speak directly to/have conversational opportunities with workforce and supervisors (informal conversations, attend staff meetings, etc.) (AR)

## **Section 2 Observations and Next Steps**

### Observations after Department Head Workshop

- ❖ We came up with many of the same ideas as Administration and Rules Committee.
- ❖ Personal relationships: on both lists

### Follow-Up

#### Administration and Rules Committee Workshop:

- ❖ After the Administration and Rules Committee workshop, the Committee along with the County Administrator agreed that a similar workshop should be conducted at a County department head meeting. This workshop would provide opportunities to receive input on other ways to address the issue of trust and relationship building. The Administration and Rules Committee and the County Administrator will further review the collective ideas.

#### Department Head Workshop:

- ❖ Type up and share with Administration and Rules Committee

#### Administration and Rules Committee January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- ❖ See follow-up suggestion in Section 3 related to taking back to Department Heads and the need to determine preferred actions.



**Section 3**  
**Notes and Analysis from**  
**the January 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Administration and Rules Committee**

*After reviewing the Proceedings Report from the two previous workshops, the five members of the Administration and Rules Committee and County Administrator reinforced many of the ideas. Based on the frequency of ideas, it would appear they would place extra importance on suggested strategies in four areas with most interest in enhanced orientation and education:*

- ❖ ***Orientation/Visit of Departments/Training/Education***
- ❖ ***Outreach Programs/Groups/Citizen Involvement***
- ❖ ***Committees/Relationships/Department Head Interaction with Supervisors***
- ❖ ***Resource Materials/Preparation/Background Information***

*Their observations at their January 25<sup>th</sup> meeting are presented below for each of these four areas in this section. There was not a selection process to determine preferences or commitments to action on this pool of comments.*

**Orientation/Visit of Departments/Training/Education**

Orientation

- ❖ Orientation: Revamp
- ❖ Orientation for returning Supervisors
- ❖ Get all Supervisors at orientation meetings
- ❖ Always gets something out of the orientation
- ❖ Liked orientation
- ❖ Orientation: Really need to get us “up to speed” on big issues
- ❖ Went to a training: focused on “orientation”- WCA (Andy Phillips) and UW Extension’s LGC (Probst)
  - Mission
  - Strategic Plan
  - Issues
  - May take two sessions or a two-day
  - Roles: Department Head vs. County Supervisor (Policy)
  - Expand orientation
- ❖ Too much in one orientation – need a series with 2 or 3 separate sessions
- ❖ Two sessions were proposed such as:
  - 3-5 p.m.
  - Dinner
  - 6-8 p.m.
- ❖ Include this report in an orientation
- ❖ Give overview of departments as part of the orientation (or department videos)
- ❖ Like idea on department videos

### Department Visits

- ❖ Figure out logistics of visiting departments; need structure to this
- ❖ Need structure for department visits
- ❖ On infrastructure: Toured several facilities; continue this and invite other Supervisors to these tours.

### Topics of Interest for Additional Education and Training

- ❖ Need education on: “How to bring new ideas forward”
- ❖ Big County issues
- ❖ Really need to get us “up to speed” on big issues
  
- ❖ Role definition
- ❖ What is the role of Committee chairs?”
- ❖ Dealing with issues such as role of County Administrator and role of County Board Chair
- ❖ Perceptions: Micromanagement is a tenuous line – “help” to “interference”
- ❖ Difference in management vs. policy
- ❖ How do we blend “working Supervisors as volunteers”, which is a blend of policy. This is a fine line.
  
- ❖ Define difference between trust and disagreement
- ❖ Forum about o.k. to disagree
  
- ❖ Training on “Civic Responsibility” and expectations
- ❖ Obligations to serve public

### **Outreach Programs/Groups/Citizen Involvement**

- ❖ Many ideas to work on: Speakers Bureau is underway – draft script

### **Committees/Relationships/Department Head Interaction with Supervisors**

- ❖ Joint meeting with Department Heads and Committee Chairs

### **Resource Materials/Preparation/Background Information**

- ❖ Like ideas on “resource materials” – have Department Heads tell Supervisors what to bring
- ❖ Encourage Supervisors to do their “homework”

### Other Ideas for Process Follow-up:

- ❖ Bring back the Administration and Rules Committee observations to the Department Heads for them to do a similar process.
- ❖ Identify and make decisions on which specific areas and actions to pursue

**Section 4**  
**Notes and Analysis from**  
**the February 22<sup>nd</sup> Department Head Meeting**

*The Department Heads reviewed the Proceedings Report from the three previous workshops. The Department Heads placed emphasis on three areas with the most interest in enhanced orientation and education:*

- ❖ **Orientation/Visit of Departments/Training/Education**
- ❖ **Committees/Relationships/Department Head Interaction with Supervisors**
- ❖ **Workforce/Relationships**

*Their observations at their February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting are presented below for each of these three areas in this section. There appeared to be general agreement on moving forward with this short-list of strategy ideas.*

**Orientation/Visit of Departments/Training/Education**

Orientation

- ❖ Orientation Team: Gary, Phil, Barb and Steve G. will look into what we could do this year to be responsive to ideas. Mission Review/Strategic Plan Summary/Major Issues in the County.
- ❖ Touch on education pieces suggested.

Department Visits

- ❖ Stress the importance of individual appointments with departments.
- ❖ Each department should provide a one or two-page summary of what it does.
- ❖ The handout being worked on by John and the intern is a good start (summary of each department). Gary to send out a draft of these department summaries.

**Committees/Relationships/Depart Head Interaction with Supervisors**

Department Head Interaction with Supervisors

- ❖ Invite Department Heads to orientation training. This will provide (interaction) opportunities among County Board and Department Heads.
- ❖ Other Ideas: After election (wait for now). Suggest a “Committee Chair-Department Heads Joint Meeting”. This would be a “forum” for Department Head questions and dialogue with Committee Chairs.

**Workforce/Relationships**

- ❖ Council on “giving voice”/“new mechanism” is being discussed at UW as a way to provide input by the “workforce”. Something like this could be adapted for Jefferson County.

Ideas for Process Follow-up:

- ❖ Process: Will bring orientation ideas to Department Head meeting.

## **Appendix**

- Trust (One-page summary of key concepts)
- Executive Summary: Governing Assessment Report, 2011 (Excerpt)

## Trust

Why do people make jokes about used car salesmen? What made you decide on your choice of a family doctor? What distinguished your insurance agent from all others? Why do you (or don't you) enjoy working for your organization?

Diverse questions, to be sure, with many answers. But one commonality always shows up, in however diverse forms, as people answer those questions. The commonality is trust, or lack of it.

It's expressed in different ways.

"He seemed genuinely interested in helping". "He was there when I needed him". "She's the kind of person you can count on". "Around here, they make you feel like part of a team". "If he says he'll do it, it's as good as done".

Or the opposite.

"He only seemed interested in what he'd get out of it". "I got the impression he was thinking about something else when I was talking to him". "That's her promise this week. She'll have an excuse next week". "Around here, you're on your own. Nobody cares whether you succeed or fail".

Trust is the foundation of all relationships. People want to work for organizations and leaders they can trust. People buy from the companies and from salespeople whom they trust. They may not say it that way, but that's what they do.

An organization has goals, objectives - tasks to perform. But an organization is people .... people working together to accomplish organizational and personal goals. These goals are more likely to be met if there is a consistently high level of trust, both inside the organization, and with customers outside.

That statement - that trust is the key element in achieving organizational goals - runs contrary to some assumptions that have been made in business over the years. Those assumptions have run along the lines that a good product at a good price, coupled with some smooth sales techniques, will look after the sales. And that employees will be happy as long as you pay them well, and treat them fairly.

Those things may be true, but both employee and client expectations have changed in recent years, and with that change has come a greater need for integrity on the part of both leaders and employees. Trust has become an essential part of the relationship between leaders and employees, and the organization and their clients.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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(Excerpt of Executive Summary)



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# Jefferson County Governing Assessment Report, 2011

**David Trechter  
James Janke  
Shelly Hadley**

Survey Research Center Report 2011/12  
August, 2011

Staff and students working for the Survey Research Center at UW-River Falls were instrumental in the completion of this study. We would like to thank SRC staff and students, Denise Parks, Hannah Stuttgen, Aaron Peterson, Ted Cannady, Ashley Julka, Danielle Hammer, Caleb Riedeman, Jacki Roden, and Erin Ingli. In particular, Hannah Stuttgen compiled the open-ended comments for Appendix B and Erin Ingli developed the numeric summary for Appendix C. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

The SRC would also like to thank Community Development Educator Steve Grabow (UW Extension, Jefferson County Office), Jefferson County Administrator Gary Petre and Administrative Assistant Tammie Jaeger for their assistance. Finally, we would like to thank the Jefferson County workers, department chairs, elected officials and local government leaders, who took the time to complete their questionnaires.

## Executive Summary

In April of 2011, the Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls sent out invitations to participate in a survey to assess Jefferson County governing practices, functions, relationships and other governing considerations. The survey was sent to 662 people affiliated with Jefferson County government (county board supervisors, local government officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers). A total of 344 useable surveys were returned for a completion rate of 52%. Responses were received from 20 county board supervisors, 28 department heads or constitutional officers, 248 county workers, and 48 local government officials.

Based on the size of the sample and other statistical properties, the SRC believes the responses are likely to accurately reflect opinions of these participants in Jefferson County government.

Describing the Sample. The sample was equally split between men and women and participants have more formal education than the average for Wisconsin – 40% of the respondents had a 4-year college degree or more compared to 25% for the state as a whole. There was also a relatively even distribution of respondents in terms of how many years of service they had with Jefferson county (e.g. 23% had fewer than 5 years of service with Jefferson County and the same proportion had more than 20 years of service to the county).

Overall Evaluation of Jefferson County Government. About two-thirds of the respondents said that they thought that overall Jefferson County government was either “effective” or “very effective.” Only 17% of the respondents said Jefferson County government was “ineffective” or “very ineffective.” In contrast, only half the respondents said that the value of Jefferson County government, relative to taxes paid was “excellent” or “good.” Somewhat surprisingly, only 47% of county employees, the people directly delivering county services, felt that the value of their services compared to taxes paid was good or excellent.

Assessment of the County Board and Its Committees. Members of the board of supervisors and department chairs/constitutional officers were asked to assess multiple dimensions of the performance of the board and its committees. In terms of board operations and planning, there was widespread agreement that the board and its committees have effective rules but few feel the board defines clear short- and long-term goals. Similarly, board committees received relatively high ratings for having active and engaged members but low ones for doing long-term planning.

Feedback on the board's internal dynamics was relatively negative. Fewer than half said the board uses the talents of its members effectively and more respondents disagreed than agreed that the board minimizes personality differences, avoids conflicts of interest, and trust each other. There are sharp divides on the board itself with respect to these issues. The overall results of this section of the survey suggest a need for on-going efforts to improve communications and trust on the board and throughout the government structure. **These findings confirm and reaffirm the highest priority strategic issue identified in the recently completed Jefferson County Government Strategic Plan which is:**

Communication and Education. How can County government educate both the public and its own internal stakeholders about its mission and services?



UW Extension research indicates that creating an environment of trust is essential for any organization seeking a high level of success.

In terms of board function, there is general agreement that board meetings are run effectively. In contrast, opinion is evenly split between those who agree and disagree that the board avoids hidden agendas and participates in needed professional development. Compared to county board members, department heads/constitutional officers were much less likely to agree that the board reaches decisions efficiently and that the board understands the decisions it reaches. **It might be worthwhile to assemble a focus group of department heads/constitutional officers to try to identify ways in which these aspects of county board functions could be improved.**

In terms of opinions about the regularity with which the County Board reviews its strategic issues, the dominant theme is that substantial proportions of respondents said they didn't know if this was true. Given that the people who answered these questions (county board members and department heads/constitutional officers) would be expected to be intimately involved in planning, the proportion of "don't know" answers seems quite high.

Most respondents felt that Jefferson County uses its resources effectively but that county decisions are driven by the budget much more than the strategic plan. The proportion of respondents who felt the county has an adequate budget was essentially equal to the proportion who disagreed with this assessment. Interestingly, county board members seemed less certain that the current budget is adequate than did the department heads/constitutional officers.

Relations Between the Board, County Offices, and the Public. Half or fewer of the respondents agreed that the county board seeks input from the public, is accessible, respectful, honest, fair, responsive, and communicative. All groups (board members, county workers, etc.) answered these questions. County workers were significantly less likely to agree that the board possesses the qualities listed above and more likely to say that they don't know if they do.

The survey results also document some tensions between the board and county employees. Fewer than half agreed that county workers respect the board, that the board supports professional development for county workers, that the board respects county workers, avoids micromanagement, provides a good flow of information, and is trusted. Only about one-in-five agreed that county employees are politically neutral. **The general conclusion the SRC reaches from these results is that communication needs to be improved by all elements of Jefferson County government: the board, department heads/constitutional officers, and workers.**

In contrast, most respondents felt that county offices had positive relations with Jefferson County citizens. Relatively large percentages agreed that county workers were honest, accessible, respectful, fair, and well-trained. These opinions were shared by county board members, department heads/constitutional officers, and workers. Local government officials were less convinced that county offices demonstrate these characteristics.

Opinions about the degree to which Jefferson County government is open to or is practicing intergovernmental collaboration are decidedly mixed. Nearly half of all respondents (limited to

board members, department heads/constitutional officers, and local government officials) said that county offices were receptive to collaborations with other units of government.

Open-ended comments tended to support the overall conclusion from this report. Specifically, there appears to be a need to build cohesion within the county board and to improve communications between all parts of Jefferson County government.

## Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather input from Jefferson county board supervisors, local elected officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers about strategic issues facing County government. In particular, this survey examined communication and intergovernmental collaboration in Jefferson County. County officials chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to implement the survey.

## Survey Methods

In April 2011, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls emailed invitations to 662 people affiliated with Jefferson County government (county board supervisors, local government officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers). The initial invitation was followed by a reminder sent to non-respondents. A total of 344 useable surveys were returned for a completion rate of 52%.

The accuracy of the estimates included in this report depends upon how we define the “population.”

- If we consider the 662 people invited to participate in the survey as a single population, the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.6%.
- If we consider the responses of the 20 supervisors (out of the 30 people on the board), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 12.9%.
- If we consider the responses of the 28 department heads and elected constitutional officers (out of 31 in these positions), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 5.7%.
- If we consider the responses of the 248 county workers (out a total of 515 workers), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 4.5%.
- Because we didn't have a total number of local government officials, we could not estimate a confidence interval for the 48 responses we received from this group.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don't complete a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who complete their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the SRC concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.**

