USING MUNICIPAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES AND ACHIEVE SAVINGS

A Small Town Perspective
Andrea Llamas, Town of Buckland
What is Municipal Cooperation?

Between Municipalities

a. Sharing Staff
   - Formal – Written Agreement / Shared Department
   - Informal – Employee working same job in multiple towns

b. Sharing Services/Facilities
   - Formal – MOU/MOA
   - Informal – Oral Agreement/Long time practice

c. Sharing Equipment
   - Formal – Joint Ownership
   - Informal - Lending
What is Municipal Cooperation?

Regional
  a. Using Regional Resources
     ➢ Regional Council of Government/Regional Planning Agency (County)
       • RPA
       • Emergency Preparedness (REPC)
       • Local Technical Assistance
  c. Types of Participation
     ➢ By Use
       • Cooperative Inspection Services – based on activity and fees collected
       • Cooperative Purchasing – fee per bid
     ➢ By Assessment
       • Cooperative Public Health Service – assessment based on service agreement for services used
       • Franklin County Sheriff’s Regional Animal Control – flat fee based on community size
       • Veterans – assessment based on population
Types of Agreements?

Based on Population/Number of Households
   Shelburne Falls Wastewater District

Based on Use/Number of Residents Accessing/Participating
   Question: How to determine?
   Shelburne Falls Senior Center – track “units” (use per person – rolling average per # of years)

Based on Time
   Number of Hours/Days – determined by Need/Volume of Services
   Franklin COG – Accounting Program
IMPROVING SERVICES / ACHIEVING SAVINGS

Improving Services – What are improved Services?

a. More Professional/Trained Workforce – Increased Expertise
   (Hard to fill due to part-time/on-call/no benefits?)
   ➢ Increase ability to fill skilled positions
     • Town Accountant
     • Emergency Personnel – EMT/Fire
     • Police
   ➢ Reduce Turnover?

b. More Access/Time – Increased Availability/Services
IMPROVING SERVICES / ACHIEVING SAVINGS

Achieving Savings – How to Measure?

Less “Overall” Cost

- Year-to-Year – Annual Budget
- As Needed / On-Call – Longer Term (multiple years)
- One-Time – Capital Savings
IMPROVING SERVICES / ACHIEVING SAVINGS

Should you expect both improved services and increased savings?

➢ Improved Services – Better Outcomes
➢ Cost Savings – Better Budgets

What if you don’t/can’t get both? Is it still worth it?
What are the Concerns/Barriers?

Physical Barriers
✓ Distance/Proximity and Size of Communities (larger vs. smaller)
✓ Organizational Structure – who reports to who (elected vs. appointed)
✓ Demographic Differences – wealth/make up of community – tax bases
✓ Legally Distinct Entities – Regional Schools/Fire/Ambulance Districts

Past Practice
✓ The way we have always done it
✓ Current long-time personnel

Loss of Control/Accountability
✓ Who will be in Charge?
✓ How to deal with discipline/termination – if not “our” staff?

Loss of Identity
✓ What services/qualities give a town its character? What do we lose?
✓ How far do we go before we hollow out the core of our community?
✓ Merging Towns – Regionalize out of existence?