

USING MUNICIPAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE SERVICES AND ACHIEVE SAVINGS

A Small Town Perspective

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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?



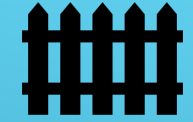
Is it still worth it?





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?**

