

**State & Local Steering Committee**  
**1/14/04**  
**Summary of Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Director Al Griffiths, Treasurer Dick Heidloff, Recorder Joyce Jensen Auditor Grant Veeder, County Attorney Pat White, Mayor, Mary Burton, Mayor Tom Hanafan, Mayor Ted Tedesco, City Manager Steve Atkins, Sen. Michael Connolly, Sen. Jeff Angelo, Rep. Rod Roberts, Rep. Delores Mertz

Also present were Bill Pederson, ISAC and Tom Bredeweg, League of Cities, Jim Nerving, Department of Management, John Pederson, Office of the Governor, Bob Rafferty, Public Strategies Group.

- 1. Introduction.** Bob Rafferty, of the Public Strategies Group, convened the meeting. Rafferty suggested the Committee be used a communications tool between the state and local government. Through dialog, different levels of government can better understand important issues that affect Iowa's future, and can move forward together.
- 2. Meeting Goal:** Establish the purpose and structure for this committee in the future.
- 3. Should Representatives From Schools be Present?**
  - The schools might fit in somewhere, but are not central to the issue
  - Schools share many state-local concerns,
  - We didn't anticipate schools prior to today. This is coming a bit too late for this group. They can become involved in the discussion later, but not directly at this gathering.
- 4. Should This Committee Become a More Formal and Ongoing Body?**
  - No decision was made in regard to "formalizing" the Committee
  - Agreement existed to meet again to further discuss the committees purpose and structure
  - Participants saw a need to continue dialog between state and local government
  - We need to make this a cohesive effort.
  - The Governor's Liaisons explained that their doors are open and encourage state and local leaders to bring important issues forward.
  - Who figures out how we adjust to the changing landscape? Without this function there are flashpoints and changes that we dance around. We need to establish a way to be civil and approach these flashpoints in a way that benefits Iowans.
  - This takes the place of the vacuum left with the dissolution of the Intergovernmental Relations Board.
  - Legislative representatives wished to be viewed as a partner in this effort

- Several organizations offered to submit a report at our next meeting on their willingness to allocate resources and time to this effort. Organizations also offered to submit topic suggestions and proposals for the committee's structure and purpose

## **5. Committee Priority and Issues**

### **A. Service Delivery**

- Is there a better way to do this? It might involve the state or local governments taking over certain service delivery areas. Who is responsible for what?
- There is a mismatch between our demand for services and our ability to fund those services. We have too much government and too few people. Are we just trying to do too many darn things?
- Some people see local government as the impediment to change, but local government wishes to be viewed as a partner and help the process of change.
- Localities may not agree with the process of transferring responsibility and funding. If the local governments hit another crisis, they want to be sure that they have control over funding streams so they can provide services to their citizens.

### **B. Levies**

- All states are different, therefore it is hard to compare across state-lines. Some have lower levies but more money through taxes. Be aware of value variables and structural differences.
- Do we need to rethink our approach to levies

### **C. Tax Credits**

- Why do we still do tax credits? The homestead exemption was put in place to be sure people were building homes – they are now.
- Civil service is very expensive and it might make sense to turn some of this over to the state.
- The reasons for some of these expenses are out-dated. We should reevaluate state-mandated costs.
- We should stop the bleeding local governments because it will cause some real harm again. If we stop the harm now we can build the trust.

### **D. Future Format**

- Recommendation to have Bill Peterson and Tom Bredeweg propose issues to discuss at the next meeting. Each of the three parties (local governments, executive branch, legislative branch) can take turns identifying the issue to engage in dialog with this committee.

## **6. Future Meeting**

- We need to address secrecy. We are not a closed working-group. If we meet at the Capitol we can demonstrate that this is an open meeting.
- It's important to find a time legislators can attend. Tuesday afternoons were suggested as a good time.
- The next meeting will be held at the Capitol on Feb 17<sup>th</sup>