2012 CALAFCO University

Shared Services and Service Efficiencies
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Overview
- Legislative Analyst's Office - Dickinson Report
- Sonoma Policy
- Practical Implications of the Policy
- Municipal Service Reviews
- Local Examples:
  - Valley of the Moon Fire and Rescue Authority
  - Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County (Kincade Valley and Windsor Fire Protection District)
  - City of Rohnert Park and the Southern Marin Fire Protection District

Legislative Analyst's Office – Dickinson Report

Scope:
- Efficiency – Are small districts less effective or efficient or effective than larger districts?
- Accountability – Are small districts less accountable to the public than larger districts or general purpose governments (cities)
- LAFCO Process – How efficient is the LAFCO process working?
Legislative Analyst's Office -
Dickinson Report Findings

- There is no common definition of a small district.
- They (LAFCOs) appear to conduct their reviews in a thorough and professional manner.
- We also find that LAFCOs vary in how they evaluate when consolidation makes sense. However, we also find that their LAFCOs do not consistently measure efficiency in their evaluations.
- A common theme they heard in the community conversations with LAFCO and special district representatives was that while LAFCOs have the authority to initiate consolidations, they are reluctant to do so if the special districts believed the consolidation would likely be opposed.

Sonoma Policy

"The Commission encourages applicants to pursue changes of organization, such as consolidations or mergers, where the result will be better services, reduced costs, and efficient administration of services after the changes in organization. Prior to initiation of any consolidation or merger, the commission recommends that various potential merging agencies enter into function agreements such as memorandum of understanding or joint powers agreement to determine the practical implications of future actions.

The Commissioner has the power to initiate consolidations and mergers. Commission shall not initiate any consolidation or merger where it determines that the commission does not have the legal authority to do so. Commission may initiate any consolidation or merger where it determines that the commission has the legal authority to do so. Any reasonable actions are made to encourage initiation of such proposals by resolution of one or more affected agencies."

All Municipal Service Reviewers will consider potential consolidations and mergers of agencies.

Part I - Engagement

"Prior to initiation of any consolidation or merger, the commission recommends the adoption of a function agreement such as memorandum of understanding or joint powers agreement...."

Part II - Practical Implications

"...leads to determining the practical implications of future actions."
Part III - Marriage

The Commission does not necessarily believe that consolidation is necessary. There are numerous desirable partnerships in government.

The Commission on Governance for the 21st Century noted that Joint Powers Agreements are valuable tools. They noted that the rapid growth of Joint Powers Agreements in recent years does not necessarily indicate increasing fragmentation in governance. Rather, it may signal the opposite, although some JPA's are formed solely to take advantage of existing surplus in all domains available, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness. The Commission's experiences with JPA's support the view that they may foster greater cooperation and coordination of services, even if only for specific purposes. They noted that there were advantages from Joint Powers Agreements, including: (1) efficiency may be obtained in providing services; (2) public improvements may be obtained without additional taxation; (3) increased provision of services may be obtained in smaller communities; (4) local decision-making may be retained; (5) organizational flexibility is achieved; and (6) local power is retained.

Part IV - If nothing?

"The Commission has the power to initiate consolidations and mergers. Commission shall not initiate proposals for consolidation or merge until: (1) there is documentation through a municipal service review or study, that such reorganization is feasible, and (2) reasonable efforts are made to encourage initiation of such proposals by resolution of one or more affected agencies."

Oh...yes

"A Municipal Service Review will consider potential consolidations and mergers of agencies."
Why this Approach?

Simply, it makes more sense to work with them and help direct them into actions they will not resist.

A key element is the MSR Reviews. They must provide the road map to improved efficiency with solid examples.

MSRs

The law requires that the MSRs address seven areas. The MSR will analyze each of the seven factors, however, the "big three" of (1) capacity and service, (2) financial ability to serve, and (3) opportunities for shared facilities will dominate the report.

When we do the MSRs for Fire Services, the "best practices" found in the functional consolidations will be used as the benchmarks.
HISTORY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTRAL FIRE AUTHORITY OF SONOMA COUNTY

CALAFCO - April 24, 2012
HISTORY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CENTRAL FIRE AUTHORITY OF SONOMA COUNTY

CALAFCO - April 24, 2012

AUTHORITY

- Authority created by the approval of the Rincon Valley and Windsor fire districts
- Authority became official on September 1, 2011

RINCON VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

- Created in 1948
- Many annexations and detachments throughout its history
- In 1993 annexed the former Bellevue FPD
- In 1997 joined the North Bay Fire Authority with the Rancho Adobe FPD and the Valley of the Moon FPD
- North Bay Fire Authority discontinued in 2000
- Special tax approved in 2000

Doug Williams, Central Fire Authority of Sonoma County
WINDSOR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

- Started as a volunteer fire company in 1965
- Became a district in 1986
- Two special taxes approved

TOWN OF WINDSOR

- Incorporated in 1991
- Did not include fire service and straddled the two districts

AFTER INCORPORATION

- Rincon Valley and Windsor passed resolutions of cooperation
- Adopted identical fire prevention ordinances and practices
OFFICE SHARING

- In 1996 the Rincon Valley offices were moved to unused space in Windsor
- Both districts began seeing a decline in revenue growth
- Positions reduced through attrition

JPA CREATION

- Large committee began meeting in 2009
- Skeleton document created and sent to legal counsel
- Worked with various internal interest groups on final wording
- Windsor FPD chief retired in July 2011

JPA EXPERIENCES

- New four-member board created (two from each district)
- New name implemented with new letterhead
- Two similar MOUs in place
- Line staffing different in the two districts
- Several iterations of org chart created
- Working on common administrative manual
- Still dealing with increased costs and declining revenues
- Found need for much more frequent staff meetings
- Still learning a variety of past practices
- Continuing to review differences in administrative packages
- Shifting more items to Central board from individual boards
- Remembered fire stations to be unique
- Creating joint safety committee
- Emphasizing joint training with neighboring agencies