

**Collaborative Governance Council
Legislative Report 2013**

Introduction

The Collaborative Governance Council was created in a bi-partisan effort by the 2010 Legislature. No funding or staff was provided for the Council. The Council is charged with making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to increase collaboration in government. Membership of the Council includes representatives from city, county, town, and school board governments as well as representatives from SEIU, AFSCME, Education Minnesota, and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

All meetings held by the Council have been open to the public and meeting materials/notices were posted on the Office of the State Auditor's website. The council held three meetings in 2011 and four meetings in 2012. All were two hours in length.

In 2011, the Council focused on reviewing Minnesota's library system, how it is funded, and its cooperative nature. Two meetings were dedicated to a variety of presenters on this topic, including the State Librarian and several regional library system directors.

The Council was impressed with how collaborative and efficient our system is at this time. The Council chose not to recommend any changes to the legislature regarding library funding. It was noted that libraries around the state are used more heavily during economic downturns by job seekers. It was understood that the state did not have additional resources to put into the system due to budget deficits, but it could be beneficial to provide greater access. No action was taken by the Council.

At its first meeting in 2012, the Council acknowledged that a report for 2011 was not submitted to the Legislature. Council members agreed that we did not need to issue a report as we had nothing to report. The Council's agenda for 2012 was to explore facilitation services available to local governments that may want to engage a consultant or professional when attempting more complex collaborative efforts with multiple partners. A representative from University of Minnesota Extension Services presented educational materials they offer to assist with this work and with fostering leadership.

The next three meetings focused on access to health care for some of our smaller rural local governments, consolidation of local governments, and the question of appointed vs. elected officials, including county auditor, treasurer and recorders. Finally, we had a presentation from a former Executive Director of a foundation that has made significant investments into potential local government collaborations. The individual shared their experiences and observations from that work as well as their current work.

In regards to health care, it was acknowledged that access to health care for all local units of government employees is important. However, due to the Federal Affordable Health Care Act (AHCA), and the court's review of it at the time, it was difficult for the Council to make a firm recommendation on any changes. The Council may review this issue again after the AHCA is completely enacted.

After reviewing the appointed vs. elected officials issue at the local level, the Council decided not to make any recommendations for change to the Legislature. It was determined that there is currently a process in place if a county wants to move to an appointed model.

At its final meeting in 2012, the Council heard from an individual about their experience in government reform, and potential collaborations. Out of this presentation, there was some interest from Council members in having the Big 4, which includes MAT, LMC, MSBA, and AMC, work on some materials and/or exercises for local officials who are interested in collaboration to use. The exercises could include role-playing activities to try out different governing models (i.e. joint powers boards and joint powers entities). The groups/associations showed some willingness to explore potential work to continue to promote and educate local officials around cooperation and collaboration to achieve efficiencies while improving service delivery.

The Council will meet again in 2013 if there are issues that are brought to its attention or areas that have been identified which need review. The Council believes that it has accomplished its statutory duties, and does not want to meet just to meet.