

Concept Proposal for Government Reorganization

D R A F T – NOT Reviewed or Approved by Committee

Underlying Concepts

Substantial but less than complete consolidation

This proposal consolidates many functional areas of City and County government, but it does not propose complete consolidation at this time.

Federation model

The proposal builds on the concept of a confederation of governments rather than a complete takeover of governmental functions by one governmental entity.

Expandable model

The proposal provides representation on the governing body for townships and/or towns that fold key services into the federation model

Communicative model

The proposed legislative body will require that city and county officials sit down together regularly, providing a forum for communications that can extend beyond the specific scope of the consolidated County

Reduction in number of elected officials

Although this proposal adds a new elective office, it actually reduces the number of local elected officials by two

Blended executive

The proposal blends the strengths of an elected head of government with the recommendations of a number of people that we add a professional layer of administration

Structural Proposal

Name

The Consolidated County of Delaware, Indiana

Governing Body

Base membership: seven

Three at-large members of the Muncie City Council will serve ex officio; if at any time there are more than three at-large members, the three members having received the highest vote totals in their most recent elections will serve

Three at-large members of the Delaware County Council will serve ex officio; if at any time there are more than three at-large members, the three members having received the highest vote totals in their most recent elections will serve

One county executive, elected at large for a four-year term. County executive chairs meetings, can vote to break ties. No veto authority.

Contingent membership: two

If at any time, one or more townships turn responsibility for firefighting (and related taxing authority) over to the Consolidated County permanently or by a contract with a period of at least four years, the township boards of all such townships shall collectively select one of their members to serve on the governing body.

If at any time, one or more municipalities other than the City of Muncie turn responsibility for highway and street maintenance (and related gas tax and other revenue) to the Consolidated County permanently or by a contract with a period of at least four years, the councils of all such municipalities shall collectively select one of their members to serve on the governing body.

Executive

County executive, elected at large for a four-year term on same schedule as county and state offices.

County administrator, appointed by county executive.

NOTE: qualifications for county administrator and for all department heads will be established by ordinance adopted by the legislative body. County executive will appoint administrator and department heads but must appoint people who meet adopted qualifications.

Public Boards

The governing body will have authority to appoint all members to the following boards; members will serve fixed terms, subject to removal for cause, eliminating the possibility of election-related replacements:

- Plan Commission
- Board of Zoning Adjustment
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Civic Center Authority
- Delaware County Airport Authority
- Redevelopment Commissions

Departments

Fire and Emergency Services

Includes professional fire department serving area within the City of Muncie at the time of consolidation, plus 911 Center, Emergency Management Services and EMT; will have authority to operate separate territories (with separate taxation) if transferred to Consolidated County by individual townships

Animal Control

Includes complete responsibility for animal control in City and unincorporated areas of County

Public Works

Includes all road, highway, bridges and related functions for Delaware County and City of Muncie; will also incorporate the duties of City Engineer, County Engineer and County Surveyor

Public Lands and Recreation

Includes current Muncie Parks, Delaware County Fairgrounds and Beech Grove Cemetery.

Building Inspection and Code Enforcement

Includes all functions of building inspection and code enforcement for Delaware County and City of Muncie with authority to provide similar services to smaller municipalities on fee-for-service basis.

Public Buildings

Includes responsibility for maintenance of all city and county buildings except those under Public Lands and Recreation.

Human Resources and Employee Benefits

Includes complete human resource services to Consolidated County, remaining elected County office holders and remaining City of Muncie. Will provide comprehensive and uniform benefits package for employees of the City, Consolidated County, remaining elected County office holders, with costs assessed to individual units.

Insurance and Risk Management

Includes insurance and risk management services for the Consolidated County, City, remaining County offices, Airport Authority, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Civic Center Authority, with costs assessed to individual units

Planning and Development

Includes redevelopment staff, plan commission staff and, possibly, future economic development staff; also includes Geographic Information Systems, which now functions directly with Planning.

Effect on City

Many functions moved to Consolidated County.

City Council remains intact.

Mayor remains.

City Clerk and City Controller will remain.

Police Department and Community Development Departments will remain as major independent functions.

Effect on County

Virtually all general governmental functions of the County will be consolidated into new entity, leaving limited need for government operations

Individually elected offices other than Surveyor remain unchanged.

County Council remains as fiscal body with authority to review budgets for individually elected offices; Council would also have legislative authority over non-consolidated functions in the unincorporated area.

Board of County Commissioners eliminated.

Property

All real property and equipment owned by City and/or County or related agencies become property of Consolidated County, which will have the responsibility to provide space for governmental functions of all units.

Tax Base

All streams of revenue dedicated to a particular function will follow that function

Property tax rates for general government functions will be uniform throughout City and areas of County outside other municipalities, except that tax rate for fire services will be determined by the City Council (in the City of Muncie) and by individual townships that choose to participate in fire territories arrangement

Legislative Authority

The governing body will have complete legislative authority for areas now in the City of Muncie or in the unincorporated areas of the County. That legislative authority will be absolute as to all matters that fall under the functional control of the Consolidated County. The City Council will have the authority to

adopt ordinances that are more restrictive than the Countywide ordinances on any matters falling under City operational responsibility (traffic, abandoned buildings).