

Muncie-Delaware County Government Reorganization Proposal

Muncie and Delaware County will be consolidated into a new entity, tentatively called the Consolidated Local Government of Muncie and Delaware County.

Legislative and Fiscal Body

There will be a 15-member Consolidated Council that will replace the city council, county council and the legislative functions of the county commissioners.

- 7 members elected at large
- 7 members elected from districts; districts will be drawn to provide separate representation from urban services area and rural services area (see below)
- County Executive (see below) will be elected at large serve as member of council and will preside at council meetings

Council will be required to meet 20 times per year (approximately two times per month, allowing for skipped meetings in some months)

Council terms will be staggered, four-year terms, with elections occurring in the general election (even-numbered) years.

Administration

The County Executive will replace the mayor and the executive functions of the county commissioners. The Executive will be elected at large and will preside at council meetings and vote in case of a tie; the County Executive will not have a separate veto.

The County Administrator will be recommended by the County Executive, based on a job description and qualifications adopted by the Council by ordinance; confirmation will require a simple majority vote at a Council meeting. Administrator may be removed for cause by the Executive or may be removed without explanation upon recommendation of the Executive and a vote of a simple majority at a Council meeting OR by the vote of 10 of the members of Council.

Financial Management

Council would adopt budget. All revenues of the local government (property taxes, state distributions, LOIT, COIT, wheel taxes) would flow through the budget process. Chief Financial Officer would be appointed by and report to County Executive; CFO would have responsibility also to report current budget data to Council. Financial management would follow a business or modern local government model, in which CFO would pay bills and disburse funds in accordance with the budget and, where relevant, approved contracts.

Service Areas and Taxing Districts

There will be four service areas and taxing districts:

- The Urban Service Area will be the area in the city limits of the City of Muncie on the day before the consolidation takes effect. Separate taxes in this area will pay for services offered only in the Urban Service Area. The major functions provided separately to this area will be city police, street lighting and professional fire protection.
- The County Service Area will include all of the area within Delaware County. All property owners in Delaware County will pay taxes to this Service Area, which will fund all general County Services.
- The Rural Service Area will include those areas that are not in the Urban Service Area and not in another incorporated city or town; property owners within this Service Area will pay a separate tax to fund services offered only to this Service Area [primarily sheriff's patrol function and any road maintenance costs paid from property taxes].
- The Rural Fire Service Area will initially be dormant. This section will provide the authority to continue rural, volunteer fire services under a general government function if at any time one or more townships no longer exist or cease to provide fire services; taxes for this service will be paid by property owners in the Service Area.

Consolidated Functions

Except for those services identified separately above, all general governmental services of the City and County will be consolidated. Those include but are not necessarily limited to: 911 service; animal control; building commissioners; controller and finance emergency medical services (subject to possible consolidation/coordination with fire protection); engineering and surveying (to be combined with planning, which is already a shared city-county function); parks and fair grounds; personnel, human resources and similar functions; redevelopment commissions (also to be combined with planning); risk management and insurance; roads, bridges and highways.

Effect on Elected Officers

County Council, County Commissioners, City Council and Mayor would all be replaced by the Consolidated Council, County Executive and County Administrator.

County Surveyor's duties will be merged with duties of Engineer and combined with planning function; office is Constitutional, so it will remain as an honorary or vacant office.

Routine financial functions of local government will be transferred from Auditor to the Chief Financial Officer; Auditor will remain with property tax duties shared with Treasurer, as they are now.

Sheriff, Coroner, Clerk, Recorder and Treasurer will remain with no effect on duties.

Process

This is an evolving document with some details still under discussion. Will deliver plan to City Council and County Commissioners before June 23, 2010. If they approve plan, it will go to vote of the people; if they fail to act, it will go to a vote of the people; if they turn it down, we need about 3900 signatures on petitions to get to a vote of the people.

For More Information

Muncie-Delaware County Government Reorganization Committee, www.mundelreorg.org