

**GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION 2010
CITY OF EVANSVILLE and VANDERBURGH COUNTY**

INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Draft: Revised August 9, 2010

I. Introduction

A. Subcommittee Members:

H. Ray Hoops, Chairman
Kurt Jourdan
Edmund L. Hafer, Jr.
Gene Warren, Jr.

B. Area of Responsibility: To review and evaluate the current status and assumed impact of reorganization on the maintenance of, and planning for, streets and roads, water, sewer, trash services, levees, storm water management, city and county garages, and other related services and infrastructures; and to report to the Reorganization Committee any recommendations for inclusion in the final Reorganization Plan.

II. Information Gathered and Reviewed

A. Interviews:

1. Dr. Phil Fisher, Project Coordinator 2005 Government Unification Proposal
2. Steven Titzer, President, Evansville Sewer and Water Utility Board
3. Ed Ziemer, Executive Director, Department of Transportation and Services
4. Kerry Kamp, Executive Assistant, Department of Transportation and Services
5. Dennis Hudnell, Superintendent of the City Garage
6. Chris Walsh, Superintendent of the County Garage
7. Jay Perry, Superintendent, Evansville – Vanderburgh Levee Authority District
8. Representative of Evansville – Vanderburgh Animal Care and Control
9. Director of Waste Management Services

B. Publications and Documents Reviewed:

1. The 2005 Government Unification Proposal and supporting documents.
2. Information (primarily web sites) from other consolidated cities
3. Evansville Sewer and Water documents including rates and fee structures.
4. Departmental budgets, organizational charts and related data.

In addition, certain members of the Infrastructure Subcommittee were involved in the 2005 Government Unification Proposal for The City of Evansville – Vanderburgh County. Through that experience they learned about reorganization efforts in other Midwestern cities. They brought that information to this subcommittee.

III. Current Structure: Areas studied by the Infrastructure Subcommittee include the following Departments, Authorities and Boards.

A. City of Evansville:

Board of Public Works: A 3 member board appointed by the Mayor and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. The Board of Public Works provides control and direction to the Division of Transportation and Services. In addition, this board awards contracts, approves claims, and performs other duties for departments of the city if the department does not otherwise have a governing board or commission.

Division of Transportation and Services: A City of Evansville Department headed by the Director of the Division of Transportation and Services. The Director is appointed by the Mayor and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor. The Division of Transportation and Services provides services in 7 areas:

1. Street Maintenance Department
2. Traffic Department (for the City and County)
3. Metropolitan Evansville Transportation Service (“METS”—City only)
4. Animal Control (for the City and County)
5. Urban Forestry
6. Cemeteries
7. City Maintenance Department

City Civil Engineer: A City of Evansville Department headed by the City Engineer. The City Engineer is appointed by the Mayor and serves at the pleasure of the Mayor.

B. Vanderburgh County:

County Highway Garage: A Vanderburgh County Department headed by a Superintendent who is appointed by the County Commissioners and serves at the pleasure of the Commissioners.

County Engineer: A Vanderburgh County Department headed by the County Engineer. The County Engineer is appointed by the County Commissioners and serves at the pleasure of the Commissioners.

C. City and/or County (Countywide Services):

The Waterworks Department (Evansville Water and Sewer Utility): A City of Evansville Department providing services generally countywide. The Waterworks Department is under the direction and control of the Water and Sewer Utility Board. The Utility Board is made up of 5 members who are appointed by the Mayor and serve four year terms with no term limits. No more than 3 members of the Utility Board may be of the same party.

In addition to sewer and water services, this department provides trash collection for residential customers in the City of Evansville.

Evansville-Vanderburgh County Levee Authority District: A combined City and County Department under the direction of a 3 member board appointed for 3 year terms (or until their successors are appointed). The board is composed of 2 members appointed by the Mayor and 1 member appointed by the County Commissioners. No more than 2 members of the board may be from the same political party.

IV. Objectives of the Subcommittee: To provide a recommendation with particular emphasis on identifying (a) areas of duplication, (b) possible economies of scale in operation and finance, (c) potential areas for consolidation, and (d) the improvements that could result from consolidation.

V. Findings: The infrastructure in the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County is already highly consolidated. This consolidation appears to have taken place with a high level of cooperation and minimal friction. Thus, we anticipate fewer changes and less impact in this sphere as a result of government consolidation.

1. The Evansville Water and Sewer Utility provides water, sewer, trash and related services on a fee basis to residents of Evansville and Vanderburgh County. The president of the Utility Board did not feel that consolidation would have a significant impact on the operations of this department. In a follow up interview, he expressed a slight concern that consolidation might produce unrealistic expectations for service in areas where it was not feasible. On further reflection and discussion with others, it was decided this was not a concern. Since the functions are funded by user fees, it was felt that the financial considerations would obviate problems of elevated expectations. It was noted that under the current operation, residents who live outside the city but who are tied into the municipal sewer system pay a higher rate for water usage than those living in the City.
2. The cost for street lighting is paid out of the City's share of the County Option Income Tax. Consideration should be given to moving the provision of street lights to a "Utility Department", and billing this on a fee for service arrangement, as is now done with sewer and trash collection.
3. The current position of Director of the Division of Transportation and Services should become a Chief Operating Officer or Vice Mayor/Deputy Mayor who would oversee the Board of Public Works as well as appropriate departments currently within the County. This individual should hold professional credentials and oversee virtually all operating departments. This person would serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. The Mayor should have hiring authority but only under the requirements of a formal job description submitted for review to the merged council.
4. The City and County Garages, and both Street/Road Departments, should be consolidated into one operation. Both locations at "North Garage" and "South Garage" should be maintained, with the Superintendent of the consolidated operation located at the current City Garage. An Assistant Superintendent, which would be a new position, should be placed at

the current County Garage. City Maintenance should be consolidated but kept as a separate crew. The Superintendent should report directly to, and serve at the discretion of, the Mayor. Consolidation of street maintenance should produce some efficiencies. Currently, the County paves roads using County equipment and employees, while the City contracts out this work, sometimes contracting with the County. Merger should allow for a more efficient mix of these paving options.

5. The separation of storm-only sewers a responsibility of the City Garage should become the responsibility of a County Board of Public Works. The County Commissioners currently serve as the County Drainage Board, with the elimination of the County Commissioners the duties of the Drainage board should be moved to the office of County Surveyor.
6. There is no identifiable impact of consolidation on the activities of the Levee Authority. Budget approval would change as a result of governance changes, but that would not be expected to have any discernable impact on their provision of services.

VI. Proposed Plan:

1. The Board of Public Works should continue under the current structure subject to any changes recommended by the Governance Subcommittee.
2. Services currently provided by the Division of Transportation and Services should be merged with the City Engineer, County Engineer, and the County Highway Garage, resulting in a countywide Department of Transportation and Services. The department head should continue to be appointed by the Mayor.
3. The Waterworks Department (Evansville Water and Sewer Utility) should continue under its current structure. Consideration should be given to moving street lighting to this department and providing street lighting on a fee for service basis rather than as part of any tax rate. This would result in a countywide Utility Department providing water, sewer, trash pickup and street lights, all on a fee for service basis. Details of the financing aspects of this recommendation are a matter for the Finance and Tax Subcommittee to determine.
4. The Evansville-Vanderburgh County Levee Authority District should continue under its current structure.