

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
50TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 8, 1987

The meeting of the Local Government Committee was called to order by Chairman Norm Wallin on April 8, 1987 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 312-F of the State Capitol.

All members were present with the exception of Rep. Bulger, Rep. Gilbert, Rep. Hoffman and Rep. Ramirez who were excused and Rep. Kitselman who was absent.

CONSIDERATION OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 14: Senator Delwyn Gage, Senate District 5 and sponsor of the resolution, stated it requested a study of the consolidation of counties in trying to cut the counties at least in half in Montana. He stated Rep. Ramirez had a bill that set up a commission to look at consolidation of counties and also services. SJR 14 indicates that it is tied to HB 744 and if HB 744 passes, the resolution would be void.

Senator Gage stated he was not sure what could be accomplished with consolidation as far as costs and did not think anyone did and that was the purpose for setting up a study. The study would be brought back to the Legislature so there would be available to the counties what they could do and what they would encounter when considering consolidation. He stated the determination of whether or not to consolidate would be left to the counties.

Senator Gage stated that consolidation may cause inconveniences in counties, but there are a lot of people who do not use the services the courthouses offer. He stated many of the courthouses are very old facilities and the question of what to do with all the courthouses could be brought out in the study. He stated some could be torn down or condemned. He commented, other facilities such as jails, that counties are now working on cooperative agreements in regards to jails. Those things can be done under present state law. With the study, all the problems involved with consolidation of counties would be available to the people in the counties to look at and see the alternatives.

He stated the argument of why look at the spending at the county level when the state level is out of control is a copout. The legislature could do many things on the state level to cut state spending but the counties and school districts could negate everything that was done as far as the cost to the taxpayers. He said as far as looking at

state government or any other government that the money is still coming from the taxpayers whether it be for the county, state, school district or wherever.

Senator Gage commented that it makes sense before going into a program to know what was being looked at. SJR 14 would give some understanding of what would be faced, the problems and the possibilities.

PROPONENTS: None.

OPPONENTS: Mons Tiegen, MT Stockgrowers Association, stated on the subject of county consolidation that the people in his area would be quite concerned as to what might come from such an endeavor. He said that is not to say that a state study might not be in line but that a positive reaction would not be found on the part of most of his people. He stated Petroleum has probably done the best job of coping with the fact that it should never have been created and the people would not want to merge with Fergus County or consolidate services. He stated they are satisfied with their county and courthouse the way it is and stated those would be the things that would be needed to be coped with.

DISCUSSION (OR QUESTIONS) ON SJR 14: Rep. Dave Brown asked why Butte was left off the list for places of public hearings?

Senator Gage replied the list was put on the resolution to be in line with Rep. Ramirez's bill. The list could be expanded or decreased.

Rep. Brown asked if there would be any objection to adding Butte to the list.

Senator Gage indicated there would be no problem.

Rep. Pistoria asked if Senator Gage would agree to Toole, Glacier, Pondera and Teton being consolidated into one county?

Senator Gage responded that he did not know anything of what would be encountered if that was considered.

Rep. Hansen commented that state government grew so rapidly partly because of the expansion of the number of counties and asked if that was addressed in the resolution?

Senator Gage responded state government was not addressed in the bill as to the work because of the 56 counties. He said there would be a impact because of dealing with

programs for 56 counties rather than 28 if counties consolidated to that number.

Rep. Brandewie commented that Flathead County spent approximately \$8 million on a new justice center and he would hate to see other counties spending that amount for the same thing. He asked if most of the savings would come from not duplicating facilities?

Senator Gage replied that would be part of the savings. Another part would be cutting down on elected officials and also savings would be possible in the consolidation of staffs. He said these are all areas that need to be explored along with the facilities.

Chairman Wallin commented that school consolidation has met with quite a lot of opposition and asked if Senator Gage suspected these same loyalties would spill over on the consolidation of counties.

Senator Gage suspected that would be true. He said the turf battles would be one of the biggest problems to overcome.

Senator Gage, in closing, stated it was necessary for the legislature to take a lead in this. Without a study of this kind, noone would have a handle on what kind of savings there might be in consolidation of counties and if it gets to the point where consolidation of counties and school districts became forced, at least the legislature would know what they were doing. For those reasons, he asked the committee to give a favorable consideration to SJR 14.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

DISPOSITION OF SJR 14: Rep. Hansen moved that SJR 14 BE CONCURRED IN.

Rep. Dave Brown moved to amend SJR 14, on page 3, following line 3, insert "Butte".

Rep. Brown commented that whether or not the committee was considering passing the resolution, he felt Butte should be included on the list for public hearings with the other four largest cities of the state.

The question was called and the motion carried unanimously.

Rep. Jan Brown moved to amend SJR 14, on page 1, line 8 of the title and on page 2, lines 10 and 11, to delete "reducing the number of counties to 28 or fewer".

She stated cutting the counties in half might be going to far. The commission would need more flexibility.

Rep. Hansen objected to the amendment and felt a targeted number was needed.

The question was called on the motion and the motion failed.

Rep. Whalen moved to add Bozeman to the other larger cities for holding public hearings. He withdrew his amendment after discussion.

Rep. Hansen moved that SJR 14 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED. The motion carried with Rep. Jan Brown, Rep. Gould and Rep. Pistoria voting no.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.



Rep. Norm Wallin, Chairman

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

April 3

19 97

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on LOCAL GOVERNMENT

report SJR 14

do pass
 do not pass

be concurred in
 be not concurred in

as amended
 statement of intent attached

Chairman

Rep. Norm Wallin

Page 3.

Following: line 3

Insert: "(ii) Butte"

Renumber: subsequent sections

4721
THIRD

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color

DAILY ROLL CALL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEE

50th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1987

Date _____

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
REP. NORM WALLIN, CHAIRMAN	✓		
REP. RAY BRANDEWIE, VICE CHAIRMAN	✓		
REP. BUDD GOULD	✓		
REP. REP. TIMOTHY WHALEN	✓		
REP. PAULA DARKO	✓		
REP. TOM BULGER			✓
REP. JAN BROWN	✓		
REP. BOB GILBERT			✓
REP. LARRY GRINDE	✓		
REP. WALTER SALES	✓		
REP. STELLA JEAN HANSEN	✓		
REP. PAUL PISTORIA	✓		
REP. ROBERT HOFFMAN			✓
REP. LES KITSELMAN		✓	
REP. JACK RAMIREZ			✓
REP. DAVE BROWN	✓		
REP. CAROLYN SQUIRES	✓		

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
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April 14, 1987

The meeting of the Local Government Committee was called to order by Chairman Norm Wallin on April 14, 1987 at 9:00 a.m. in Room 312-F of the State Capitol.

All members were present with the exception of Rep. Jan Brown and Rep. Jack Ramirez who were excused and Rep. Tim Whalen and Rep. Tom Bulger who were absent.

CONSIDERATION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 55: Rep. Dave Brown, House District 72 and sponsor of the bill, stated the resolution was a committee bill put together because of the committee's desire to do something about the problems of state lands in the area of exchanges and to study all the state land issues.

PROPOSERS: None.

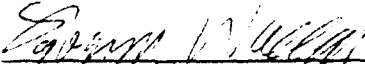
OPPOSERS: Dennis Hemmer, Department of State Lands, stated if there was a study they would cooperate fully and provide whatever would be needed. He stated he rose in opposition because he thought the measure was basically driven by the bill the committee heard regarding an exchange. He stated they have looked at the exchange and that issue and there was no solution short of a legislative mandate or leaving it to a decision of the Board. He felt there would not be a lot gained if the study were done because of that exchange.

EXECUTIVE ACTION

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 55: Rep. Gould moved to DO NOT PASS HJR 55.

Rep. Gilbert moved as a substitute motion to TABLE HJR 55. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.


Rep. Norm Wallin, Chairman

DAILY ROLL CALL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEE

50th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1987

Date

4/1/87

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
REP. NORM WALLIN, CHAIRMAN	✓		
REP. RAY BRANDEWIE, VICE CHAIRMAN	✓		
REP. BUDD GOULD	✓		
REP. REP. TIMOTHY WHALEN		✓	
REP. PAULA DARKO	✓		
REP. TOM BULGER		✓	
REP. JAN BROWN			✓
REP. BOB GILBERT	✓		
REP. LARRY GRINDE	✓		
REP. WALTER SALES	✓		
REP. STELLA JEAN HANSEN	✓		
REP. PAUL PISTORIA	✓		
REP. ROBERT HOFFMAN	✓		
REP. LES KITSELMAN	✓		
REP. JACK RAMIREZ			✓
REP. DAVE BROWN	✓		
REP. CAROLYN SQUIRES	✓		

