



Options for the Organization of Municipal Government in Wisconsin

January 27, 2020



Forms of Government Available

- Council/Manager under Wis. Stat. Ch. 64
- Commission form under Wis. Stat. Ch. 64
- Mayor/Council under Wis. Stat. Ch. 62



Council/Manager Form

- Organized under Wis. Stat. Ch. 64
- Duties of the Manager are set by statute
 - Serves as Chief Executive Officer
 - Appoints and supervises all department heads
 - Presents monthly reports and accounts to Council
 - Council President has no veto authority
- Termination of Manager requires statutory procedure
- Council/manager cities do not have a Mayor
- Used by 10 cities in Wisconsin



Commission Form of Government

- Not currently in use by any City in Wisconsin
- Commission consists of Mayor and two Council members, elected at large
- Six year terms for each member of commission
- Mayor and two commissioners serve full-time



Mayor/Council Form

- Duties of Mayor set by Wis. Stat. § 62.09(8)
 - Chief Executive Officer of City
 - Takes care that all ordinances and laws are enforced and all employees discharge their duties
 - Has veto power to acts of the Council
- Council has the ability to establish position of City administrator under this form



What are the differences?

City without Administrator

- Mayor exercises authority under Wis. Stat. § 62.09(8)
 - Directly supervises daily operations
 - Department heads report to Mayor and receive assignments from Mayor

City with Administrator

- Mayor exercises authority under Wis. Stat. § 62.09(8)
 - Indirect executive responsibility
 - Monitors activities of administrator and departments
- Administrator
 - Reports to Mayor and Council
 - Directly supervises daily operations
 - Supervises department heads



Duties of a Mayor with an Administrator

- Serves as CEO of city
- Presides over Council
- Monitors activities of administrator
- Sees that ordinances and laws are enforced
- Serves as policy leader for community
- Holds tie vote at Council
- Has veto power over Council
- Chief media representative
- Receives public comments and complaints and works with administrator to resolve
- All other duties not mentioned as specified by Wis. Stat. § 62.09(8)



What is everyone else doing?

Forms of Government Currently in Use in Wisconsin



What forms are currently in use?

Municipal Government Structure in Wisconsin

Table 1. Combined Wisconsin Forms of Government

Forms	City	Village	Total	%
Council-Manager	10	8	18	12.8%
Mayor-Council-Administrator Appointed/Approved	58	35	93	66.0%
Strong Mayor-Council without Administrator	24	0	24	17.0%
Weak Mayor/-Council without Administrator	4	2	6	4.2%
Total	96	45	141	100%

Nollenberger, K., & Simmons, J. (2016). Municipal government structure in Wisconsin: Does form matter? *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*, 2(2), 82-100. doi:10.20899/jpna.2.2.82- 100



What are our peers doing?

Administrator/Manager

- Oshkosh (Manager)
- Janesville (Manager)
- Sheboygan
- Wauwatosa
- Fond du Lac
- Beloit (Manager)
- Menomonee Falls (Manager)*
- Oak Creek
- Sun Prairie
- West Bend
- De Pere
- Two Rivers (Manager)
- Kiel

No Administrator or Manager

- Green Bay
- Appleton (discussing)
- New Berlin
- Wausau
- Brookfield
- Greenfield
- Franklin (dept. of admin.)
- Superior (advisory ref.)
- Stevens Point
- Neenah
- Watertown



How would we change?

What steps would Manitowoc need to take to create the position of administrator or manager?



To Change to Council/Manager

- Charter ordinance to change form of government to be organized under Wis. Stat. Ch. 64
 - Subject to petition and referendum
 - Effective third Tuesday in April
- Develop job description and set salary for manager
- Most managers expect a contract



To Change to Council/Mayor with Administrator

- Develop job description and set salary
- Determine daily responsibilities of administrator
- Establish position by charter or regular ordinance
 - Charter ordinance subject to petition and referendum
 - Effective third Tuesday in April
- Most administrators expect a contract



Charter Ordinance

- Must specify it is a charter ordinance and what provisions of the charter are amended
- Initiated by the Council or submitted to public for a vote
- Requires 2/3 vote of Council to be valid if not sent for referendum
- Requires majority vote if sent for referendum
- Must be published as a Class 1 notice and submitted to Secretary of State



Other considerations

- Mayor
 - Full time or part-time
 - Potential salary adjustment
- Logistics
 - Office location and space
 - Assistant
 - Vehicle allowance



Questions?