



Winnebago County  
*The Wave of the Future*

2021 Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

***Board of Supervisors Size Recommendation***



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*The Wave of the Future*

***“Good boards are, very simply, high-functioning work groups. They are distinguished by a climate of respect, trust, and candor among board members and between the board and management. Information is shared openly and on time; emergent political factions are quickly eliminated.”*** (Source: **“What Makes Great Boards Great”** [Harvard Business Review](#) 80(9):106-13, 126, October 2002)

# Background

- Standing issue for constituents and community leaders
- Authority to Reduce Board of Supervisors Size - WI Statute 59.10
- Number of supervisors has been reducing since Act 10 in 2006, allowing for the “right sizing” of county boards
- Winnebago County Actions:
  - November 1990 (31 years ago)
    - ***“Winnebago County Task Force of Government Efficiency and Effectiveness”***
      - **Winnebago County had the second largest county board in the nation out of 3044 counties with 45 supervisors**
      - **Recommended a minimum of 15 and maximum of 30 supervisors to improve efficiency**
      - **Reduced board size to 38 (7 members)**

# Background

- October 31, 2001
  - ***“Winnebago County Exploration Committee Final Report”***
  - **Committee restructuring and supervisor pay**
- 2006 - 2007
  - **Findings from a *“Temporary Committee on County Board Size”***
  - **Citizen request to reduce size to 18 supervisors**
  - **Committee recommended reduction to 28 supervisors to be implemented following the 2010 Census report**
  - **Noted number of supervisors to be adequate for rural representation and complete committee, board and commission coverage**
  - **Supervisors took no action in 2010**

# Current State

- All surrounding counties have reduced board size to 25 – 26 members, including considerably larger, Brown county
- Winnebago and Outagamie Counties remain at 36 members
- Wisconsin Counties Association recommends one supervisor for every 10,000 constituents, +/- 10 percent

# Current State

- **Current Board Size by Adjacent/Comparable Counties (Source UW Extension/WCA)**

(Maximum 47 members allowed by law)

- **Winnebago: 36**
- **Outagamie: 36**
- **Brown: 26**
- **Fond du Lac: 25**
- **Sheboygan: 25**
- **Washington: 26**
- **Other counties with 30 or more supervisors: Dane, Marathon (72 to 38 in '06 due to area size), Sauk, Dodge, Jefferson, Oconto and Outagamie**
- **Only Dane, Marathon, Outagamie and Winnebago have over 35 supervisors.**

# Current State

## Supervisors by Constituent Population (2010)

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Constituents per Supervisor</u>
• Winnebago:	166,994	4,639
• Brown:	267,296	10,280
• Outagamie:	173,656	4,824
• Fond du Lac:	101,633	4,065
• Washington:	131,887	5,047
• Marathon:	136,234	3,585
• Dane:	556,189	15,032

# **Judiciary & Public Safety Committee Recommendation for Winnebago County**

- **28 supervisors strikes a balance between a maximum size allowed supervisors of 47 and a minimum of 18**
- **28 supervisors would each serve about 5,964 citizens (2010 Census); approximately an additional 1,325 constituents**



# Impact on Voting/Representation

<u>Votes Required:</u>	<u>36 Districts:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>28 Districts</u>	<u>%</u>
Majority	19	53	15	54
1/3 for negative quorum	12	33	10	36
2/3 for override veto	24	67	19	68
3/4 for bonding	27	75	21	75

- Percentages rounded up; 28 supervisors slightly increases the voting power of individual supervisors

# Committees, boards, commissions

- **Current board rules (23.1) provide for 12 standing committees of 5 members each, plus (1), the Legislative Committee with 15 county board members (including County Board Chairman/Vice Chairman, Board, Commission and Committee Chairpersons)**
- **At 28 members, 24 supervisors qualify for 2 committees and 4 qualify for 3 committees (down from 12 at 3 committees), plus Legislative Committee service for 15 members**
- **Other boards and commissions provide additional opportunity for supervisor involvement**

# Rationale for Board "Right Sizing"

- **Constituent/community leader long-standing request to further reduce board size**
- **Wisconsin Counties Association redistricting presentation, recommended the "ideal district size" of 10,000 constituents per supervisor (with 10 percent +/-)**
- **Winnebago and Outagamie boards, at 36 members, remain the largest in the NE WI region**
- **Possible benefits include: more competition for elected positions (hopefully translating to qualified/experienced/engaged candidates; fewer board vacancies, appointments and write-in candidates who lack a vetting process); increased communication and decision-making ability; reduced administrative cost, etc.**
- **Constituents maintain and possibly increase access to supervisors due to the smaller number; large enough to maintain rigorous rural representation**

# Respectfully Submitted:

**Winnebago County  
Judiciary and Public Safety Committee  
Bill Wingren, Chairman  
Tom Ellis, Vice Chairman  
Vicki Schorse, Secretary  
Paul Eisen \*  
Michael Braun**

**\* Special thanks to Supervisors Eisen and Schorse for research on this issue and preparation of this document. Supervisor Eisen maintains an extensive archive of Winnebago County board discussion and actions on this issue.**