



Jefferson County Governing Assessment Report, 2011

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Executive Summary

In April of 2011, the Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls sent out invitations to participate in a survey to assess Jefferson County governing practices, functions, relationships and other governing considerations. The survey was sent to 662 people affiliated with Jefferson County government (county board supervisors, local government officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers). A total of 344 useable surveys were returned for a completion rate of 52%. Responses were received from 20 county board supervisors, 28 department heads or constitutional officers, 248 county workers, and 48 local government officials.

Based on the size of the sample and other statistical properties, the SRC believes the responses are likely to accurately reflect opinions of these participants in Jefferson County government.

Describing the Sample. The sample was equally split between men and women and participants have more formal education than the average for Wisconsin – 40% of the respondents had a 4-year college degree or more compared to 25% for the state as a whole. There was also a relatively even distribution of respondents in terms of how many years of service they had with Jefferson county (e.g. 23% had fewer than 5 years of service with Jefferson County and the same proportion had more than 20 years of service to the county).

Overall Evaluation of Jefferson County Government. About two-thirds of the respondents said that they thought that overall Jefferson County government was either “effective” or “very effective.” Only 17% of the respondents said Jefferson County government was “ineffective” or “very ineffective.” In contrast, only half the respondents said that the value of Jefferson County government, relative to taxes paid was “excellent” or “good.” Somewhat surprisingly, only 47% of county employees, the people directly delivering county services, felt that the value of their services compared to taxes paid was good or excellent.

Assessment of the County Board and Its Committees. Members of the board of supervisors and department chairs/constitutional officers were asked to assess multiple dimensions of the performance of the board and its committees. In terms of board operations and planning, there was widespread agreement that the board and its committees have effective rules but few feel the board defines clear short- and long-term goals. Similarly, board committees received relatively high ratings for having active and engaged members but low ones for doing long-term planning.

Feedback on the board's internal dynamics was relatively negative. Fewer than half said the board uses the talents of its members effectively and more respondents disagreed than agreed that the board minimizes personality differences, avoids conflicts of interest, and trust each other. There are sharp divides on the board itself with respect to these issues. The overall results of this section of the survey suggest a need for on-going efforts to improve communications and trust on the board and throughout the government structure. **These findings confirm and reaffirm the highest priority strategic issue identified in the recently completed Jefferson County Government Strategic Plan which is:**

Communication and Education. How can County government educate both the public and its own internal stakeholders about its mission and services?

UW Extension research indicates that creating an environment of trust is essential for any organization seeking a high level of success.

In terms of board function, there is general agreement that board meetings are run effectively. In contrast, opinion is evenly split between those who agree and disagree that the board avoids hidden agendas and participates in needed professional development. Compared to county board members, department heads/constitutional officers were much less likely to agree that the board reaches decisions efficiently and that the board understands the decisions it reaches. **It might be worthwhile to assemble a focus group of department heads/constitutional officers to try to identify ways in which these aspects of county board functions could be improved.**

In terms of opinions about the regularity with which the County Board reviews its strategic issues, the dominant theme is that substantial proportions of respondents said they didn't know if this was true. Given that the people who answered these questions (county board members and department heads/constitutional officers) would be expected to be intimately involved in planning, the proportion of "don't know" answers seems quite high.

Most respondents felt that Jefferson County uses its resources effectively but that county decisions are driven by the budget much more than the strategic plan. The proportion of respondents who felt the county has an adequate budget was essentially equal to the proportion who disagreed with this assessment. Interestingly, county board members seemed less certain that the current budget is adequate than did the department heads/constitutional officers.

Relations Between the Board, County Offices, and the Public. Half or fewer of the respondents agreed that the county board seeks input from the public, is accessible, respectful, honest, fair, responsive, and communicative. All groups (board members, county workers, etc.) answered these questions. County workers were significantly less likely to agree that the board possesses the qualities listed above and more likely to say that they don't know if they do.

The survey results also document some tensions between the board and county employees. Fewer than half agreed that county workers respect the board, that the board supports professional development for county workers, that the board respects county workers, avoids micromanagement, provides a good flow of information, and is trusted. Only about one-in-five agreed that county employees are politically neutral. **The general conclusion the SRC reaches from these results is that communication needs to be improved by all elements of Jefferson County government: the board, department heads/constitutional officers, and workers.**

In contrast, most respondents felt that county offices had positive relations with Jefferson County citizens. Relatively large percentages agreed that county workers were honest, accessible, respectful, fair, and well-trained. These opinions were shared by county board members, department heads/constitutional officers, and workers. Local government officials were less convinced that county offices demonstrate these characteristics.

Opinions about the degree to which Jefferson County government is open to or is practicing intergovernmental collaboration are decidedly mixed. Nearly half of all respondents (limited to

board members, department heads/constitutional officers, and local government officials) said that county offices were receptive to collaborations with other units of government.

Open-ended comments tended to support the overall conclusion from this report. Specifically, there appears to be a need to build cohesion within the county board and to improve communications between all parts of Jefferson County government.

Survey Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gather input from Jefferson county board supervisors, local elected officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers about strategic issues facing County government. In particular, this survey examined communication and intergovernmental collaboration in Jefferson County. County officials chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls to implement the survey.

Survey Methods

In April 2011, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls emailed invitations to 662 people affiliated with Jefferson County government (county board supervisors, local government officials, the county's constitutional officers, department heads, and county workers). The initial invitation was followed by a reminder sent to non-respondents. A total of 344 useable surveys were returned for a completion rate of 52%.

The accuracy of the estimates included in this report depends upon how we define the “population.”

- If we consider the 662 people invited to participate in the survey as a single population, the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.6%.
- If we consider the responses of the 20 supervisors (out of the 30 people on the board), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 12.9%.
- If we consider the responses of the 28 department heads and elected constitutional officers (out of 31 in these positions), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 5.7%.
- If we consider the responses of the 248 county workers (out a total of 515 workers), the estimates are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 4.5%.
- Because we didn't have a total number of local government officials, we could not estimate a confidence interval for the 48 responses we received from this group.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don't complete a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who complete their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the SRC concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.**

In addition to numeric data, respondents provided additional written answers. **Appendix B contains the compilation of the comments.**

Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a complete quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

We collected two pieces of demographic data about the respondents, their gender and their educational level. As Table 1 indicates, the sample is equally split between males and females and is, compared to the state as a whole, highly educated. Only 13 percent of the sample had a high school diploma or less compared to 45 percent of the adult population in Wisconsin. (Note: 338 out of the 344 respondents completed the demographic profile.)

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents							
	Count	Male	Female				
Sample	338	51%	49%				
Wisconsin	5,599,420	50%	50%				
		Less than High School	High School	Some College/ Tech	2-Year College Degree	4-Year College Degree	Grad Degree
Sample	338	0%	13%	31%	17%	27%	13%
Wisconsin	3,693,307	11%	34%	21%	9%	17%	8%
Source: U.S. Census, American Fact Finder Database, http://www.factfinder.census.gov/							

We also gathered some basic information about the respondents' role in Jefferson County (board supervisor, department head or constitutional officer, county worker or local government official) and the number of years they have served in this capacity. Figure 1 shows that the sample is dominated by people who work for the County but are not department heads or constitutional officers. There are a similar number of county board supervisors (20) and department heads/constitutional officers (28) and about twice that many local government officials (48) in the sample.

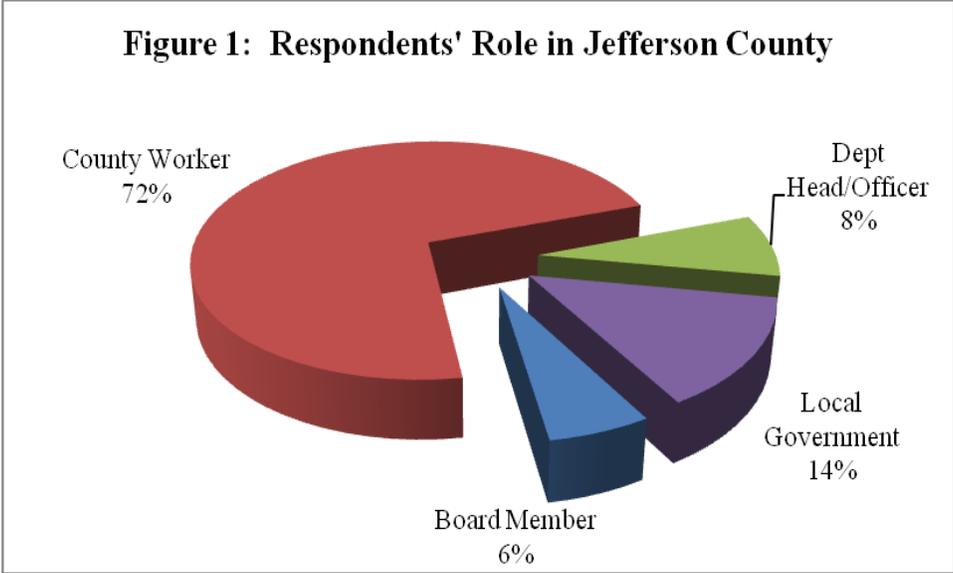
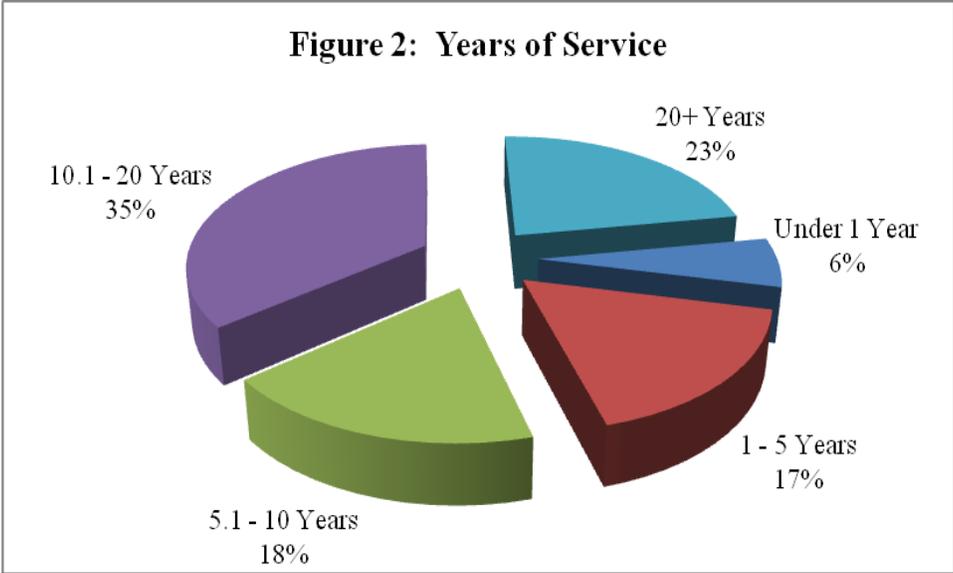


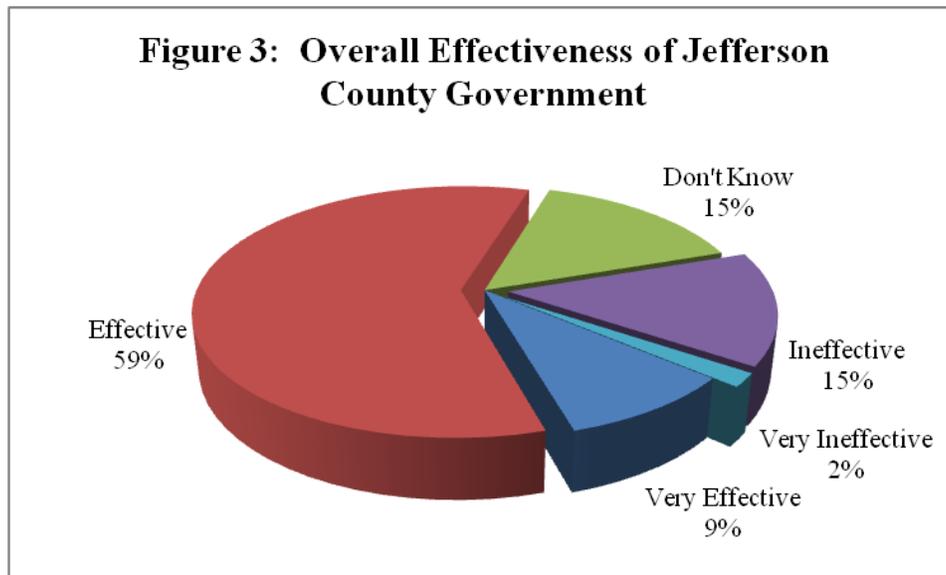
Figure 2 shows that the distribution of workers in terms of the number of years of service they have with the County is fairly even. There are similar numbers of those with relatively few years of service (23% had five or fewer years of service) as those with long-term tenure in the County (23% have more than 20 years of experience).



Throughout this report, we will note when there are statistically significant differences of opinion based on these demographic features (gender, education level, role in the County, and length of service to the County).

Overall Indicators of Jefferson County Government Performance

The survey sought the opinions of respondents with respect to two overall indicators of county government performance. Figure 3 indicates that about two-thirds of the respondents think that Jefferson County government is either “effective” (59%) or “very effective” (9%). This is 4 times as many respondents as said they think that County government is “ineffective” (15%) or “very ineffective” (2%).

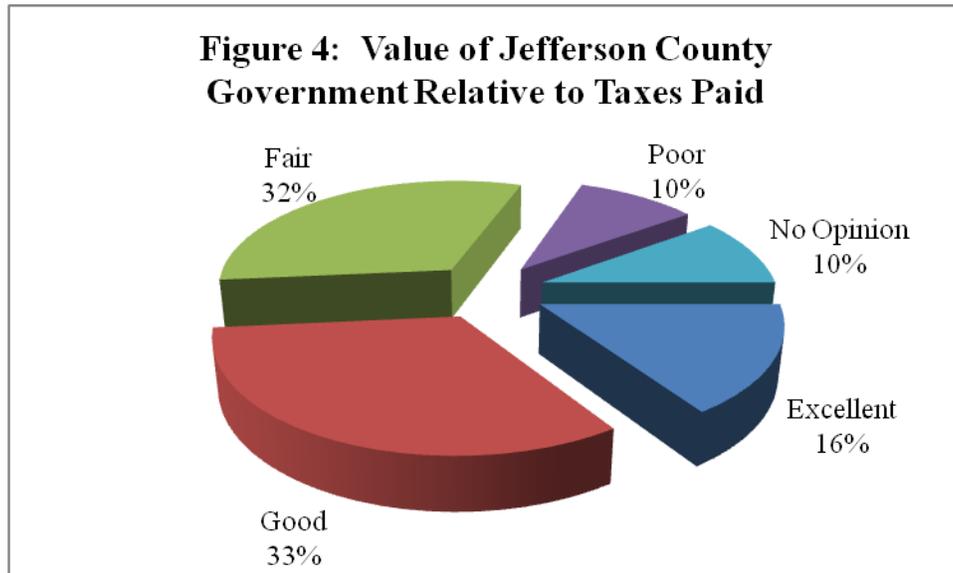


In terms of how different demographic groups assess the overall effectiveness of Jefferson County government, there are several statistically significant differences:

- Members of the board of supervisors (85%) and department heads/constitutional officers (86%) were more likely than local officials (69%) or county employees (65%) to say that county government is effective or very effective. Local officials and county employees were also more likely to say they had no opinion about the overall effectiveness of county government.
- Females (75%) were more positive about Jefferson County governmental effectiveness than were males (63%).
- Confidence in county government’s effectiveness tended to increase with educational attainment. Only 50% of those with a high school diploma thought Jefferson County government was effective or very effective, which rose to 74% for those with a graduate degree.

The other key indicator of overall performance was a question that asked for respondents’ opinions about the value of Jefferson County government services relative to taxes paid. We have summarized respondents’ opinions in Figure 4. About half the respondents said that the value of Jefferson County governmental services compared to taxes paid was either good (33%) or excellent (16%). Nearly as many felt the value of Jefferson County governmental services compared to taxes paid were only fair (32%) or poor (10%). In short, there is some ambivalence

about the value of county governmental services relative to taxes among a substantial minority of respondents.



Ambivalence about the value of Jefferson County governmental services is not spread equally across the different demographic groups. In particular:

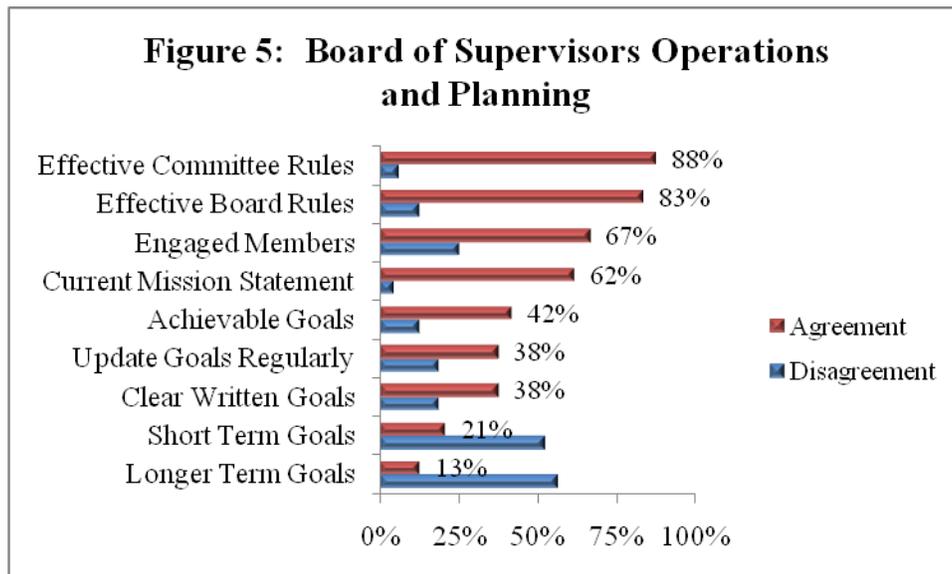
- Local government officials are particularly skeptical about this value proposition, with only 28% saying the value of county government services compared to taxes are good or excellent. Surprisingly, only 47% of county employees, the people directly delivering county services, felt that the value of their services compared to taxes paid was good or excellent. In contrast, 71% of department heads/constitutional officers and a whopping 85% of county board supervisors felt the services delivered compared to taxes paid was excellent or good.
- Again, men were significantly less supportive of the value of County services (43% said they were good or excellent values) than were women (55% in the good or excellent categories).
- Though not as consistent as was true for the overall effectiveness of Jefferson County government, generally, as educational levels rose, so did the percentage of respondents saying that the value of County services relative to taxes paid is good or excellent. For example, only 33% of those with only a high school diploma felt this way compared to 52% of those with graduate or professional degrees.

Assessment of the County Board and Its Committees

The performance of the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors was examined in a number of dimensions by the survey. In the figures in this section, the SRC has collapsed response categories for ease of discussion. We combined the “strongly agree” and “agree” responses into an “agreement” category and “disagree” and “strongly disagree” into a “disagreement category.

Respondents also had a “don’t know” option in these questions and we will note items for which high percentages of respondents selected this option. Only board supervisors and department heads/constitutional officers answered the questions in this section of the report, so Figures 5 – Figure 10 represents the collective opinions of 48 respondents.

In Figure 5, we have summarized a battery of questions asking about the effectiveness of operations and planning on the county board and its committees. There was widespread agreement that the rules governing both the board and its committees are effective – more than 4 out of every 5 respondents felt this way. Roughly two-thirds of all respondents feel that board members are generally active and engaged and that the board’s mission statement is current and up-to-date.



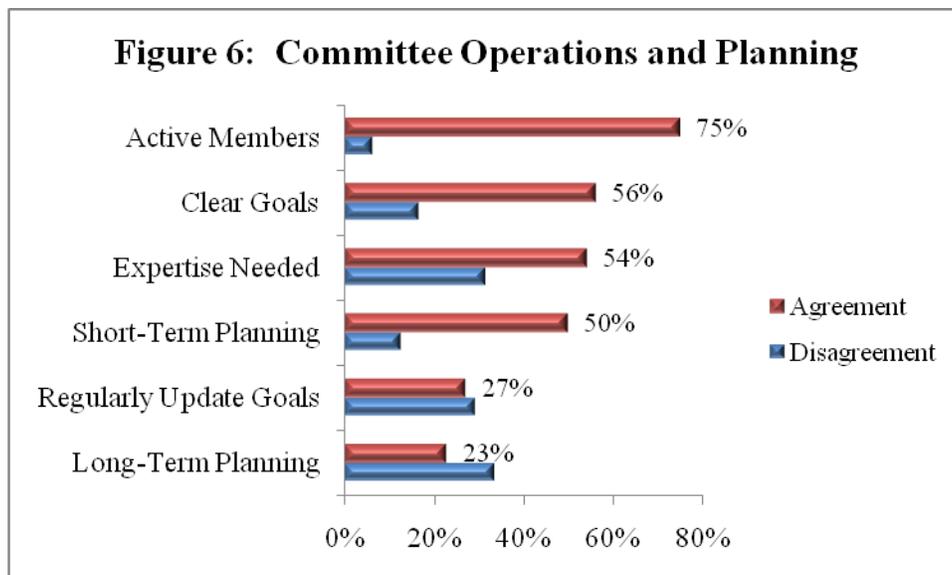
There is much less agreement about the other items in Figure 5. Only about 40 percent feel that the goals identified in the recently completed strategic plan are achievable, that these goals are updated regularly and they are written down and clear to all. These three elements all had more respondents in the “don’t know” category than in either the agreement or disagreement categories – about 45 percent of respondents selected “don’t know” for each of these elements. This clearly indicates that additional communication efforts are called for with respect to the goals of the strategic plan and on-going examination of progress toward realization of the stated goals and/or their modification.

Relatively high proportions of respondents disagree that the Board agrees on what needs to be accomplished in the next 1-2 years (short-term goals) or 3-5 years (longer-term goals). Approximately 30 percent of the respondents said they “didn’t know” about the board’s agreement about short and longer-term goals.

There are relatively few statistically significant differences between how board members and department heads/constitutional officers view the performance items shown in Figure 5. Board members (90%) agree in significantly higher proportions than do department heads/constitutional officers (78%) that the board has effective governing rules. Similarly, the board (80%) is much

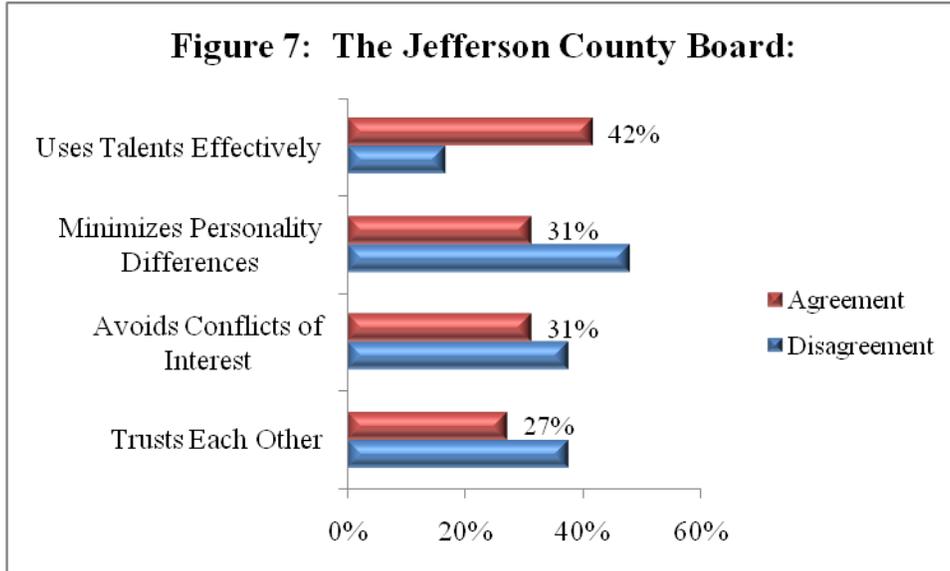
more likely to agree that its mission statement is current than are department heads/constitutional officers (48%).

Figure 6 summarizes feedback on operations and planning of the County Board committees. Approximately three-quarters of the respondents feel that committee members are generally active and engaged. About half the respondents agreed that committees have clear goals, have members with the expertise needed to be successful and that the committees engage in short-term planning. It is interesting to note that roughly twice as many said committees do short-term planning as said that the County Board as a whole has short-term goals (Figure 5). Slightly higher percentages disagreed than agreed that the committees regularly update their goals and engage in long-term planning. Again, roughly 40% of respondents said they didn't know if the committees engage in short or longer term planning and if they regularly update their goals.



The only demographic differences in terms of how respondents assessed the performance of County Board committees were gender-based. Men were much more certain that these committees had short-term goals (60% of men agreed compared to 36% of women) and the expertise needed for success (67% of men vs. 29% of women).

Slightly less than half the respondents said that the Jefferson County Board uses board members' talents effectively; the same proportion said they didn't know if this was true. For all the other items in Figure 7, more people disagreed than agreed with the statements. About one-third of the respondents said that personality differences on the Board are minimized (compared to 48% who disagreed) and that conflicts of interest are avoided (compared to 37% who disagreed). About one-quarter agreed that board members trust each other (compared to 37% who disagreed). Relatively high proportions of respondents said they "didn't know" about the degree to which personality differences are minimized (21%), conflicts of interest are avoided (31%), or that board members trust each other (35%). Interestingly, none of the respondents "strongly agreed" with any of the items in Figure 7.



The only statistically significant difference is with respect to whether or not board members trust each other. Department heads/constitutional officers were significantly more likely to say that they didn't know whether this was true or not.

Table 2: Board Opinions about Relationships on County Board		
Item	% Agreeing	% Disagreeing
Board Uses Talents Effectively	35%	20%
Board Minimizes Personality Differences	40%	45%
Board Avoids Conflicts of Interest	35%	45%
Board Members Trust Each Other	45%	40%

Perhaps the most interesting results from the data underlying Figure 7 is with respect to the opinions of the members of the Board. Table 2 summarizes these opinions and indicates a stark divide. Other than utilizing board members' talents effectively, there are comparable proportions who disagree as agree with these statements. Further, as noted above, none of the supervisors strongly agreed with any of the statements in Table 2 but some said they strongly disagreed with all of them. Thus, the strength of opinion is stronger in the "disagreeing" column of Table 2 than in the "agreeing" column.

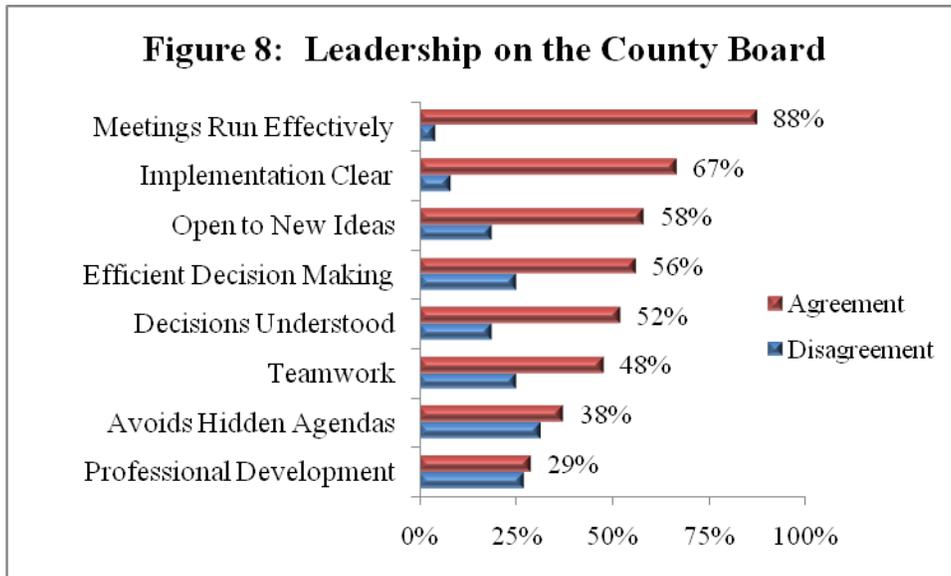
From an outsiders' perspective, the results summarized in Figure 7 and Table 2 suggest a need for on-going efforts to improve communications and trust on the board. These findings confirm and reaffirm the highest priority strategic issue identified in the recently completed Jefferson County Government Strategic Plan which is:

Communication and Education. How can County government educate both the public and its own internal stakeholders about its mission and services?

UW Extension research shows that organizations must create an environment of trust in order to achieve success at a high level. Regarding the workplace, employees who are trusted and given more say over how they do their jobs are more engaged, more committed and more productive. Leaders must value and believe in people.

There is nearly universal agreement that County Board meetings are run efficiently and two-thirds of respondents said that responsibilities for implementation of decisions is clear (Figure 8). Approximately half of the board members, department heads, and constitutional officers said that the board is open to new ideas, makes decisions efficiently, understands the decisions they make, and encourages teamwork.

On the other hand, approximately equal proportions of respondents agreed and disagreed that the board avoids hidden agendas and obtains needed professional development. High proportions of respondents said they didn't know if the board participates in needed professional development opportunities (44%) and avoids hidden agendas (31%).



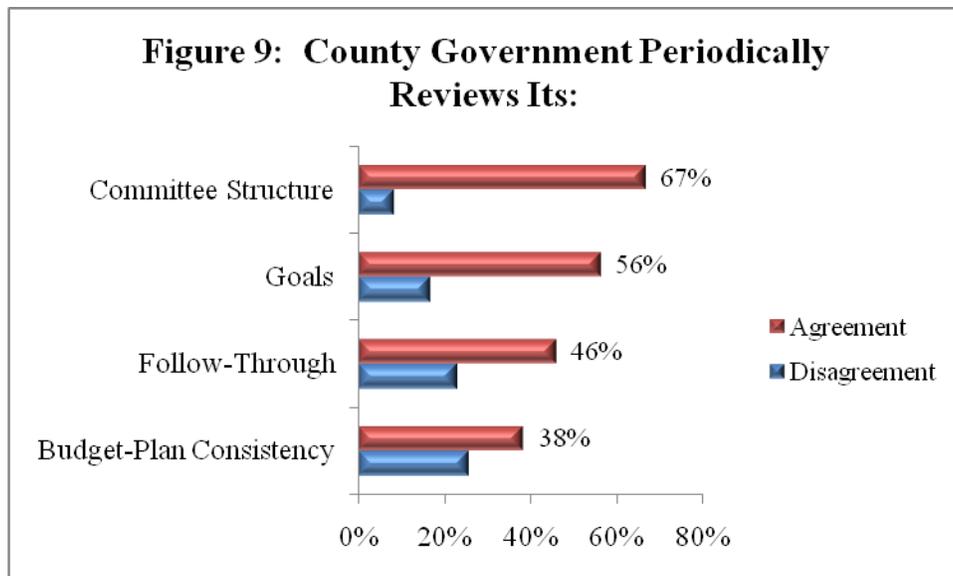
In terms of statistically significant differences, department heads/constitutional officers were more likely to say they didn't know if board meetings were run effectively than were board members. In addition:

- 75% of board members agreed that the board reaches decisions efficiently compared to only 43% of department heads/constitutional officers.
- 75% of board members agreed that they understand decisions they reach compared to only 35% of department heads/constitutional officers.

It might be useful to convene a focus group of department heads and constitutional officers, facilitated by someone outside of Jefferson County, to identify ways in which they feel the efficiency of board decisions and the comprehension of those decisions could be improved.

Figure 9 indicates that about two-thirds of the board and department heads/constitutional officers feel that Jefferson County government periodically reviews its committee structure and about half feel it reviews its strategic goals and the effectiveness of the follow-through on decisions. A plurality (38%) feels that the County reviews the consistency of its strategic plan with its budget reality.

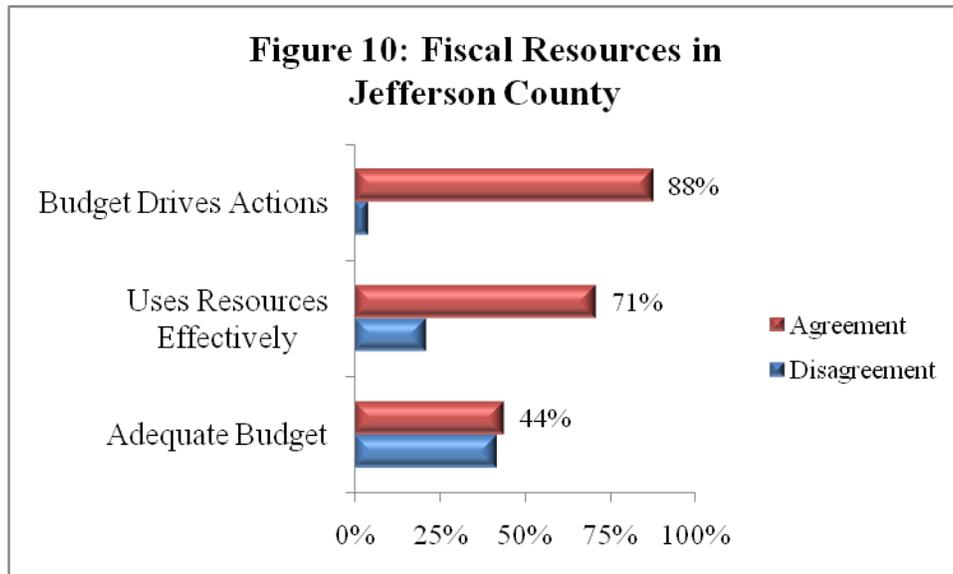
However, nearly as high a proportion of respondents said they “don’t know” (36%) if the County reviews the consistency of its budget and strategic plans, as said they agreed the County did and another one-quarter disagreed with this statement. In general, there were a relatively high proportion of respondents who said they “don’t know” about all of the items in Figure 9, ranging from 25% for reviewing the committee structure to 36% for the consistency of the budget and strategic plan.



There were no statistically significant differences by demographic category or position for the items in Figure 9.

A very high proportion of board members and department heads/constitutional officers agree that budget availability drives County actions more than its strategic plan (Figure 10). There is also relatively wide-spread agreement that the County uses its resources effectively. In contrast, there is an even split between those who feel the County has sufficient fiscal resources to achieve its goals (44%) and those who disagree with this assessment (42%).

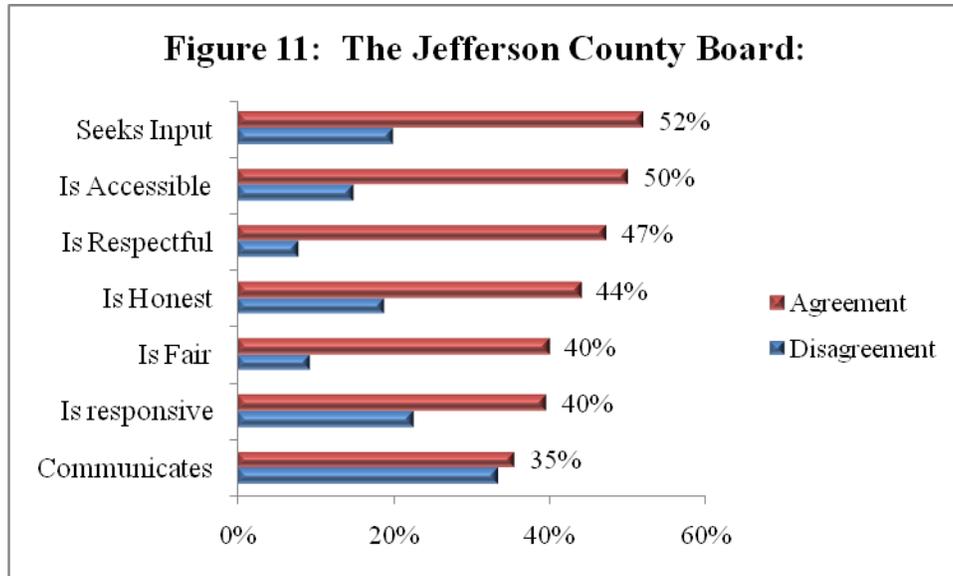
Looking at the items in Figure 10 in terms of how different groups view these issues provides some interesting results, both in terms of significant differences of opinion and for results that are not significant. Surprisingly, department heads/constitutional officers (28%) were more likely to disagree that the County uses its resources effectively than were board members (10%). The degree to which people agreed that the County uses its resources effectively tended to increase, modestly, as the level of formal education increased.



While not statistically significant, it is interesting that board members are more pessimistic about the adequacy of the County’s budget than department heads/constitutional officers. For the board, 50% disagreed that Jefferson County’s budget is adequate compared to 35% who felt it is. For department heads/constitutional officers, only 36% felt the budget was inadequate compared to 50% who felt it was adequate.

Assessment of Relations between the Board, County Workers, and the Public

In this section of the report, the SRC will summarize responses to a series of questions asking about relations between the board and county offices, between the board and the public, between county and local governments, and between county offices and the public.



In Figure 11, we have summarized the opinions of the approximately 340 respondents; board supervisors, department heads/constitutional officers, county workers, and local government officials who answered these questions. About half the respondents agreed that the County Board provides sufficient opportunities for citizens to provide input, is accessible to the citizens of Jefferson County, and treats constituents with respect.

With respect to all the items in Figure 11, except for communicating effectively with county residents, there are many more in the “don’t know” category than in the “disagreement” category. A whopping 51% said they didn’t know if the board treats the public fairly or not.

There are roughly equal numbers of respondents who agree (35%), who disagree (33%), and who have no opinion (31%) about the effectiveness with which the Board communicates with the public.

There were a significant number of differences of opinion regarding the County Board’s relationship with the citizens of Jefferson County based on the position held by the respondent. In particular, compared to the other groups, county workers were less likely to agree with the statements in Figure 11 and more likely to say they don’t know. Table 3 summarizes these response patterns. *We have included both the percentage of county workers who agreed with the statement and, in parentheses, the percentage who said they didn’t know.* **The results of Table 3 suggest that many county workers don’t feel they have very much information about how well the County Board works with the residents of the county. Local leaders in Jefferson County will need to decide if this lack of information is important and needs remediation.**

Local officials and department heads/constitutional officers tended to have very similar levels of agreement with the statements in Table 3.

Figure 12, on the following page, summarizes the opinions of about 290 County Board supervisors, department heads/constitutional officers and county workers. The only statement endorsed by close to a majority of respondents was that county employees respect Board

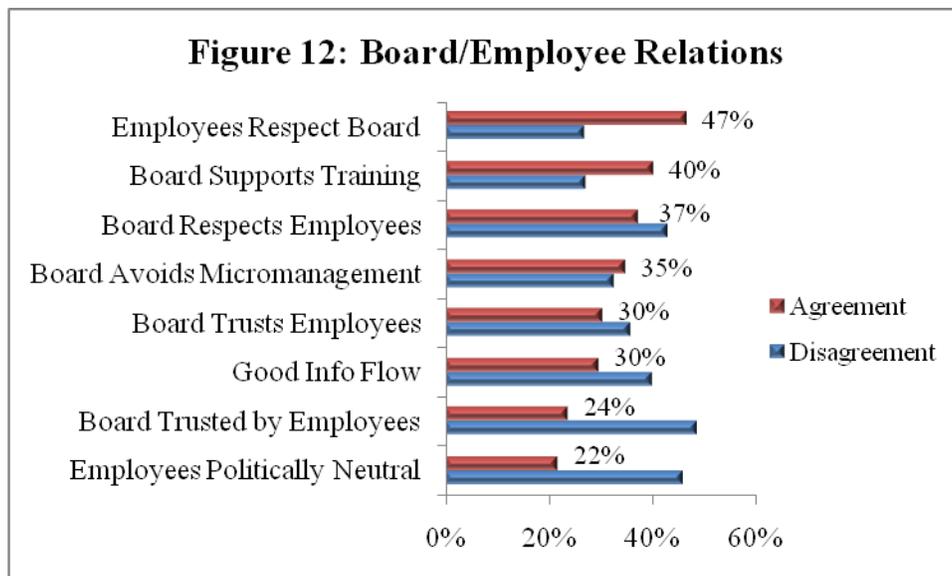
members (47% agreed). Further, a clear plurality agreed with only one other item in Figure 12 – 40% agreed that the Board supports the training needs of county employees compared to 27% who disagree.

Table 3: Percent Respondents Who Agree the County Board:				
Statement	Board Members	County Workers (% Don't Know)	Dept Head/ Const. Officer	Local Official
Seeks adequate public input	90%	42% (35%)	93%	65%
Is responsive to public	85%	29% (45%)	71%	54%
Is respectful to public	95%	38% (53%)	68%	65%
Is fair to citizens	90%	30% (59%)	57%	60%
Communicates effectively to public	55%	29% (35%)	50%	50%
Is accessible to public	80%	43% (40%)	68%	65%
Is honest with public	75%	35% (43%)	65%	65%

There is a roughly equal balance between those who agree and those who disagree with three statements: board respects employees (37% agree/43% disagree), board avoids micromanagement (35% agree/33% disagree), and board trusts employees (30% agree/36% disagree).

For three other statements the proportion who disagree with the statements are substantially greater: there is an effective flow of information between the board and county offices (30% agree/40% disagree), the board is trusted by employees (24% agree/49% disagree), and employees are politically neutral (22% agreed/46% disagreed).

Except for the statement that the Board respects county employees, for which only 20% responded that they didn't know if this was true, all the other items in Figure 12 had between one-quarter and one-third of the respondents opting for the “don't know” response.



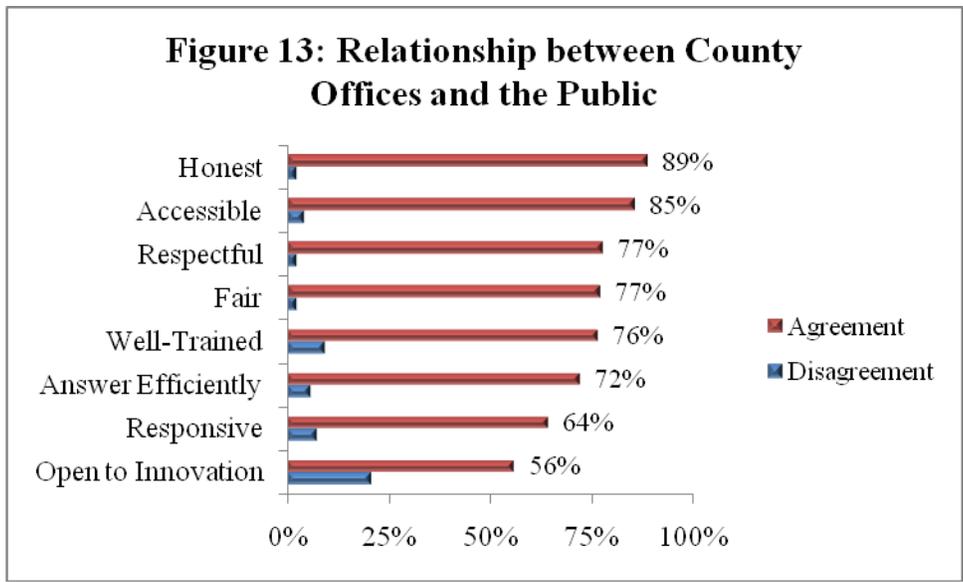
When we look at the responses to the questions summarized in Figure 12 by the position held by the respondent, we find many significant differences. **The overall pattern that emerges from the information in Table 4 is one in which the Board is consistently more positive about the relations between themselves and county workers, the workers are much less positive, and department heads/constitutional officers occupy a middle ground.**

Table 4: Significant Differences in Opinions about Board/Employee Relations, Percent Agreeing			
Statement	Board	Workers	Dept Heads/Officers
Board Supports Training	50%	36%	74%
Board Respects Employees	75%	32%	57%
Board Avoids Micromanagement	75%	29%	57%
Board Trusts Employees	75%	25%	46%
Good Information Flow	70%	23%	57%

For both the items in Figures 11 and 12, a lack of communication across the different participants in Jefferson County’s government seems to be at the root of many of the results. Further, the gaps in communication suggested by Figure 12 and Table 4 indicate that all of the participants in county government should improve their communications. For example, 74% of the department heads/constitutional officers agree that the board supports needed training/professional development for employees but less than half the workers, who presumably receive this training, feel this is so. **This suggests that either the training needs are not being adequately communicated by the workers to the board and department heads, or the board and department heads are not identifying and giving sufficient credit for the training offered. Likewise, a large majority of the board say they respect and trust county employees, but that does not appear to be filtering out to the department heads/constitutional officers and workers.**

Finally, this survey was completed during the time when the controversy surrounding Governor Walker’s budget repair bill was front-page news. It is impossible to know the extent to which the Governor’s proposals influenced the outcome of this survey but it would strain credulity to maintain that they had had no impact.

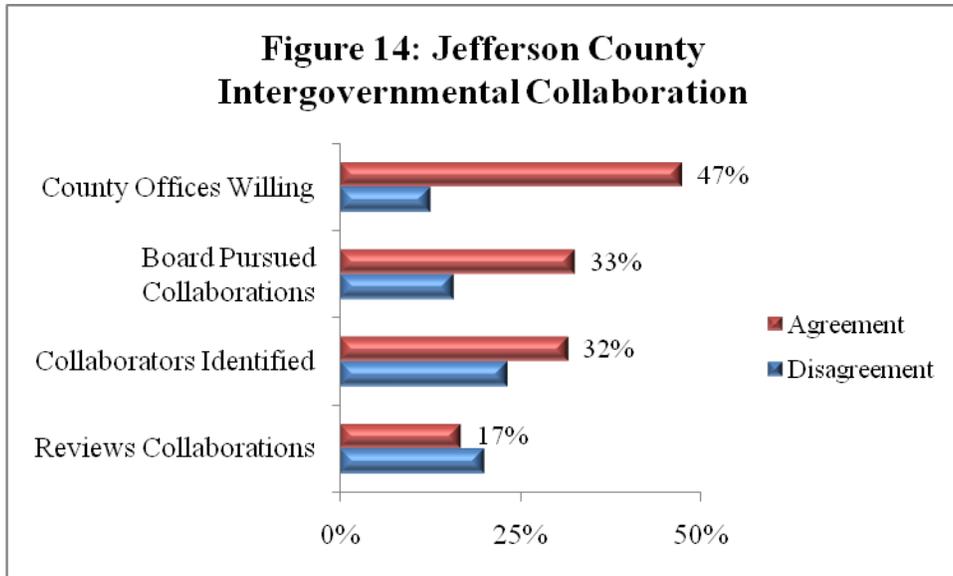
Figure 13 suggests there is a positive relationship between Jefferson County government offices and the general public. This set of questions was answered by all four groups participating in the survey (board members, county workers, department heads/constitutional officers, and local government officials). Approximately three-quarters or more of all respondents said that county workers are generally honest and trustworthy, accessible to the public, treat the public respectfully, treat citizens fairly, are well trained to do their jobs, and answer questions efficiently. More than half said they agree that county offices are responsive to citizens and are open to innovation. With respect to being open to innovation, nearly as many said they disagreed (21%) or that they didn’t know if this is true (24%), as were in agreement with this statement (56%).



There are a substantial number of statistically significant differences across demographic groups with respect to the items in Figure 13.

- Women agreed in significantly higher proportions than men that county offices treat citizens respectfully, are fair to them, answer questions efficiently, are accessible, are staffed by well-trained people, and are innovative.
- Those who have worked for Jefferson County for longer periods of time tend to agree in higher proportions that county offices are accessible, staffed with well-trained people, are staffed by people who are honest and trustworthy, and are innovative.
- Local government officials, compared to the board, workers, or department heads/constitutional officers, were less likely to agree that county offices are responsive to citizens’ input, answer questions efficiently, are well-trained for their jobs, are honest and trustworthy, and are open to innovation. Digging a bit deeper into the data, the key difference in these questions was a much higher proportion of local government officials who said they “didn’t know” if these statements were true or not. Finally, county workers tended to occupy the middle ground between the board and department heads/constitutional officers (who tended to agree in higher proportions) and local government officials.

Opinions about the degree to which Jefferson County government is open to or is practicing intergovernmental collaboration are decidedly mixed. Nearly half of all respondents (limited to board members, department heads/constitutional officers, and local government officials) said that county offices were receptive to collaborations with other units of government, but one-third or fewer of the respondents agreed with the other items in Figure 14. The dominant answer for these question was “don’t know” – 63% said they didn’t know if the county reviews its collaborations, 52% didn’t know if the board pursues collaborations, 45% didn’t know if the county has identified collaborations it would like to pursue, and 40% didn’t know if county offices were open to collaborative arrangements.



There were no statistically significant differences across demographic groups.

Additional Comments

Respondents were also given the opportunity to complete an open-ended question that asked, “Please add any comments that you would like considered that would enable Jefferson County to provide better service in the future.” A total of 113 respondents completed this question and their comments are compiled in Appendix B. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the topic areas into which the SRC subdivided the comments. Many of these comments support some of the key themes identified in this report. In particular, several comments identified a need for additional communication between the board and county offices.

Board member comments called for greater openness on the board and improved efficiencies in future county government operations.

Because there were many more county workers who responded to the survey than people from the other groups (board, department heads/constitutional officers, local government), it isn’t surprising that the bulk of the comments came from this group. Two categories in particular dominated these comments: comments about being a county worker and comments about the county board. With respect to comments about being a county worker, a number of responses focused on what they perceived as a lack of respect. Typical of these comments were:

Also, employees should be looked at as a resource. Respect employees, value them - ask them to give input into budgetary difficulties. Employees are on the front lines and know their jobs and departments. We need to have an environment of trust which I feel is pretty much non-existent at this point.

Employees will buy into the county policies when given the opportunity and information to buy into the programs.

It would be helpful for the county to have the employees review their supervisor on a yearly basis to provide better quality services for the department.

Table 5: Responses to the Open-Ended Question: *Please add any comments that you would like considered that would enable Jefferson County to provide better service in the future.*

Comment Category	Number Responses
Board Comments (Total)	8
• Improve Board Functions	3
• Survey Process Comments	3
• Improve County Gov't Functions	2
County Worker Comments (Total)	88
• Employee and Staff Comments	24
• County Board Comments	20
• Departmental Concerns	10
• Budget Concerns	8
• Meeting Issues	4
• Workplace Stress	3
• Miscellaneous	13
Dept Head/Constitutional Officer Comments (Total)	9
• Board Suggestions	5
• Positive Board Comments	2
• Miscellaneous	2
Local Government Official Comments (Total)	9
• Collaboration	3
• Board Concerns	3
• Survey Concerns	3

In terms of comments about the County Board, typical comments included:

I believe county board members should spend time with county employees and that way they might get a feel for the county [workers] and what they do for the county.

I think not all, but a good number, of the County Board members only see employees as a fiscal number, not as someone doing a job for the public. However, I do believe that

everyone involved in county government tries to treat the general public fairly and with respect. Wish it were the same the other way around sometimes.

Personal agendas should not be placed in front of the overall welfare and concern for the citizens of Jefferson County as a whole.

Several of the staff comments about dealing with budget issues and workplace stress reflected the current tensions within the state regarding funding state and local government. This stress was also reflected in comments from the department heads/constitutional officers. As one said,

It seems at times that county officials are short sighted in terms of departments/agencies protecting their departmental or agency interests rather than looking at the bigger, countywide picture and effect of decisions. We all have the same goal, which is to be as efficient as possible, while providing the best services to our citizens, despite diminishing financial resources to accomplish this. The less politics is brought into county government, the better. We all have jobs to do, and we are all on the same team. Given the current climate in local and state politics, it is even more important to work together.

Comments from local government officials were evenly split between comments about collaboration (mostly that they are open to it but haven't seen much thus far), county board operations (including a couple calling for more collaboration on the board), and concerns about the survey itself (e.g. lack of information about some questions they were asked to complete).

Conclusions

This survey suggests that most of those involved with county government in Jefferson County believe that, overall, services are being delivered to residents in an effective manner (Figure 3). There is more ambivalence about the value of those services relative to the taxes paid to support them (Figure 4). Skepticism about the value of county services was significantly higher among local government officials and, surprisingly, among the county workers who deliver those services.

One block of survey questions focused on governmental operations. In terms of effectiveness of operations and planning on the board of supervisors, most respondents give higher marks for board operations than they do for planning. Relatively few respondents felt that the board clearly identifies short and long-term goals, for example. This general pattern is also somewhat true of respondents' opinions about the operations and planning of the county board's committees. These committees are given relatively high marks for having active members but relatively weak ones for long-term planning and updating strategic goals (Figure 6). In terms of the internal dynamic of the county board, the results of this survey suggest a relatively sharp divide on the board with comparable proportions agreeing and disagreeing that they minimize personality differences, avoid conflicts of interest and trust each other (Table 2). Perhaps reflecting this divide, the board gets high marks for the effectiveness with which it runs its meetings but much weaker ones with respect to teamwork and avoiding hidden agendas (Figure 8).

A second block of questions asked about relations between the board, county offices, and the public. About half of the respondents said the board seeks input from Jefferson County residents but only about one-third felt that the board did a good job of communicating with the public (Figure 11). **Improving communications within county government and with the citizens of Jefferson County is a key theme of this report. These findings confirm and reaffirm the highest priority strategic issue identified in the recently completed Jefferson County Government Strategic Plan which calls for improved communication and education about Jefferson County's mission and services.** Along these lines, there were a number of significant differences between what the board thinks and what workers and department heads/constitutional officers think about board/employee relations (Table 4). Many of these differences (e.g. board respect for and trust of employees), might be reduced with improved communications. Most respondents felt more positive about the relationship between county offices and the public (Figure 13), with large majorities feeling that county workers were honest, accessible, respectful, fair, and well trained. Finally, in terms of intergovernmental collaboration, there appears to be a willingness to pursue this but also a distinct lack of information about current collaborations in the county.

Appendix A – Non-response Bias Tests

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who complete their surveys. For example, one question that people in all the job categories (supervisor, department head/constitutional officer, county worker, local government official) were asked, had to do with the extent to which the County Board provides sufficient opportunities for input. Suppose most of the people who completed their survey felt the board does provide such opportunities, whereas most of those who didn’t do the survey felt otherwise. In this case, non-response bias would exist, and the raw results would overrate public’s opinion about the degree to which the County board provides opportunities for input.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who complete their survey in response to the first invitation to the responses of those who complete the survey after a reminder. Those who respond to the second invitation are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first invitation), and we assume that they are representative of that group. In this survey, 176 people responded to the first invitation, and 168 responded to the second invitation.

We found only five variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents out of 134 tested. Table A1 indicates that women and those with less formal education were quicker to respond to the survey than men or those with more formal education. It also indicates that later respondents were more skeptical that the board has goals that are clear to all, minimize personality differences, and reaches decisions efficiently. Given the large number of variables tested and the small number of significant differences, the **Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for this sample.**

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Invitation			
Variable	Statistical Significance	Mean First Invitation	Mean After Reminder
Gender	.004	1.56	1.41
Education	.003	4.14	3.73
The County board has goals that are clear to all	.032	2.96	3.55
Personality differences are minimized on the Board	.023	2.42	3.09
The Board reaches decisions efficiently	.041	3.00	3.59

Appendix B – Written responses

Q17. Please add any comments that you would like considered that would enable Jefferson County to provide better service in the future (113 Responses)

Jefferson County Board Member (8 Responses)

Improving Board Functions (3 Responses)

- Board members should be given opportunities to practice running meetings. The thirty-member board should be continued. To assist public understanding of Board actions, Board members should be encouraged to provide support for their positions on issues before the Board. Within the confines of the Open Meeting law, leadership should find opportunities for more open discussion, between Board members, of divisive issues.
- Problem: open meeting law violations, lack of communication of information to all board members-chair does not communicate his daily actions and meetings and their relationship to county business, decisions made by 3-4 members only behind closed doors(example redistricting), unprofessional behavior (reminds me of high school). The county departments do a great job of running our county government (with a couple of exceptions).
- The board should be run in an open and inclusive manner. It appears that Wisconsin Open Meetings Laws are routinely violated. Information is shared among only a few members of the board. The board should be run in a manner that is accountable to the public. Most constituent comments reflect little confidence in the board. Too much status is granted based on how long a board member has served, as opposed to how well the member serves. We're not in high school anymore.

Survey Process Comments (3 Responses)

- Good exercise, can't wait to see the results!
- I don't know what the purpose of this survey was. Asking questions and providing canned answers that in some cases do not apply to the board, as a whole is a silly exercise. This is a bureaucratic waste of time, not really designed to accurately answer any questions.
- I feel there should have been an additional choice in the middle, instead of don't know.

Improving County Government Functions (2 Responses)

- Understand all the physical constraints we are and will be under, besides the obvious fiscal constraints. These would be resource availability, like; energy, water, food and other commodities currently made available by cheap oil and debt spending.
- We need to strive for more efficiencies in providing the necessary county services. We should also look to provide services in cooperation with other agencies and governments.

Jefferson County Employee (88 Responses)

Employees and Staff (24 Responses)

- All county workers need more respect from citizens
- Also, employees should be looked at as a resource. Respect employees, value them - ask them to give input into budgetary difficulties. Employees are on the front lines and know their jobs and departments. We need to have an environment of trust which I feel is pretty much non-existent at this point.
- As employees, you work for the good of the consumer just as board member should strive to work for the good of the employees. We should ALL lead by example!

- Be fair to everyone not just some. Treat employees better and more fair like how about family picnic with everyone. Say thankyou once and while.
- Be more responsive to employee input. Employees are the most effective tool Jefferson County has, be more respective to their ideas. You have good employees, treat them right and they will continue to be great employees.
- Changes need to be made with administration. Should be required to live in county.
- Comments like 'I have been doing this for 17 years so I know what I'm doing' and no new suggestion are taken. New employees aren't always treated fairly.
- County workers are treated unfairly by offices in the court house
- Do not cut staffing so much that we can't do our jobs. Deal with us fairly and openly as our caring employees deserve.
- Employees will buy into the county policies when given the opportunity and information to buy into the programs.
- Get rid of _____ and you would make 500 employees happy.
- Give the employees a fair contract now.
- I believe the County board needs to stand behind its employees re: Budget /Bill 10. Many municipal city, townships & Counties in the State are not backing Scott Walker's "Shock Doctrine" tactics.
- I have worked for Jefferson County for ____ years now. When I first started, morale was great. However, it has been sliding in the past years.
- I have worked with individual offices and individuals within offices that make my experience good or bad. The county has many good employees, a few great employees and some employees that the great ones make seem good.
- I will say that the departments I do interact with generally all have very courteous and professional employees; from maintenance to the Deputies who man security.
- In terms of my office, ANY reductions in staff would result in a significant reduction in services.
- It would be helpful for the county to have the employees review their supervisor on a yearly basis to provide better quality services for the department.
- Jefferson County employees are committed to their jobs and providing efficient services to the community. They should be treated with respect and awarded for their faithfulness. They should be allowed to voice their opinions and have collective bargaining with the county. This will enable a safe and productive work environment and continue to make it a pleasure to come to work and serve the people of Jefferson County.
- Make public more aware of what our jobs are, also aware that we as county employees, do earn 2 [15] minute breaks in a 8 hr. day along with a 30 min. unpaid lunch.
- Morale is not as it should be as employees don't feel like they are being treated fairly. Any positive comments or feedback to them right now is viewed as empty words proceeded by a cut or decrease in some part of their compensation. That is mostly a result of the virtual non-existence of this in the past.
- The ability to listen to the public and county employees and to respond with effective communication to the concerns and challenges we face together will be significant in providing future service. If we feel we're all in this together then we can make some good decisions as we go forward.
- Treating the employees with respect for the job they do is essential. The employees are one of the greatest assets that the County has, and showing support towards these assets will only increase the bond each employee feels for the service they provide.

- Weed out the inefficient employees and keep the ones who work hard and compensate them for it.

County Board (20 Responses)

- Board members should go out with crews
- Communication with board members and employees.
- I also feel that it would be beneficial for all county board members to have a better understanding of the services that are provided to the clients within the specific departments and well has having a better understanding of all of the job duties that are required of each individual staff.
- I am a fairly new employee in the county. My interaction with the County Board has been limited to this point.
- I believe county board members should spend time with county employees and that way they might get a feel for the county works and what they do for the county.
- I believe that it would be helpful if ALL County Board members become more familiar with all County offices, staff, and responsibilities (mandated and non-mandated) in order to get a better understanding of the extent of services that are provided to the public. Additionally, this would better help the Board in making crucial decisions that would affect programs, employees, and services to the public.
- I think not all, but a good number, of the County Board members only see employees as a fiscal number, not as someone doing a job for the public. However, I do believe that everyone involved in county government tries to treat the general public fairly and with respect. Wish it was the same the other way around sometimes.
- I think there is always room for improvement in all areas of government, both in terms of management and communication.
- I would like the county board to recognize the hard work and dedication that county worker's provide through recognition and compensation. I think that these are challenging times, yet I would hope the county board would not take advantage of worker's not having a union to represent and negotiate for wages.
- In my department when residents or county board members leave - there are comments of disrespect. There is lack of respect for some members of the Board Supervisors and well as residents. New ideas are not accept by the department head or some members of the department.
- Overall, I don't think the majority of board members do research into some of the issues before them and do not talk to county employees about their recommendations. There are many County employees who have been here for a long time & can certainly explain many of the issues/questions before the board to them.
- Personal agendas should not be placed in front of the overall welfare and concern for the citizens of Jefferson County as a whole.
- The County Board should look at helping their employees during this budget repair bill that has been introduced, instead of passing resolutions on potential future laws that haven't been signed yet!
- The County Board would benefit from significant training on their roles and responsibilities. Many board members do not have even a basic knowledge of the issues they are deciding. Moreover, many make little or no effort to learn about the issues before them. Many board members do not act in the public's interest; instead, many sought office with an ax to grind, or to advance a personal interest or ideology. They have rebuked the public and acted punitively toward them. The most troubling aspect of the board is after their leader was defeated in a recent election by a significant majority,

the remaining board leaders and members failed to understand the public's message to them. They have not modified their approach to leadership nor have they learned from their past mistakes. The public would be better off if fully half of them chose not to run in the next election.

- The Human Resources department has certainly stated that they value the employees. It would be nice if the entire County Board said the same thing!
- There are opportunities at the Sheriff's Office for Board members to get an inside look at the Sheriff's Office, and their needs. One such opportunity is the Citizens Police Academy. Very few of the Board members have taken advantage of this great opportunity (in the fall of each year) to get a clear picture of law enforcement in Jefferson County, and the challenges that Deputies face daily. As a taxpayer, I'm concerned that people that are making budget decisions [that affect the safety of our Deputies and citizens alike] are not taking the time to get educated on what is actually happening here. We have genuine NEEDS here, not just a wish list. Please invest the time to find out for yourselves what is actually taking place on our streets, and with our Law Enforcement Officers who take incredible risks each day for our county to remain a safe place to live.
- There needs to be more direct communication between the board and the employees in order to create a better understanding of both.
- This survey was difficult for me to fill out. First of all, there are County Board members who I believe are worthy of my respect and are responsive to the general public. Unfortunately, there are a number of them that have their own personal agendas and/or do not act in a professional manner, for example, there have been times when Board members should have recused themselves from voting on a particular subject.
- To stop talking out of both sides of their mouth. To the public they state how much they appreciate their workers, yet when they discuss having a fair contract, they want to take away all rights. Don't acknowledge that they deserve anything for compensation. They need to stop lying to the public and be honest with what their motives are. The workers are NOT respected nor appreciated. These needs to change in order for Jefferson County to succeed.
- Why so many board members in the first place?? Could operate much better and cheaper with fewer people who / are willing to do a decent job instead of a bunch of old duffs that just take up space.

Departmental Concerns (10 Responses)

- Corporate counsel or County Attorney, needs to be more efficient and get things done in a timely manner. Often micromanages things he need not be involved in and things he needs to be involved in it put off.
- I have not had exposure to many of the different departments within the county. Many of my answers are based upon the observations within my own dept.
- It would be beneficial if there was less tension within the Court House.
- Department Heads should live and pay taxes in the county and I think they would be more responsive to input.
- Encourage department heads to cease micro management of employees and instead of playing politics, start providing support to the employees and public in general. The sheriff specify and his staff positions are so worried about looking good with numbers that they have lost all perspective of law enforcement.
- I feel that in order to better support the development and growth of each department and of the team members within the different departments; it would be beneficial for staff to be able to provide annual reviews of their supervisor. The effectiveness of a supervisor

can positively or negatively impact the department, the team members, and the clients that are served.

- In regard to County offices, I cannot really speak for any other office except the one I work in. I know that everyone in my office works hard to give value to the public. We have the difficult task of trying to implement state policy. It isn't always easy and I am sure it is not always what our clients want to hear or do. However, by treating each person with respect, they go away with more understanding of our programs.
- The county board needs to ask the sheriff why citation revenue is down so much....the sheriff should respond with I micro manage and have destroyed the morale and enthusiasm of my department.
- This opinion may be prompted in part by my rapidly advancing age, but i am uncomfortable with the practice of allowing sheriffs deputies to shave their heads. When i see shaved heads, i think of facist skinheads, aryan supremacy groups, bikers, etc. My first impression of such appearances is that of raw, intimidating power. To me, it does not communicate the image of a trusted guardian of public safety. It may be an effective visage for a warrior, but not for a peace officer.
- Would like to see more communication between highway dept workers and commissioner (don't be afraid to address the workers)

Budget Concerns (8 Responses)

- A lot of the shortfalls right now can be directly attributed to budgetary constraints related to the economy. Most departments and employees are asked to do more with less.
- Also, it is important to include \$ for training in department budgets so that staff can continue to provide up-to-date and knowledgeable information & services to the public.
- I believe that Jefferson County does a very good job of providing quality service with-in a very tight budget. The strength of this county is its ability to adapt and respond to changing circumstances.
- I strongly believe in Jefferson County and their elected officials. During these troubling economic times and budget cuts, I am sincerely hopeful that the County Board and their Officials will treat their employees with honesty and fairness.
- I think we have a unique county that takes pride in caring for our residents. I hope that this does not change due to the budget issues at hand.
- Settle contracts in a timely manner not 6 months to a year after they expire, if we don't get raises then at least approve funding for training & equipment.
- Understanding current condition of finances
- We have cooperation counsel. Why are taxpayers paying outside lawyer to handle employee contract issues? Give us some respect!

Survey Concerns (6 comments)

- Why do I need to identify if I am a male or female employee
- If the county says there is no money how was this afforded and what is the point? If no one is keeping track of my participation then why was I reminded to participate? The questions require me to know what the board thinks or what perhaps is the motivation behind votes activities - I'm not on the board so how would I know. The questions require me to know how other offices work with the board or the public - I would not know.
- I feel this survey was TOO vague! And thus, there will be vague answers that don't really mean much. I wonder how much was spent! I answered the questions to the best of my abilities. However, there were some questions asked about county board members

& departments that may be true for one board member & department but not true for another board member & department.

- Generalized questions do not make for very good responses.
- I do not like this surveys setup. Many of the questions where not asking me what I felt, but rather what I thought other felt. If that was your intend, fine. I think that sort of survey doesn't give an accurate read of what people think.
- I don't feel as though I can answer questions related to citizens of this County as I have never had a conversation with another citizen of this County regarding that.

Meetings (4 Responses)

- Agendas should be more specific on what's being decided. Minutes should be more specific on what was decided. It looks as if things are trying to be hide?
- I have been at Board meetings and I feel that there is not enough time allowed for citizens to speak, even though I know that Jefferson County abides by the laws that dictate the amount of time for each citizen. As far as the flow of information to residents, I think the Board publishes the information as dictated by law as well.
- In the last couple years, a number of county board members have been extremely partisan and have purposely provided false information in meetings to try to sway people to vote with them. They have also been harassing to some county employees. This is not appropriate. I think county employees are professional and should be relied upon to provide information at board meetings when there is some question about the truthfulness of some board statements. Because of these actions of a number of county board members the moral around the courthouse employees has certainly been bad. Add on top of that the Walker budget cuts, and things are bad now!
- Provide listening sessions away from regularly scheduled full board meetings on special interests survey the public--are their needs met? Do they feel respected?

Workplace Stress (3 Responses)

- The sons a don't have a clue what any one of us actually does around here. We are a number on a time card, no more. When the bottom falls out, maybe, just maybe someone will wake the up, and realize just how much blood, sweat, and time we give to this place. There are very few employees in my dept. We do the work of 10 people. And now that the governor is raping us of \$400 dollars a month, no one is throwing us a life-preserver. No contract, No help, No nothing. The whole bunch of greedy money hungry can rot in....
- The workplace has become a very stressful and hostile environment. It is sad.
- There is much distrust and stress between the board, administration and employees. This used to be a positive place to work and employees were proud to be employed by Jefferson County. Now, employees walk on eggshells and wait for the other shoe to drop. The board and administration do not respect the employees.

Miscellaneous (13 Responses)

- During difficult times, communication is key.
- During my years of employment, I have had opportunities to visit other government buildings in surrounding counties. I have been impressed by the cleanliness of these facilities and the welcoming feeling when entering these governmental buildings. The hallway floors are shiny & bright; restrooms are kept very clean and supplied. My personal reflection of the Courthouse building is that it does not have that same appearance to our visitors and employees. Perhaps it has to do with older maintenance

equipment, or janitorial staff inadequately trained, but I would like to see some improvement in this area of overall appearance and cleanliness of our county owned building(s).

- Eliminate security and the needless screening of the general public. Take security measures to the courts-- if that's where they want it and feel they need it. There are emergency buttons in each office. Or have a deputy stroll the halls-- that should be effective and intimidating.
- I would like to see a drop-box for after hours to accommodate the people who can not get here before we close. Also, it would be very helpful to post the business hours on the doors that we are available to the public.
- More flexible hours for the public
- My impression of what I hear from the general public and clients that I work with is a favorable impression of Jefferson County Government, I share that view.
- Nationally other States that have these rogue governors such as Michigan have set up to take over City & county governments if they do not tow the line and follow their agenda. Walker's plan to sell and privatize much of the states assets. They virtually want to abolish EPA and Farmland Preservation with No oversight. While BIG Business doesn't pay taxes, and receives Credits all under the guise to bring in 250,000 new jobs to WISCONSIN..... We have had 35 years + of the Trickle down effect- which have only created monopolies. Small business , our towns been gutted, we the middle class bailed out these mega giants of Business (TO BIG TO FAIL) and the workers are to BLAME for the state of this BUDGET CRISIS. MAKE THE ONES WHO CREATED IT PAY FOR IT. BIG BUSINESS... SIMPLY do you want a government run by the People or ran by the Corporations?
- Not sure if this really helps you or not, but I think taxes are crazy for what Jefferson has to offer! I'm guessing that's more of a city issue then a county issue.
- Spending waste on comparison with other counties our size and then they never act on what they found and don't want to here it in any meeting's so what a waste.
- Tell the Truth on both sides.
- The administrator would not take a pay raise when no one else received a pay raise.
- We all try to do the best we can in a professional manner
- We are in very volatile and politically charged times. Moreover, it seems some with very strong ideological positions are using this situation to further their political agenda to the detriment of the public and service providers as a whole.

Jefferson County Department Head (8 Responses)

Board Concerns (5 Comments)

- It seems at times that county officials are short sighted in terms of departments/agencies protecting their departmental or agency interests rather than looking at the bigger, county-wide picture and effect of decisions. We all have the same goal, which is to be as efficient as possible, while providing the best services to our citizens, despite diminishing financial resources to do accomplish this. The less politics that is brought into county government, the better. We all have jobs to do, and we are all on the same team. Given the current climate in local and state politics, it is even more important to work together.
- More details about the meetings listed in the paper so that taxpayers understand the many facets and budget issues that are going on so they understand the relationship between taxes, tax levy and the costs for caring for the citizens.

- Some type of qualification to serve on county board (education, advanced life experience) something! Cease service of personal agendas. Stop micro management of departments. County board supervisors should realize their roles, they are not day to day employees of Jefferson County.
- There are not many things in the world that are black and white. It will be important to avoid divisive political rhetoric and focus instead on pragmatic compromise in the interest of maintaining the highest level of public service. The effort invested in strategic planning has been a step in the right direction as well as opening a dialog with the community through interfaces like Facebook -- perhaps that is a way to break through the general ambivalence of the disinterested public who remain uninformed despite efforts to engage and educate them on the issues. That will always be an uphill battle – but we should keep trying!
- Very reactive and not proactive. Too many cuts in staff with actually evaluating where the cuts could occur. Narrow vision.

Positive Board Comments (2 Comments)

- Current County Board Chair and the strong majority of the County Board are strengthening communication and relationships with the County Departments and the public, and they demonstrate that they value the public service provided by Jefferson County government--this is a positive trend. This leadership is becoming more important as we see a contrast from a vocal minority of the County Board who do not seem to understand the importance of public service and are even derisive in their views on the role of government and government workers.
- This survey was kind of hard as it asked questions for the county as a whole - i know that my staff treats our customers with respect, i don't think that all office do from comments i have heard. Overall i think that most people are here for the good of the county, the county board does what they think is right and the employees really do try and do a good job. I would really like to see the county board members stop into our offices before they make decisions that pertain to the office. I would also like to see board memebers and dept heads say "hi" to all employees, not just department heads when they see them in the hall or where ever they may see them! It often seems that the employees feel like it is us against them, and a simple hi would go a long way.

Miscellaneous (2 Comments)

- None
- WI FI throughout county facilities

Jefferson County Local Government Official (9 Responses)

Collaboration (3 Comments)

- I was most intrigued by your questions regarding collaboration with other units of government. While I believe the county identifies "ideal" collaboration in their planning documents, I have yet to experience any sincere effort to collaborate or even communicate. The exception is the presence a county supervisor at each of our town meetings. This appears to be an individual's dedication to communication and not otherwise representative of county government as a whole. County employees are first rate. Having lived in another county for many years, I am delighted by their sincerity in assisting residents and the county road pavement is in great shape. I think supervisors and department heads attempt to isolate themselves from the public. That is why I rated "being treated fairly" as poor. It seems to me unless a resident is connected to the

business community; they are treated by decision makers in a less than welcoming or fair manner. I would suggest regular outreach columns in the local papers than educate and inform on county gov't and services.

- Recommend investigating opportunities for intergovernmental task forces in several areas.
- Walworth County is much more proactive in addressing intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation issues. Walworth County has had an Intergovernmental Cooperation Council (ICC) for the last several years and frequently engages local municipalities in discussions on possible service sharing and/or consolidation.

Board Concerns (3 Comments)

- No clicks on the board. Listen to each side. Do what is best for all and not a select few. Have those serving in their positions know what they are doing. Reviews of employees should include those who work with and those who work for that person to get an overall honest opinion. More input should be asked for from those in government positions outside of the City of Jefferson Courthouse.
- Their seems to be a number of county board officials that only have their agenda's in mind and do NOT have the townships/county as a whole in the best interest. Some, NOT ALL try to FORCE their opinions on others. I do not believe that is the way government is supposed to work.
- Don't levy property taxes on cities and villages for services only provided to towns.

Survey Concerns (3 Comments)

- I have been an alderman for only a short time. To fill out this survey puts me at odds because I have not worked with the Jefferson County Employee's or affiliates. Therefore, since I have had very little involvement with the County I honestly can not state anything but "I don't know," I hope you understand my position on things.
- There should be a choice of sometimes agree. Some of the topics I agree with for some issues, but there is room for improvement on others.
- This is a very difficult survey for someone not in the County to complete, as we do not deal with the Board itself but several of the individuals that work in several of the departments. I have talked with some of the individual Supervisors and they have always been helpful.

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

Jefferson County Government

Q1 Are you

A Jefferson County Board Member	A Jefferson County Employee	A Jefferson County Department Head	A Jefferson County Local Gov't Official
6%	72%	8%	14%

Q2 For how many years have you been involved with Jefferson County Government?

Under 1 year	1 - 5 years	5.1 - 10 years	10.1 to 20 years	20+ years
6%	17%	18%	35%	23%

Q3 In terms of overall direction of Jefferson County, to what extent do you agree that:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
The County Board has effective governing rules for itself	4%	8%	4%	67%	17%
The County Board has effective governing rules for its committees	2%	4%	6%	75%	13%
The County Board has an up-to-date mission statement	0%	4%	34%	36%	26%
The County Board has written goals that are clear to all	4%	15%	44%	29%	8%
The County Board has goals that are achievable	2%	10%	46%	42%	0%
The County Board updates its goals regularly	2%	17%	44%	35%	2%
The County Board members are generally active and engaged	2%	23%	8%	63%	4%
The County Board agrees on what needs to be accomplished in the near term (next 1 - 2 years)	6%	46%	27%	21%	0%
The County Board agrees on what needs to be accomplished in the longer term (3 - 5 years)	6%	50%	31%	13%	0%

Q4 In terms of how Jefferson County Board committees currently function, to what extent do you agree that:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
Committees have clear goals	4%	13%	27%	52%	4%
Committees regularly update their goals	4%	25%	44%	25%	2%
Committees generally have members who have the needed expertise	6%	25%	15%	50%	4%
Most committees have active members	0%	6%	19%	71%	4%
Most committees do short-term planning	2%	10%	38%	48%	2%
Most committees do long-term planning	10%	23%	44%	19%	4%

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Board provides sufficient opportunities for citizen input	4%	15%	28%	45%	7%
The Board is responsive to citizen input	4%	18%	38%	36%	4%
When citizens contact the Board they are generally treated with respect	2%	6%	45%	42%	5%
When citizens contact the Board they are generally treated fairly	2%	7%	51%	35%	5%
The Board communicates effectively with the public	5%	28%	31%	32%	4%
Board members are generally accessible to the public	2%	13%	35%	44%	6%
Board members generally act in an honest and trustworthy manner	4%	15%	37%	39%	5%

Q5 In terms of relations with the public, to what extent do you agree that:

Q6 In terms of working relationships on the County Board, to what extent do you feel that:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
Board members trust each other	6%	31%	35%	27%	0%
Board members avoid conflicts of interest	6%	31%	31%	31%	0%
Board member's talents are utilized effectively	2%	15%	42%	42%	0%
Personality differences on the Board are minimized	10%	38%	21%	31%	0%

Q7 In terms of leadership on the County Board, to what extent do you feel that:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
Board meetings are run effectively	2%	2%	8%	67%	21%
The Board is open to new ideas	4%	15%	23%	56%	2%
The Board avoids hidden agendas	10%	21%	31%	33%	4%
The Board participates in needed professional development opportunities	4%	23%	44%	29%	0%
The Board encourages teamwork	6%	19%	27%	46%	2%
The Board reaches decisions efficiently	6%	19%	19%	54%	2%
Members generally understand decisions reached by the Board	0%	19%	29%	46%	6%
Responsibilities for carrying out Board decisions are clearly assigned	0%	8%	25%	56%	10%

Q8 In terms of overall relations between the County Board and County Departmental offices, to what extent do you agree that:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Board respects county employees	11%	31%	20%	34%	3%
County employees respect Board members	3%	24%	26%	43%	3%
The Board trusts county employees	6%	29%	34%	28%	2%
County employees trust Board members	9%	40%	28%	22%	2%
There is an effective flow of information between the Board and county offices	8%	32%	30%	28%	2%
The Board avoids micromanagement of county offices	9%	23%	33%	32%	3%
County employees are politically neutral with respect to county politics	9%	37%	32%	21%	1%
The Board supports training needs of county employees	7%	20%	33%	38%	2%

Q9 In terms of relationships between county offices and the general public, to what extent do you agree with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
When residents contact County offices they are treated with respect	1%	1%	20%	59%	18%
When residents contact County offices they are treated fairly	0%	2%	21%	60%	17%
County offices are responsive to citizen input	1%	7%	29%	51%	13%
County offices generally answer citizen questions efficiently	1%	5%	23%	57%	15%
County workers/offices are easily accessible to the public	1%	4%	11%	66%	19%
County workers are generally well trained for their jobs	2%	7%	15%	60%	16%
County workers generally act in an honest and trustworthy manner	1%	1%	9%	64%	25%
County offices are generally open to innovations/new approaches	3%	18%	24%	46%	9%

Q10 With respect to intergovernmental collaborations, to what extent do you agree with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Board has identified collaborations they want to pursue with other units of government	2%	21%	45%	31%	1%
County offices are receptive to collaborations with other units of government	0%	13%	40%	44%	3%
The Board has pursued collaborations with other units of government	3%	13%	52%	29%	3%
County government periodically reviews relations with other units of government	3%	17%	63%	17%	0%

Q11 With respect to fiscal resources, to what extent do you agree with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
County government has sufficient fiscal resources to achieve its goals	2%	40%	15%	33%	10%
County government uses its fiscal resources effectively	4%	17%	8%	50%	21%
Fiscal resource availability plays a bigger role in determining County actions than the strategic plan	0%	4%	8%	69%	19%

Q12 With respect to evaluation, to what extent do you agree with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Strongly Agree
County government periodically reviews its goals	2%	15%	27%	54%	2%
County government periodically reviews its committee structure	4%	4%	25%	63%	4%
County government periodically reviews effectiveness of follow-through on decisions	6%	17%	31%	46%	0%
County government periodically reviews consistency of its budget and strategic planning	4%	21%	36%	36%	2%

Q13 Overall, how effective do you feel Jefferson County government is?

Very Effective	Effective	Don't Know	Ineffective	Very Ineffective
9%	59%	15%	15%	2%

Q14 Overall, how would you rate the value of Jefferson County government compared to the taxes paid to the county?

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
16%	33%	32%	10%	10%

Q15 Please add any comments that you would like considered that would enable Jefferson County to provide better service in the future.

Appendix B

Q16 Are you

Male	Female
51%	49%

Q17 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Less than high school	High school	Some College/ Tech School	2-Year College Degree	4-Year College Degree	Grad or Professional Degree
0%	13%	31%	17%	27%	13%