

MINUTES

Members Present

Mr. Hess, Mr. Payton, Mr. Sirois, Ms. Webber, Ms. Parker, Ms. Polk, Mr. Fetherling, Mr. Hunter and Mr. Collins

Members Absent

None

In Attendance

- **Board Members**

Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Liehr and Mr. Kerkstra

- **Department Heads**

Delbert Skimerhorn, Anita Speckman, John Coghlan and Theresa Goudie

Media

None

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by the Committee Chairman, Mr. Hess, at 9:00 a.m.
Quorum present.

Mr. Hess advised the committee that this is an informational meeting today and there will not be any voting or motions.

Mr. Hunter asked if questions need to wait until the end or can they be asked when presented.

Mr. Hess advised questions can be asked during presentation.

2.Redistricting Process, History and Your Mission (Chairman Hess and Vice-Chairman Payton)

Mr. Hess advised that the legal parameters will be discussed and reviewed by State's Attorney, Jim Rowe.

Mr. Payton stated that the last redistricting was completed in 2011 where the board voted to stay at 28 board members.

The deadline to reapportion and determine the size of the County Board is the first regularly scheduled County Board meeting in July 2021.

Mr. Hess advised the committee of the first task which is to debate and vote on the following:
Board Member compensation to be per diem or salary
Election of members by District or at Large
Multi-member or single-member districts
Compensation for Board Members, Chairman and Liquor Commissioner

Online or manual paper process for public input on mapping
View presentations and sample maps for 28, 24, 21, 18 and 10 County Board Districts
Total number of single or multi-member districts

3. Legal Requirements for Reapportionment (Jim Rowe)

Mr. Rowe stated that the legal responsibilities through this process are to determine the size of the county board, determine how board members shall be elected, determine compensation, terms of board members and other considerations.

Mr. Rowe reviewed each legal responsibility of the board.

Mr. Rowe stated that by law, you have to have between five and 29 members. Each district shall be substantially equal in population to each other district and districts shall be comprised of contiguous territory, as nearly compact as practicable.

Mr. Rowe stated that the number of county board members will not be able to be changed again until 2031.

Mr. Rowe discussed deviation between districts should be as minimal as possible. Each district shall be substantially equal in population to each other district. Maximum deviation is 10%, but Mr. Rowe stated that would be too high and deviation should be as close as possible.

Mr. Sirois stated that the true census numbers may not be known for some town. So, if we don't have the most recent numbers, how will that work?

Mr. Rowe stated that he would expect something from Springfield to provide direction on this because it will have an effect on the voting cycle and local elections could get pushed back.

Mr. Wheeler stated that they are expecting census numbers in September.

Mr. Rowe stated that we can't miss a deadline and we would use the most recent completed census to complete the map, unless there is a deadline extension from Springfield.

Mr. Rowe spoke on the compactness of the map with proper documentation and the districts to be contiguous territory.

Mr. Rowe stated that creating the map is challenging and there is much more to it than picking a number and drawing a map. There are many legal requirements that it must adhere to.

Mr. Rowe spoke regarding how board members are elected. They are currently elected from each district, but the committee could choose to elect members at large.

Mr. Hess stated that at large members would mean that residents would have a board member representing them that don't even live in their area.

Mr. Collins spoke regarding townships within our county and how it serves the community better to have 28 members with one member for each district and is more representative to our community.

Mr. Rowe stated that our area is very unique including both urban and rural.

Mr. Rowe reviewed the compensation for board members could be salary or a per diem. This will not go into effect until that member for the district is in the next term.

The terms do not need to be done until after the reapportionment process, which is prior to September 1st of 2022. This is where the terms are divided among board members as 2 years or 4 years.

Mr. Rowe stated that other considerations include the Open Meeting Act and there have been challenges to redistricting. The process must be fair, open to the public and the public had an opportunity to appear and be heard. The public is allowed to bring forward maps for review.

Mr. Sirois read the future committee meeting dates out loud to the committee.
April 26, 2021, May 2, 2021, May 10, 2021, May 17, 2021, May 24, 2021, June 7, 2021 (Tentative)

Mr. Rowe complimented the board on the open process that they have in determining redistricting and he believes that is the best practice.

Mr. Rowe commented on the 2017 advisory referendum which stated 21 board members and that is something to be discussed and considered.

Mr. Hunter asked if there were any members of the current board that were present when the board decided the 28 single member districts.

Mr. Liehr stated that he came after the 28 members were established, but he had heard references that the decision was linked to the number of townships and providing equal representation.

Mr. Hess stated that the board originally began as township supervisors.

Mr. Rowe stated that the reapportionment plan has to be completed and on file with the County Clerk by the day after the July 13th, 2021 County Board meeting. Mr. Rowe stated that ideally, it would be approved at the County Boards June meeting. If that were to fail be completed by the July deadline, the county clerk would then convene a three-member county apportionment commission. That commission would have until October to submit its apportionment plan, if that wasn't filed in October then all the county board members would be elected at large. There would be 29 members.

Mr. Hunter thanked the effort that was included in the document and easy to understand.

Mr. Wheeler reviewed the various sizes of county boards compared to population and township form of government. It was also discussed the cost to taxpayers of having less members.

Mr. Collins commented on his views of the size of the board and having 28 members is the best way to save money and give the most representation to our communities. Mr. Collins would like to see more education to the public on the functions of County government.

4. General Reapportionment & County Board Information

5. Legal Process Q&A

There were no questions or comments from the committee.

6. Board Member Comments

There were no comments from the committee.

Mr. Rowe stated that it's very easy for someone to come forward and say no to a map, but it's challenging for them to bring their own map to the table.

7. Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Mr. Wheeler added that while public comment is typically done at the beginning, he thinks it would be a good idea to have public comment in the beginning and the end before any votes.

- **Future Meeting Schedule**

April 26, 2021

May 2, 2021

May 10, 2021

May 17, 2021

May 24, 2021

June 7, 2021 (Tentative)

Mr. Fetherling asked if there were any challenges to the current map that we have.
Mr. Rowe stated that there has not.

Mr. Hess reviewed the upcoming schedule with the committee.

8. Adjournment

Mr. Sirois made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 a.m., and Mr. Collins seconded it. Meeting adjourned.

Roger Hess, Committee Chairperson
Kelly Bylak, Executive Coordinator