



Minutes of the Redistricting Commission Special Meeting
December 16, 2011

Hearing Room 2, John A. Cherberg Building, 304 15th Ave, Olympia, Washington
Broadcast and Webcast Live on TVW

Commission Members Present:

Lura Powell, Chair
Tim Ceis

Dean Foster
Slade Gorton

Tom Huff

Commission Members Absent:

None

Commission Staff Present:

Bonnie Bunning
Heather Boe

Genevieve O'Sullivan
Rachel Gay

Nick Pharris
Ryan Wilke

Other Attendees:

David Anderson, Citizen
Adam Bartz, House Democratic Caucus
Art Castle, BIAW
Rusty Fallis, Assistant Attorney General
Steve Garrett, Senate/House Democratic
Caucus
Dayna Lorie, Congressman Jim McDermott
Richard May, Whatcom County
John Milem, Citizen

Ryan Moore, Senate Republican Caucus
Joann Poysky, Citizen
Brad Shannon, The Olympian
Kelly Singh, Senate Republicans Caucus
Don Skillman, House Republican Caucus
K-Y Su, House Republican Caucus
David Valiant, Pierce Co. Auditor Office
Emily Walters, Senate Democratic Caucus

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. with Lura Powell presiding as Chair.

2. MATTERS PERTAINING TO REDISTRICTING

a. Exchange of partial plan proposals

Commissioner Slade Gorton shared the results of the Senate subcommittee's work on legislative districts north of the Pierce County line. He said all districts meet the population requirements and they reduced the number of divided cities from 30 to 18. He said they also increased the number of competitive districts from 8 to 10 which he thought ended up being fair and relatively logical in their composition.

Commissioner Tim Ceis agreed. He said there were difficult discussions at times and that they were probably 95 percent of the way there. He said they created districts that will be competitive in the near term and that they tried to minimize jurisdictional splits and tried not to displace incumbents. He said they will want to hear what the auditors and public have to say.

Commissioner Gorton pointed out that a very large majority of people will be in the same districts as they are in now. According to his figures, 18 of the 22 new districts will retain more than 75 percent of the people who are presently in those districts. He added that on average; more than 80 % of people remain in the same districts.

Commissioner Tom Huff asked about the Senate's plan regarding the 30th and 31st districts, where the sub-teams' plans come together, in particular asking how the City of Milton was handled.

Commissioner Gorton said that there was a substantial variation in the two plans regarding the area of the 30th and 31st where the two plans will join. He said that the Senate plan kept Milton and Pacific in a single district, so there is some overlap with the House sub-team's plan along the Pierce County and King County line.

Commissioner Huff said that the House subcommittee's work on 16 legislative districts is moving along well and that the next step will be moving on to Eastern Washington. He said they made an attempt to split as few cities as possible and have had success. He also stated that natural boundaries and communities of interest were considered, as was heard in public testimony. He highlighted that Port Orchard was made whole in the 26th district and that Kelso and Longview are in the same district at this point. He also stated that they maintained the Peninsula school district entirely in the 26th district and kept the Key Peninsula in the 26th, which means that Key Center, along with Gig Harbor, are kept together as the centers of a community of interest.. The plan produces some changes with legislators, such that Representative Orcutt, Representative Alexander, and Representative McCune are affected.

Commissioner Dean Foster said he appreciated the input from the public through various sources—internet, hearings, personal conversations, and letters. He pointed out that every communication probably sets up a tension with another communication, and that is one of the reasons why the process takes longer than some would like. He stated that their population deviation throughout the plan is less than 50 people per district. He said the district that is most out of line is the 22nd which is 46 people over and the one that is down the most is the 18th district in Clark County which is down 37. The 29th in Pierce County has a population deviation of 2.

Commissioner Foster said there are parts in the map that may look more odd than they really are. He said between the 19th and the 24th districts there is an arm going north out of the 19th, which is all of the City of Montesano which they put into the 19th district. He said they have reconciliation to do between the 30th district, and the 25th district. He stated that they thought they were drawing a map to the Pierce County line, but noticed the other Commissioners drew boundaries around the cities of Milton and Pacific, so there is reconciliation to be done between the two maps in the 31st district.

Commissioners continued discussions on each other's maps, making suggestions for possible small improvements to the current drafts of their plans.

Commissioner Foster pointed out that in the mathematics of trying to keep populations with rather small deviations, all of the Commission's draft maps have left a piece of Clark County unassigned just to the east of the 18th district. That unassigned area serves as a placeholder for equalizing the small amount of population that Eastern Washington needs for the number of districts they will have.

Commissioner Powell clarified that the House subcommittee is moving to Eastern Washington legislative districts and the Senate subcommittee is going to start on the congressional districts.

Commissioners stated that they would be meeting in their subcommittees later on in the day.

b. Discussion of Timeline for completion

Executive Director, Bonnie Bunning, suggested three timeline scenarios for completing the plan by January 1, 2011, and creating, and submitting the final plan to the Legislature at the beginning of the 2012 session, on January 9.

Commissioner Gorton thought they should put more pressure on themselves and hoped today they could finish the next two assignments and set Wednesday as a goal. He would like to give more than 24 hours to the auditors. Commissioner Ceis suggested sending the drafts to the auditors today and to get their input. Commissioner Foster suggested scheduling a meeting for everyday next week and cancel 24 hours in advance if needed. Commissioners discussed their schedules and the meeting times for the week.

Rusty Fallis, Assistant Attorney General, advised that part of the report should require a modest amount of time from each commissioner. One of their duties is to prepare and publish a report to submit with the plan. The report should contain an explanation of the criteria used in developing the plan.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Robert Rodriguez, Mill Creek (Online)
John Milem
Sharon Woods, Marysville (Online)
Richard May, Whatcom County

A transcript of the public testimony will be published on the Commission's website at <http://www.redistricting.wa.gov/forums.asp> and can be viewed as a webcast at http://twv.org/index.php?option=com_tvplayer&eventID=2011120085.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission the meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.