

**MINUTES OF THE
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**

Friday, May 20, 2011 – 6:00 p.m. – Lehi Junior High School Auditorium

Members Present:

Sen. Ralph Okerlund, Senate Chair
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion, House Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Benjamin M. McAdams
Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell
President Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Don L. Ipson
Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart

Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Christine F. Watkins
Rep. R. Curt Webb

Members Absent:

Rep. Gage Froerer
Rep. Brian S. King

Staff Present:

Mr. John L. Fellows, General Counsel
Mr. Leif G. Elder, Policy Analyst
Mr. Jerry D. Howe, Policy Analyst
Mr. Joseph T. Wade, Policy Analyst
Ms. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Sumsion called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Rep. Froerer and Rep. King were excused from the meeting.

Members of the Committee introduced themselves and indicated the areas of the state that they represent.

MOTION: Sen. Van Tassell moved to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2011 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Overview of Redistricting

Mr. Elder gave a presentation on what redistricting is, why it is done, and the redistricting principles that were adopted at the May 4, 2011 meeting. He said the responsibility for drawing the districts is constitutionally given to the Utah State Legislature. He stated that the ideal population is 95,306 for Senate districts, 36,852 for House districts, and 690,971 for a congressional district.

Mr. Wade demonstrated how to use the mapping software and access the Redistricting Committee homepage.

Chair Sumsion discussed the dynamics involved in drawing maps for the different districts. He requested that the public follow the same guidelines that the Legislature must follow when constructing its maps.

3. Public Comment About Redistricting

Chair Sumsion invited public comment on redistricting for State Senate, State House, and State School Board.

Mayor James Hadfield, American Fork City, noted that the city has been split in the middle with representation, which makes it difficult to deal with issues in the community.

Mr. James Dixon, Lehi City Council, indicated that District 56 is the largest as far as population. He asked if Senate District 11 will continue to cross over into Utah County.

Sen. Okerlund noted that those parts of the state not growing as rapidly will have to increase in area in the redistricting process. He said it will be difficult to keep all cities whole. He noted that the Committee will be taking input around the state to see how the different areas are best served.

Ms. Donna Burnham, Eagle Mountain City Council, suggested, that when considering the \pm 3.5 percent for legislative districts, giving faster growing areas the smaller population area and giving areas with small or negative population growth the larger population.

Mr. Jim Miller, Saratoga Springs City Council, asked the Committee to consider a smaller district for the Saratoga Springs area since they are a rapidly growing community, which will allow them to grow to the ideal size district. He briefly addressed the issue of Saratoga Springs and Bluffdale cost-sharing in police services. He stated that it would not necessarily be a bad thing if the two cities were to be placed in the same House district.

Mr. Mark Johnson, Lehi City Council, expressed concern when boundary lines are not chosen along clearly designated boundaries such as particular streets and arterial routes. He suggested that boundaries be more easily recognized.

Mr. Larry Johnson, Saratoga Springs resident, suggested following existing county, city, and school district boundaries to avoid confusion. He also suggested putting three House districts within each Senate seat.

Ms. Debbie Swenson, southern Utah County citizen, explained that when boundaries go over county lines, it forces an election to a state rather than county convention. She stated that keeping districts within county boundaries will lead to better representation.

Mr. Kent Guymon, Orem citizen, asked for information on what happened with district boundaries that cost former Rep. Craig Frank his seat.

Mr. Fellows explained that when the House district boundaries were drawn 10 years ago, the boundary lines were drawn using political subdivision boundaries. As the subdivision annexed additional land, the boundary of the subdivision was redrawn in such a way that a portion of the subdivision was in a different district than the rest of the subdivision. Rep. Frank moved to the portion of the subdivision that was not within the boundaries of the district for which he was elected and was forced to step down. He said that, during the last general session, the Legislature adjusted those boundaries.

Chair Sumsion said that he hoped the new software would prevent the problem from happening again.

Mr. David Lifferth, Eagle Mountain citizen, said that the districts should be balanced as much as possible. He said that as soon as the maps are drawn, they will be obsolete due to the fact that some communities are growing much faster than others.

Mr. Will Matheson, Provo citizen, suggested keeping the current political lines as close as possible by using city boundaries. He said keeping cities together makes the election process easier for county clerks and may also help to increase voter turnout because the process would be simplified. He addressed the congressional redistricting by stating the "pizza slice" theory is not the way to go.

Ms. Elaine Augustine, Lehi citizen, asked whether the voter precinct boundaries would change. She asked if the online tool would show what those boundaries will be. She noted that as a resident of Lehi, she would rather be represented by a senator in Utah County.

Chair Sumsion responded that every congressional, Senate, House, and school district boundary will change. He noted that voting precinct boundaries fall under the responsibility of the counties and some will have to change to reflect this new districts.

Ms. Sue Connor, Represent Me Utah, asked about the percentage point differences that the Committee has been discussing and the Committee's choice of ± 3.5 percent.

Rep. Kiser indicated that a percentage point of ± 3.5 percent is a total deviation of 7 percent.

Mr. Fellows explained that the Committee is required to equalize the population of the districts. He said the goal from the courts' perspective is to drive down the population deviation as far as possible.

Ms. Marie Nuccitelli, private citizen, said that respecting county lines would be beneficial since each county has different ways of addressing how political party delegates are seated.

Ms. Kelli Lundgren, Represent Me Utah, suggested that district maps that do not cross county lines be strongly considered.

Chair Sumsion stated the Committee is hoping for hundreds of maps to be submitted by the public for the committee's consideration.

Mr. Casey Jackson, asked about how the new district boundaries would effect local elections.

Sen. Okerlund responded that if there is some overlapping of elected officials due to new district boundaries, regardless of the election cycle, those elected officials would have to run. An incumbent not affected by new district boundaries will not have to run until the next regularly scheduled election.

4. Discussion of Congressional Plans

Chair Sumsion discussed the congressional map that he provided for public comment. He indicated that the map was drawn to highlight that there are communities of interest in the state.

President Waddoups stated that if Salt Lake County is to be divided, it should be divided by a line going east and west so there would be north and south districts.

Mr. Kent Guymon, Orem, stressed the need to put major metropolitan areas within the same district and also keeping rural areas together.

Mr. Ken Froehle, private citizen, requested that the redistricting process begin with a common starting place.

Mr. Paul Thompson, Utah Citizens Council, indicated that many people in Utah feel disenfranchised. He urged that there be continuity in the process and asked that the Committee focus on common interests.

Mr. John Mulholland, private citizen, stated that he preferred trying to have four congressional districts

that are roughly equal in land area. He said he was looking forward to using the redistricting software.

Ms. Lundgren asked President Waddoups why he desired to have federal land within each of the congressional districts and if he thought the citizens of Utah would make that a high priority as well.

President Waddoups indicated that most of Utah's natural resources are tied up in federal lands. He discussed some of the restrictions in place. He said having four voices in Washington speaking for the state in harmony on those issues is very important. President Waddoups said he hears many times that the highest priority is education, which is funded by property taxes. He noted that Utah is not receiving property taxes on the federal lands due to the restrictions in place.

Ms. Lundgren said that Utah almost turned down \$150 million from the federal government for education. She asked if Utah would refrain from doing that again in the future.

Speaker Lockhart indicated that Congress went around the Legislature, which has the constitutional duty to appropriate funds in the state. She said that the Legislature did accept those federal funds.

Sen. Okerlund said that the state has tremendous differences in urban and rural areas. He noted that it is important to have fair representation from all congressmen on all issues of the state.

Ms. Connor pointed out there are two sides to the federal land issue—those that want more drilling and exploration and those that want more conservation. She opposed having members of the Committee discussing special interests when they are not considered part of the redistricting principles.

Rep. Barrus outlined the history of the federal lands within the state. He said that it is important for the Committee to recognize the value of the public lands to the future of the state and to ensure Utah has good representation in the federal delegation that pays attention to that as well.

Mr. Hayden Williamson, Saratoga Springs citizen, agreed that there are many varying viewpoints in the state. He spoke in favor of creating congressional districts that represent all viewpoints of those within the area they represent.

Rep. Kiser discussed the letter from Mr. J. Allen Kimball, which was distributed to the Committee. He mentioned that Mr. Kimball suggests having fewer Senate and House districts.

Chair Sumsion thanked the Committee and the public for their attendance.

5. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Ipson moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Sumsion adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.