

## REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

September 20, 2010

Administrative Center – Room 3220

MEMBERS PRESENT:	S. Doyle, T. Johnson, J. Billings, J. Medinger, S. Hampson, M. Pedretti, A. Kader, M. Naegle
MEMBERS EXUSED:	D. Manthei, J. Heim, J. Ehram, M. Larson
OTHERS PRESENT:	J. Bluske, L. Stone, A. Richmond, T. Lehrke, R. Ebert, C. Burmaster, M. Freedland

Chair Steve Doyle called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

### OVERVIEW OF REDISTRICTING PROCESS

Jeff Bluske distributed an introduction letter for the Redistricting Committee. Every 10 years following a U.S. Census (which was completed in July of this year), all local, state and federal elections districts must be re-mapped to account for a growing mobile population. States are generally responsible for conducting the mandated redistricting of US House and State legislative districts.

Redistricting gives the locals and county the opportunity to realign supervisory districts based on population shifts as well as look at the number of districts and where annexations occurred. At some point the committee will have to adopt guidelines to build the new districts, based on equal population, contiguous districts, compact districts, preservation of communities of interest (traditional neighborhoods), districts that follow political subdivision lines, and protection of incumbents.

The official start of redistricting will begin in March of 2011. The process will fall into three 60-day processes. Under equal population guidelines, the county districts and aldermanic districts will follow state statutes and equal population will have to maintain the following criteria:

- Ideal population
- Equal population standards
- District deviation
- Plan deviation
- Packing
- Fracturing
- Gerrymandering
- Ward size restrictions
- School District Lines
- Ballot Styles

Jeff distributed the 1990 County Board Plan for 34 Supervisors where they took the total population (in 1990) of 97,904 and divided it by the number of Board Supervisors to come up with the Ideal District Target Population. The difference in population between the smallest populated district and the largest populated district can only be 10% (between the highest and the lowest).

In April 2011 the Committee will review draft plans, adopt a plan, and send to local municipalities asking for suggestions or concerns. In May 2011 the County will hold a public hearing on the tentative plan and include a resolution approving the tentative plan and send to local municipalities again. In June & July, the local municipalities start their process to divide districts into wards and aldermanic districts and send county wards plans. August will start the County's final 60 days to hold a final public hearing to adopt the final plan.

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Jeff distributed a chart showing several different plans of 2001 Reapportionment Options, which was based on the total county population of 107,120 at the time. It was felt that the committee should first pick a range of County Board Size and then go from there. The 2010 preliminary population estimate for La Crosse County is 113,758 which was prepared by the Department of Administration.

The last handout Jeff distributed was the "35 plan" which shows the deviation. This was done in 2001. From the census records for each block it has the number of specific minorities in comparison to your ideal population. Each County Board Supervisor is supposed to have as close as they can to 3,061 people. The actual population is listed next to the Supervisory District, and the percent of deviation is listed. Our biggest spread was from -3 to 3, which is 6 and a very acceptable deviation.

**ELECTION DATES AND DEADLINES**

One important date the committee has to take note of is Dec. 1, 2011 because that is when Supervisors take out papers to run for office, so this all needs to be settled before then. It is recommended and helpful if we can have our final determination of board size by February 2011 so that in March 2011 a public hearing date can be set. The Census Bureau numbers are expected back in March.

**ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The role of this committee is to put together a proposed map to present to the Board. There are three decisions that need to be made:

1. Board size
2. Staggered or non- staggered terms/elections
3. Are these the lines we want to have?

It was discussed at what point do we check back with the full County Board or do we just present them with our final findings? It was felt that this would be a major policy decision and should be put before the board at one of their policy meetings. The City also needs to begin discussions regarding these issues. Some felt that it would be a good idea to poll the County Board – just to get their preliminary thoughts on County Board size. There was a "County Board Size Study Committee" done at one point, and this information needs to be reanalyzed. The questions that were focused on for this committee were:

- What number or range of numbers is the most appropriate for the size of the La Crosse County Board?
- What considerations are relevant for the County Board in determining its size?
- What arguments support a larger County Board?
- What arguments support a smaller Board?
- When is the most appropriate time to make a change in the County Board size if a change is beneficial?
- What changes in procedures, policies, committee structure and ordinances are needed to prepare for a change in County Board size?

It was decided to review the previous study committee's findings, and collect as much information as we can before we go to the Board and present them with a couple of recommendations.

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The Committee requested Linda Stone to research other counties that have decreased the size of their County Board and ask such things as:

- Has it worked?
- What advantages have you seen?
- What problems do you see?
- Do the Clerks like it?
- Does the Board Chair like it?
- Does the Administrator/Exec like it?
- Cost?
- Rationale for changing the size?

Jill feels we should get the public opinion prior to the final public hearing. Steve will be talking to the League of Women Voters regarding redistricting after the first of the year. They have committed to doing public forums with a panel of people discussing redistricting with the public being invited. Two public hearings are mandatory, with the last one just being before the county board. It was felt that we should probably do three public hearings instead of just the two to obtain more public opinion.

**DISCUSS WORK PROCESS TO ACCOMPLISH REAPPORTIONMENT AND EXPECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

It may be beneficial for Steve Doyle, Jeff Bluske & Linda Stone to go to the Editorial Board of the La Crosse Tribune and to do a media release to obtain public input on this issue.

Discussion followed of when the cities can get up and running on these issues. Audrey Kader will follow up with the City of La Crosse and Cari Burmaster will discuss with the City of Onalaska.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Update from the City of Onalaska and City of LaCrosse
2. Discussion of information from County Board Size Study Committee
3. Linda's information from her survey of counties who reduced their board size—possible vote on a range for the County Board size study.

**SCHEDULE FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the Redistricting Committee is scheduled for Tuesday Oct. 19th at 3:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by Kader/Billings to adjourn the meeting at 3:28 p.m. **carried unanimously.**

The above minutes may be approved, amended, or corrected at the next Committee meeting.

Recorded by Terri Pavlic