

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

February 1, 2011

Administrative Center – Room B190

MEMBERS PRESENT:	S. Doyle, T. Johnson, J. Billings, J. Medinger (exc. 4:00), S. Hampson, M. Pedretti, A. Kader, J. Heim, J. Ehram, M. Naegle, M. Larson
MEMBERS EXUSED:	D. Manthei
OTHERS PRESENT:	J. Bluske, T. Lehrke, G. Dankmeyer, T. Acklin, R. Ebert, C. Burmaster, M. Freedland, E. Schmidt, J. Gilman, J. Schroeder, V. Burke, D. Meyer, M. Giese, L. Decker, B. Feehan

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Committee Chair Steve Doyle called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 19, 2010 MINUTES OF THE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

MOTION by Ehram/Kader to approve the October 19, 2010 minutes. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Manthei excused)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Supervisor Bill Feehan spoke regarding County Board size. He feels that reducing the County Board size would be a mistake. He doesn't see significant financial savings and he feels that Board Members' ability to get face to face with the people they represent will be limited if they would need to serve a larger number of constituents.

REPORT FROM SHARON HAMPSON OF FINDINGS OF PREVIOUS COUNTY BOARD SIZE STUDY COMMITTEE

Sharon Hampson summarized the findings from the study committee that was established a few years ago regarding reducing County Board size. The Legislature gave us all one chance to downsize between census's. The restrictions in that law were too many to make it feasible for us to change. The biggest thing was we would have had to change by the factors of the number we have now, which would be 5 or 7. Given this, we looked at 7. It didn't afford equal coverage of all districts. The population deviation was greater than 10%. To get the deviation low enough we would have to look at 9 or more and function in an entirely different manner. There was concern expressed from clerks that the ballots would be very confusing. There is no cost savings when going to a smaller County Board. The amount of work is still the same so you have a fewer number of people doing the same jobs. They also felt that diversity and representation would suffer. The study group decided not to change the Board size at that time. They concluded that a range to consider this year would be 17-31 and some members would like to stay at 35.

Sharon attended a Redistricting Workshop that the WCA put on. There will be software available online from the state to reshape and redraw districts (see Sharon if you would like more details). On April 13th the State is coming to La Crosse to demonstrate this software. At the January 24th meeting they had Chairs from Grant, Douglas, Wood and Waukesha Counties present who all had experienced downsizing. Their concerns were pretty similar to what our group had discussed previously: very large districts; some supervisors getting too much power; work load was difficult; no more contested elections than previously; a walking quorum becomes a risk with smaller board.

Sharon then presented a Powerpoint, which came from John Reinemann, Legislative Director of the WCA. This presentation goes through the pros and cons of downsizing of

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

February 1, 2011

Page 2

County Boards. The average size of county boards in Wisconsin is 23.3 and the national average is 6.23. WCA has no ideal recommended size.

If you are interested, there is a presentation at the public library on Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. by Ray Bloch, from the Dept. of Political Science from UW-La Crosse regarding redistricting.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING COUNTY BOARD SIZE RANGE

Jeff Bluske distributed a chart that he put together, where he took a County Board size of 11 up through 35 of odd numbers only, which then showed the ideal population, # of City Supervisors/# of County Supervisors and the absolute/deviation (which should be close to 10%). Jeff will run some numbers using even numbers of Board Members.

Audrey Kader reported that Rich Becker did an informal straw poll of City Council members, and wrote a letter to Steve Doyle, stating that the City would prefer to stay at 17 members.

Steve Doyle asked committee members to give their thoughts of what they felt would be a good range of numbers for County Board size. The average range was 25-31. Many members feel that being coterminous with the City of La Crosse would be best for ease of voting for the Clerks as well as constituents. Also, it was felt that it would be a good idea to ask the various towns and villages for their input as to County Board size. We will let the City of La Crosse know what this range is. With the elections in April, there may be many new members on the City Council.

Jeff drew everyone's attention to a handout that discussed "Guiding Principles and Considerations" and at the "Three-Step Process" before making any final decisions. We have to be done with this by July 1, 2011.

MOTION by Ehram/Billings to use the range of 25-31 for County Board size.

Amendment by Kader/Billings to include the option of staying with 35 Board Members. Kader withdrew Amendment. New **Amendment** by Kader/Billings to change the range to 25-35 for County Board size. A roll call vote was taken. **Amendment failed** on a 5/4 vote. Those in favor were Billings, Pedretti, Kader, Hampson. Opposed: Heim, Ehram, Naegle, Larson & Johnson. Doyle abstained; Manthei & Medinger excused. Original **MOTION carried** on a 5/4 vote. Those in favor were Ehram, Naegle, Johnson, Heim, Hampson. Opposed: Larson, Billings, Pedretti, Kader. Doyle abstained; Manthei & Medinger excused.

MOTION by Kader/Hampson to take this recommendation to the full County Board once we have a plan with a proposed map. Kader withdrew the **MOTION**.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Naegle/Billings to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. **carried unanimously**.

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

Recorded by Terri Pavlic

Approved, March 22, 2011, Terri Pavlic, Recorder