

Redistricting Board (Wednesday, October 6, 2021)

Generated by Diane Gleissner on Thursday, October 7, 2021

Members present

Richard Johnson, Chair

Matthew Burgan, Vice Chair

Dr. Patricia Richardson

Paul Thompson

Lance Johnson (via ZOOM)

John Houser, Assistant County Attorney

Neil Murphy, Deputy County Attorney

Diane Gleissner, Staff Support

1. CALL TO ORDER

Richard Johnson, Chair called the meeting of the Redistricting Board to order at 5:33 pm in the Chesapeake Building Meeting Room Governmental Center, Leonardtown.

2. ROLL CALL**A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

I move to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion by Dr. Patricia Richardson, second by Paul Thompson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

I move to approve the Minutes of September 28, 2021, as presented.

Motion by Matthew Burgan, second by Dr. Patricia Richardson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

I move to approve the Minutes of September 29, 2021, as presented.

Motion by Matthew Burgan, second by Dr. Patricia Richardson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

Mr. Burgan suggested before going forward with the agenda to make it a practice at the beginning of each meeting to define the directive and guidance the Board was given so that the public understands the criteria.

Directive: Chapter 26-2 of Article 19 of The Code of Public Local Laws of Maryland

(3) The Redistricting Board shall establish the boundaries of the four (4) Commissioner Districts in St. Mary's County, Maryland in conformance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, ordinances and policies

Guidance: Legal guidance was to keep the population variance between districts within 10%

Additional Objective Considerations taken by the board:

- 1) When redefining district lines, we utilized natural boundaries such as roads, legal subdivisions and bodies of water for ease of communicating and displaying districts
- 2) Obtain as close to an equal distribution of population as possible not only exceed the 10% guidance but to allow for future population fluctuation and still maintain the 10% variance through future out years
- 3) Minimize changes to existing district to the best of our ability whilst meeting/exceeding the directive and following the guidance
- 4) Extend abutting districts to include 3 & 5 for ease and fairness of future redistricting requirements

NOTE: The Draft Map presented represents a minimal viable product and is an approximate "90% solution". so as to allow public insight and input prior to finalization

3. OLD BUSINESS

A. OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY - Response to Email Questions

Several questions were raised by the board for both the County Attorney's office and the Election's Board. Here are the questions and answers that were provided:

1. At the beginning of our discussions we talked about using the total population database as our primary source, but also looking at the over 18 and registered voters databases to see where those numbers/percentages fell with any given plan. We know the 10% range is a goal. If we continue to use the total population as the primary database, do all three databases need to be within the 10%?

It does not matter. The reason for this is population. Once you define what population is, that number is what you're aiming for to be within 10%.

2. Am I correct when I say that our task is to use the current data (What is) and not look at future possibilities regarding county growth (What might be)?

Mr. Houser stated he could not find a case where a rational was ever put forth that we are justifying a population discrepancy because we believe the population may change.

3. Are school board and county commissioner candidates required to be registered voters?

Yes they are.

B. ST. MARY'S COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

1. The Board of Elections has a CD that lists All Registered Voters in the County. You get this when you run for office. Is there any chance they can give us this data on CD?

Ms. Atkins provided the board members with a CD containing the information requested.

2. I am looking at prior data from the Board of Elections. It lists the following:

- DEM, REP, GRN, LIB, WDP, BAR, UNA AND OTHERS

*I know DEMOCRAT for DEM, REPUBLICAN for REP, GREEN Party for GRN, LIBERTARIAN for LIB
What is WPD, BAR, UNA and Others*

WDP - Working Class Party

BAR - Bread and Roses Party

UNA - Unaffiliated

OTH - Are all other parties. These are parties that are not "recognized" parties in Maryland

3. What are the ramifications of moving a precinct or a census block to another district?

There are no ramifications for us. You aren't moving election districts. You are only moving lines for representation.

4. The Board of Elections provide several different options for voting: vote by mail, vote at the early voting site(s), and in-person voting at the individual's assigned polling place on Election Day. Is each polling place only allowed to use one ballot? If you vote at an early cite you are given your appropriate ballot regardless of where you live in the county and I just want to be clear on this.

At the polling locations we only issue the ballot styles for that precinct. If a voter comes in that is not assigned to that precinct to vote the judges gives them two options. One they can leave and go to their correct polling location or two they can stay their and vote a provisional ballot with the understanding that their full ballot may NOT be counted based off of where they live. At the early voting centers all ballot styles are issued so that any voter can go to any location and have the correct ballot style issued

5. Our committee had some discussion in a previous meeting on Chestnut Ridge Drive and Chestnut Hill. They are very close, but currently in different Commissioner Districts as I understand it. Do the individuals in both developments vote at different polling places if they opt to vote in-person on Election Day?

This is an area that we are working on also. For Chestnut Ridge Drive that precinct is 03-003. If you are talking about "Chestnut Hill" development that some of that area is in 03-001. We are working with the MD department of planning to help us clean this area up so that it is correct.

6. Can the county level redistricting cause a change a voter's polling location?

No, the only way it gets changes is by the board of elections, congressional or legislative redistricting.

7. Can the county level redistricting cause new polling locations to be created (and therefore change a voter's polling location)?

No, you are changing representation not the polling places.

C. INFORMATION SHARING - MAPS

Following discussions, the majority of the Board decided they want to make additional edits to their maps. Mr. Burgan stated his edition is final.

MOTION 1. I move to bring all five maps back for review at the October 12, 2021 meeting and look at the pros and cons of each.

Motion by Dr. Patricia Richardson, second by Matt Burgan.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

MOTION 2: Our objective by the end of the meeting on October 12, 2021 is that we will finalize one Draft map to present to the public during the scheduled hearing dates.

Motion by Matt Burgan second by Dr. Patricia Richardson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

4. NEW BUSINESS

None

5. ADJOURN

A. MOTION TO ADJOURN

I move to adjourn.

Motion by Dr. Patricia Richardson, second by Paul Thompson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Richard Johnson, Matthew Burgan, Dr. Patricia Richardson, Paul Thompson, Lance Johnson

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:25 pm.

Minutes approved by the Redistricting Board on October 12, 2021.

 RJ

Richard Johnson, President