

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TEMPORARY REDISTRICTING
COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 9, 2021**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES:

The County Redistricting Commission met at 12:00 p.m. on November 9, 2021. The following persons were present: Emily Peters, Tim Latham, and Rich Paxson

Also present:

Adam Wedmore, County Auditor
Sandy Shonka, Deputy Auditor
Bob Peshak, Deputy Auditor

The meeting began at 12:00 p.m.

Wedmore gave an overview of the Census and explained the duties of the Temporary Redistricting Commission. He explained that they are to decide and define the precincts for the Cerro Gordo County rural areas and eight communities for voter convenience and electoral efficiency. Wedmore laid out the guidelines to consider when determining the precincts for the county. Wedmore stated that Clear Lake and Mason City will independently define their own precincts.

Wedmore distributed a map of the current 26 precincts as well as 2010 and 2020 populations for comparison. He stated that Census population, not number of registered voters, is used to determine the number of individuals per precinct. It was recommended to the Commission to target well below the 3,500-population cap per precinct.

Wedmore explained that following the agreement on a proposed plan, a public hearing would be held at a later date for input. After approval of the map by the Commission, the Board of Supervisors will approve and send the map to the Legislative Services Agency for Supervisor districts to be drawn.

Latham asked if it was ideal to decrease the number of precincts. Wedmore stated the population has been trending down so it would be considered electorally efficient either remain with the same number of precincts or to decrease.

Latham asked about the use of absentee voting. Wedmore stated that with more individuals learning about the option of absentee voting,

that local and national studies and surveys show voters who have used absentee voting are more likely to use it for future elections.

Peters asked about the variable cost per year to the county for elections. Wedmore stated that it depended on the size of the election, for a smaller election the need for three election officials whereas for larger elections anywhere from five to seven workers per precinct, plus the number of ballots, supplies, and training. Wedmore stated that at a minimum two elections are held on even-numbered years and one on odd-numbered years, plus any special elections that may arise.

Peters asked the possible cost to train precinct officials within the next ten years. Wedmore stated that there has been a decrease in precinct election officials willing to work within the past two years.

Shonka prepared six proposed plans for the consideration that fit within the requirements outlined. The Proposed Plan 1 would have township-based precincts. Falls Township would be one precinct with voters going to Plymouth or Rock Falls. Grimes Township would become one precinct and Geneseo and Dougherty Townships along with the City of Dougherty would be combined. Proposed Plan 1 would have the most changes.

Peters asked what the target distance the Commission should consider for the voter of each precinct. Wedmore stated that that was up to the Commission to determine as there is no Federal or State standard for time and distance for the voter to travel. Paxson stated that the drive from Dougherty to the Hanford Church would be the longest drive.

Peters asked if there was a list of voter comments or complaints regarding the current precincts. Wedmore stated there are a handful of comments and concerns from Dougherty voters having to drive to Hanford to vote as it was not their normal daily route.

Paxson asked how long have the Falls Township and Grimes Township been divided. Wedmore stated

that the past few Census changes had resulted in the reduction in the number of precincts and believes those two township splits are left from years prior.

Latham stated that initially he is in favor of Plan 1 due to the savings to the taxpayers.

Peters asked if Plan 1 is the only one that would remove any precincts. Wedmore stated that Plans 2 and 3 would remove one each, Plan 4 would remove two, and Plan 6 would keep the same number.

Paxson asked if they were to choose Plan 1 if NIACC could be a polling location. Wedmore stated that it could, however, since NIACC is still within city limits, that it would require additional steps by the Auditor's office and that it would be best to have a voting location within the precinct itself.

Peters stated that the pros for Plan 1 would be the electoral efficiency for Grimes, Falls, and Dougherty Townships. Wedmore stated that eliminating two polling locations would help with the staffing as well.

Latham asked if combining Portland, Owen, Mason-south, and Bath was a possibility. Paxson agreed that having those townships vote at the Emergency Management building would be convenient. Wedmore stated that right now he doesn't see any issues but would confirm there would be no statutory reasons those could not be combined.

Paxson asked about the possibility to combine Falls and Lime Creek Townships. Wedmore stated that there may be some pushback due to limited polling locations within that area.

Latham stated he would like to move forward with Plan 1 with the recommended changes to combine Portland, Owen, Mason South, and Bath. Paxson and Peters were in agreement.

The commission set the public hearing for Tuesday November 23rd, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.