

Redistricting Committee of 2012
Wicomico County, Maryland

June 18, 2012

There being a quorum present, The Redistricting Committee of 2012 held its fifth meeting on Monday, June 18, 2012. Chairman, Joe Collins called the meeting to order in room 301 of the Government Office Building at 9:00 a.m. with the following members present: Harry Basehart, Eddie Boyd, Joe Collins, Charlie Gray, G.A. Harrison and Deke Sheller. Stacey Weisner was absent from the meeting.

County support staff to the committee: Frank McKenzie Matthew Creamer

Mr. Collins asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. **On motion by Mr. Sheller, second by Mr. Harrison the committee unanimously voted to adopt the agenda.** Mr. Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 8, 2012 and asked whether there were any additions or corrections. There being none, **on motion by Mr. Harrison, second by Mr. Sheller the minutes were unanimously approved as written.**

Mr. Creamer expressed gratitude to Ms. Holland for preparing the minutes of the June 8th meeting, which he had been unable to attend.

Committee members acknowledged receipt of the maps representing the work completed at the June 8, 2012 meeting. Mr. Collins said he had reviewed the maps prepared by Mr. McKenzie and received assurance from Mr. McKenzie that the file and data for the June 8th maps have been saved. In review, Mr. Collins said District 1. is 382 above the ideal population for a district, that being the total county population divided by 5, as there are 5 districts. He added that the black population of District 1. is 58.38%. Continuing he said he would like the committee to present to the County Council a redistricting map with the population of each district closer to the ideal population number for districts and he said he thinks that could be accomplished by moving small parts of district boundaries to get closer to the ideal number of 19,837 population per district.

Dr. Basehart recalled that there are two places south of Delmar where District 5. dips down into District 1. suggesting that adjusting those lines could even out the boundaries in those areas. Mr. Harrison replied that the committee had tried doing that and the result was to lower the black population as a percentage in District 1. Next attention was given to the Sharptown/San Domingo area. After experimenting, Mr. Collins suggested a realignment of the district boundary which moved 180 people from District 1. to District 2. but avoided the San Domingo area. Moving the district boundary to follow a stream bed changed the district for 35 people, increasing the black population of District 1. up to 58.46%. Attention was then given to an area southeast of Hebron between Rockawalkin Road and Quantico Road, south of U.S. 50. This adjustment resulted in District 2. with a population 37 people below the 19,837 ideal, a deviation of 1.2%.

Dr. Boyd commented that not all districts experienced the same population growth since the redistricting was done 10 years ago and districts should be expected to grow at different rates over the next decade, so it won't hurt for some districts to be a little under the ideal in population.

There followed further discussion regarding shifting district boundaries in the Fruitland area having an affect on District 2. and District 3. and about shifting part of District 5. south of U.S. 50. Mr. Harrison said he had spoken with a majority of the members of the County Council and all but one member seemed to be satisfied with what the committee is doing.

Mr. Sheller made a motion for the committee to adopt the redistricting plan as it was at the conclusion of the June 8, 2012 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Boyd. Following further discussion there was a call for the question. Mr. Collins asked all those in favor of the motion to vote aye. **Those voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Gray, Mr. Sheller and Dr. Boyd. Those who voted against the motion were Mr. Harrison, Dr. Basehart and Mr. Collins. With a tie vote the motion failed.**

Mr. Collins reminded the committee that the goal is to do better than was done the first time. Mr. Collins asked to start again with the redistricting plan of June 8, 2012 and plug in, again, the changes between District 1. and District 2. in the vicinity of, but excluding San Domingo, to plug in, again the changes suggested earlier in this meeting near Hebron into District 2. With those changes District 2. would be 32 people under the ideal district population and District 1. would be 234 people over the ideal population and the black population of District 1. would be 58.72 % black.

After making some adjustments to boundaries between Districts 5. and 3. and examining District 4. it would have a population of 42 people over the ideal population of 19,837.

Dr. Basehart said he cannot support the direction the committee is taking because in the interest of making the districts as close to equal in population as it can, too much unincorporated area of the county is put in District 4. It is his belief that District 4. should be preserved for the municipality of Salisbury. Considering Dr. Basehart's concern, Mr. Collins asked Mr. McKenzie to overlay the Salisbury municipal boundaries on the map of the districts. The area of attention was the vicinity of Snow Hill Road. The committee could see no clear division by the municipal boundary, as it takes a meandering course with enclaves of unincorporated area surrounded by municipal areas.

As the redistricting map stood at that time Mr. Collins read off the deviation of the Districts from the 19,837 ideal population:

District 1. district population 59.02% black	deviation	-52
District 2.	deviation	-32
District 3.	deviation	-35
District 4.	deviation	+42
District 5.	deviation	+75

Dr. Basehart said his concern is still that District 4. has unincorporated areas in it and with him the principle is the issue.

Mr. Gray made a motion to accept the district boundaries as they have been adjusted from the June 8, 2012 plan, as suggested by Mr. Collins. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion. Mr. Collins commented that he thinks the County Council will look at the map and the chart, see the deviation within each district and be pleased with the effort. He added that the redistricting plan moved more than a few people to a different district than they are in at present, but some districts were way over in population and the plan balances the districts out while preserving a high percentage of minority population in District 1.

Dr. Boyd said he likes the 59% in District 1. but he is interested in looking at Dr. Basehart's concern further. Dr. Boyd asked in what district is Newtown. Mr. McKenzie responded that it's in District 1.

Mr. Harrison called for the question.

Mr. Collins asked those in favor of the motion to vote aye and those so voting were Messes. Sheller, Collins, Gray, Harrison and Dr. Boyd, There were no votes against the motion.

Dr. Basehart stated that he abstained from the vote.

There was no Old Business.

Under New Business Mr. Harrison opined that the County Council will hold one or more work sessions on the plan the committee submits and that he thinks Council members will want any committee members who can to attend the work sessions.

Following discussion there was consensus that the committee will endeavor to present the redistricting plan to the County Council at it's meeting on July 17, 2012. Mr. Creamer thanked the committee for its work and Mr. McKenzie for his invaluable technical assistance to the committee.

There being no further business the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. **On motion by Mr. Sheller, second by Mr. Harrison, the motion was unanimously carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a. m.**

Matthew Creamer