

WILL COUNTY BOARD
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

June 16, 2011

9:00 a.m.

302 North Chicago Street
County Board Room
Joliet, IL 60432

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Moustis called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present were Members: Adamic, Deutsche, Howard, Singer, Weigel, Dralle, Hart, McPhillips, Kusta, Maher, Traynere, Argoudelis, Goodson, B. Smith, Gould, May, Rozak, Konicki, Zigrossi, Brooks, Stewart, Winfrey, Babich, Wilhelmi and Moustis.

Absent were Members: Bilotta and L. Smith.

Also Present: B. Friefeld and M. Johannsen.

Present from State's Attorney's Office: M. Tatroe and M. Manning.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No minutes were presented for approval.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

13 Districts

Members per District

Consensus 13 District Plan

Setting Salary for County Board Members

Mr. Moustis stated we need to make some decisions on the redistricting/reapportionment. We will talk about these items and then come back and vote on those individual items that are required by statute.

Mr. Gould thanked everyone who has been involved: Ms. Deutsche, Ms. Smith, Mrs. Dralle, Mr. Kusta, Ms. Goodson, Vice-chair Zigrossi, Mr. Stewart, Ms. Winfrey, and Mr. Adamic for all their efforts to bring us where we are today. He acknowledged Greg Johnson, Tong Zhou and the GIS staff; he thanked the county board staff for all their hard work in the meetings and Mrs. Tatroe and Mrs. Manning for their counsel throughout this process. He thanked County Executive Walsh for his hard work and support of this plan as well as Mr. Palmer. Mrs. Voots and Mrs. Wiedmeyer made themselves available in all meetings. He thanked Mr. Moustis for creating a truly bipartisan committee and his leadership of this board. The reapportionment committee met 11 times including a 2-1/2 hour public hearing. We posted various plans on the website. We worked in cooperation with the County Executive and his staff. We met the challenge that was laid down for us at our first meeting. What we have before us today is a reapportionment plan that reflects where we are as a county not only in population but in terms of keeping municipalities together under state statute in compliance with the Voting Rights Act. He is pleased the committee has approved this plan.

Mr. Moustis indicated the only thing we will take a vote on here is the salaries. We will not vote on the plan until the county board meeting; this is for discussion and input. The more appropriate place to vote is county board.

Mr. Gould stated this is a 13 district plan and calls for the number of members to be set at 26. The consensus plan is on everyone's desk; there were some technical corrections since the reapportionment meeting. This is a good plan - good for the municipalities and the county but most of all good for the people of Will County.

Mr. Moustis noted the plan calls for 26 members, which is one less than we currently have; this will be 2 members per district.

Mr. Brooks questioned if the 13 member map is the final map.

Mr. Moustis replied yes it is the final map brought to the board for a vote.

Mrs. Traynere commented she missed where the committee took a vote going from 9 to 13 districts.

Mr. Gould indicated we always had 3 plans available; two of them were 9 districts and the third was the 13 districts. There were always 3 plans on the table and that is what was presented at the public hearing for consideration. The 13 district plan was drafted by the GIS department. He was charged by the committee to bring back one map for the committee's consideration; he was charged to work with the County Executive and his Chief of Staff and come up with one plan. They met for 5-1/2 hours

and went through the merits of both the 9 district maps and the 13 district map. We looked at the legal requirements. The conclusion was that under the two 9 district plans, we were not able to keep municipalities together that have over 30,000 people and keep them in one particular district. An example is Romeoville is over 30,000 and will be a majority in the proposed District 3 in the 13 district map. Under the 9 district maps, Romeoville would not be a majority nor would many other communities that exceed 30,000. Once we came to that conclusion, the County Executive put all efforts into the 13 district plan.

Ms. May asked who was in that meeting.

Mr. Gould answered Vice-chair Zigrossi, Chairman Moustis, County Executive Walsh, Chief of Staff Nick Palmer and Greg Johnson with GIS.

Mr. Moustis commented he had no input. He asked a few questions from Mr. Johnson on how it all worked but he did not participate.

Mrs. May stated she has heard a number of times that every 10 years the county draws a map and that last time the map was drawn that people did not have a say; they were just given one map and they voted on it. This is the same thing; she is given one map – given no choices. It would have been nice to have seen an alternative 9 district map. It was stated that we were trying to protect the minority representation on the board; but then the map is drawn with a district that currently has 3 minority members on the board and now there will only be 2 minorities with the hopes that more will be elected. More consideration should have been shown to the minority population and she does not believe this map reflects that. She understands trying to keep like communities together. An example is District 6; how does Wilton, which seems to be more farmland, get put in District 6? It could have been put in District 1.

Mr. Gould indicated it made more sense to remain in District 6. Wilton Township, while it is agriculture – so is Florence, Jackson, Reed and Wesley Townships. It was considered that District 1 contains the iron ring communities – Peotone, Monee, Crete, Beecher; that those municipalities remain in District 1.

Mrs. May commented there are some board members that will run as 3 members against 2. When drawing the map how do you take the politics out of it? When looking at this map, certain members are right on the line, even by a street. If you had moved it one block they would be put in a different district.

Mr. Moustis stated this 13 district map was done by GIS. The committee did not draw the map nor did Mr. Gould or Mr. Walsh. They asked GIS to draw according to the

statute when it was decided at that meeting to work on a 13 district map. Mr. Palmer, Mr. Gould, Mr. Johnson start moving things around to make it equitable as they could; it was not an “us and them” situation - there were no sides in that room. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Johnson will need to weigh in on what that process was. It was 3 people – Mr. Gould, Mr. Palmer and Mr. Johnson; Mrs. Zigrossi and I asked questions. It was a group process – not Mr. Gould drawing a map.

Mrs. May noted it took 5 hours after GIS drew the map.

Mr. Moustis stated everyone was always welcome to come to the meetings; some county board members came to every one of those meetings – even those that were not members. Everyone was allowed to comment – it was not a closed process.

Mrs. Traynere questioned what the iron ring was.

Mr. Moustis replied they are those communities that will be impacted by the development of the airport; they identify themselves as the iron ring.

Mr. Babich asked if and when a 13 district map gets approved; will the number of precincts be split or will they be made whole.

Mr. Moustis answered the County Clerk will clean up all the precincts as best she can once it is passed.

Mrs. Voots indicated every 10 years we get the opportunity to look at the precincts and make sure we have adequate judges and polling places. We split precincts by how many registered voters and how many people come out to vote.

Mr. Moustis noted early voting will affect how precincts are put together.

Mrs. Voots stated she is working with County Clerks throughout the state on the precinct sizes. The elections are very costly and we want to be saving money. She cannot start working on the map until the county board districts are approved; then we work on precinct lines. She will start at the left-hand corner to draw the precinct lines. Everyone will have an opportunity to look at the map in advance. She appreciates the committee giving her this map one month early. She has to bring it back in August for the precincts. September 6 is the first day to pull petitions.

Mr. Adamic commented it is important to note some precincts were between municipalities such as Joliet and Plainfield. Will you try to keep all the municipalities together and keep the precincts whole in the county board districts?

Mrs. Voots answered yes, that is her goal; it may be confusing for voters.

Mrs. Rozak stated she has heard people on both sides state that this was the most fair and transparent process we have ever had. Mr. Gould went around the table

every time and everyone had a chance to speak; anyone from the public was able to speak as well. At the last meeting we asked to have one map brought forward - not one person in that committee asked if we could have more than one map. She thanked the committee and everyone involved.

Mr. Argoudelis noted when you draw a map for today it is setting us up for the next 10 years. With 9 districts, that would be about 75,000 people and with 13 districts it would be about 51,000. In 10 years some districts may have 75,000 to 80,000 people. We have a better opportunity to represent our constituents; we cannot represent 125,000 to 150,000 people. This gives us the opportunity to represent our district and the future growth of our district; it helps us for the future. He fully supports it.

Mr. Maher commented when we drop off a county board member we save the county some money – going from 27 down to 26. We are making an effort on ways we can save money and he appreciates the committee doing that.

Mr. Moustis stated we need to take action on setting the salaries for county board members. He does not personally support anything that would be an increase – it is either frozen for the next 4 years or it is lowered. If the consensus is to freeze it, we will set salaries where they are currently at.

Mr. Howard asked for clarification if this includes health care benefits.

Mr. Moustis answered county board members are considered as full time for the purpose of benefits – they are eligible for all benefits. The benefit package offered is about \$17,000 to \$18,000; not all county board members take health insurance but it is not part of the overall salary discussion.

Mr. Wilhelmi questioned when discussions would take place about contributions being set higher.

Mr. Moustis replied whatever contributions employees make - county board members will make the same. He does not think you can have different levels of benefits.

Mrs. Traynere asked the State's Attorney for an opinion on that.

Mrs. Tatroe stated she believes that is correct – you cannot have different levels; you can make the decision as to whether you are full time or part time and make the benefits commensurate to that.

A motion was made by Mrs. Traynere, second by Mrs. Zigrossi, to freeze the salaries for county board members at the current level for the upcoming term. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.

Questions Re: County Board Agenda (due to cancellation of Caucuses)

Mrs. Rozak questioned the zoning case on cargo containers.

Mr. Weigel replied the cargo containers in the New Lenox Industrial Park were approved; we had previously approved some in that industrial park.

Mrs. Rozak noted we had previously approved some but we also had said this is it – we were going to follow the ordinance. Staff had recommended denial.

Mr. Weigel indicated we have limited some of those in certain areas. The industrial parks have no view by the public; we are striving to eliminate them in the future.

Mrs. Dralle stated there will be a public hearing regarding adopting the Administrative Adjudication. She will make a motion to remand this back to committee; there were some concerns that came up and we need to readdress those.

Mr. Babich noted Mr. Grueling had discussed fees for the trucks on the roads

Mr. Moustis indicated this had started out as a port authority and then went into a transportation district. Ms. Goodson may report on this at the board meeting; it is something that is being done at the state level but it has not come forward. Senator Wilhelmi will have meetings on this issue. We are quite a ways off and there will be a lot more discussion; this is an issue the transportation committee will keep abreast of.

Ms. Goodson commented this issue is very involved; they have realized it is a much larger issue and need more time to look at in greater detail.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Babich, second by Ms. Winfrey, to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 a.m. All in favor.

MOTION CARRIES.