**Utah Independent Redistricting Commission**

**Commission Meeting Minutes**

Anchor Location: Taylorsville State Office Building

Bonneville Room Floor 3

4315 South 2700 West

Taylorsville, UT 84129-2128

May 25, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Public Meeting Minutes

Attendance - Commission Members

           Chair, Utah Independent Redistricting Commission - Rex Facer

                        Commissioner Lyle Hillyard

                        Commissioner Jeff Baker

                        Commissioner William A. Thorne

                        Commissioner Rob Bishop

                        Commissioner Christine M. Durham

           Commissioner Karen Hale

Attendance - Staff and Others in Attendance at Anchor Location:

                        Gordon Haight, Commission Executive Director

                        Jacob Acquah, GIS

           Bryan Nalder, Assistant Attorney General

                       Barbara Sutherland, Division of Finance

                       Teresa Facer, Volunteer

                       Moira Facer, Volunteer

                       Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator

Jeffrey Wice, Senior Fellow, Census and Redistricting Institute

Jason Torchinsky, Partner at Holtzman Vogel Josefiak Torchinsky PLLC

Daniel Magleby, Associate professor of political science at Binghamton University

Note: A copy of meeting materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found on the Public Notice Website. The minutes may refer to the recording found on the Public Notice Website with the approximate number on the recording where an issue is being discussed.

1. Welcome – Rex Facer

Commission Chair Facer welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Introduction of Aly Escobar, Administrative Assistant

Aly introduced herself to the board and background.

1. Action Item: Approval of May 11, 2021 Utah Independent Redistricting Commission Meeting Minutes – (Commission motion required)
2. Chair Facer requested one correction to the meetings - Bryan Nalder as an acting counsel.

Commissioner Hillyard moved to approve the minutes with the suggested change. Commissioner Hale seconded the motion. The motion carried and the minutes from May 11, 2021, Utah Independent Redistricting Meeting were approved as corrected.

1. Action Item: General Counsel Discussion and Decision – Christine Durham (Commission motion required).

Chair Facer stated that the commission has started reviewing the packets.

Commissioner Durham made comments regarding the presentation by Christopher Jennings and she does not have access to the scoring. Commissioner Thorne explained how to access the scoring packages. She will go through the scoring packages with Gordon to be able to access them. On the other hand she has been reviewing the quality of the proposals and is positive that they will settle on a firm soon.

Chair Facer stated that on June 8th counsel will be at the meeting. Gordon and Chair Facer will call for an electronic meeting before the 8th and will be at the anchor location to settle on a firm.

Commissioner Throne asked if there is a prohibition to one firm doing both jobs.

Chair Facer, responded no. Commissioner Hillyard expressed some frustrations. He would like to see more areas of judging and expressed some bias towards small firms as his own experience as a lawyer. Smaller firms can focus on what you need rather than on a big firm.

Chair Facer appreciated the feedback and said, as we learn from the processes future independent commissions will benefit.

No action was taken on this item.

1. Action Item: Voting Rights Act Counsel Discussion and Decision – Christine Durham (Commission motion required)

No action taken on this item.

1. Redistricting Presentation by Jeff Wice and Jason Torchinsky

Please refer to 1:22:52 of the recording to view this presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the May 25, 2021, posting. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>

1. Analyzing Redistricting Presentation by Daniel Magleby

Please refer to of the recording to view this presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the May 25, 2021, posting. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>

1. Discussion: Communications Strategy

Gordon presented an idea to hire a marketing firm to be in charge of getting the message out to involve the public in the redistricting process. He suggested having interns at various locations as cities, towns, and counties are preparing for their summer festivities and having them in a tent educating the public on our software to draw maps. He said that there are various ways to get the public involved from his experience, but would like feedback from the commission.

Commissioner Durham referred back to Jeff Wice presentation about the crucial part of getting the public educated before the census numbers come out and agreed on having public educated before the numbers come out as a great idea.

Commissioner Hale second and suggested to focus on interest groups and a diverse background of individuals to ensure the commission listens to all people. Commissioner Baker asked about a time frame for a marketing firm. Gordon replied that staff can go with some vendors that the state has approved to get one as soon as next meeting on June 8th. Commissioner Thorne suggested involving groups and nonprofit organizations to start getting the word out. He said, most likely they are willing to do it at no cost and can get them on board sooner rather than later.

Chair Facer tasked staff to meet with groups like Better Boundaries to start getting them on board to submit comments to the commission. Commissioner Hillyard commented on two frustrations one, is that people won’t care until they get impacted and second is that sometimes the commission will get the same fifty people submitting comments and the same lobbyist from the same group and that is a problem. Gordon said that one important thing is to ensure people feel like they are being heard. The vendors for the software’s will be presenting at the next meeting and the commission will start practicing with 2010 data. Commissioner Throne suggested using ACS data that might tell the commission where drastic changes need to be made. Commissioner Hale asked if staff is working with various organizations and how is the outreach going. Chair Facer replied that is something that we have not been very successful, but as soon as we get a better hold of the schedule and more staff we will start to reach out to more people and groups. Commissioner Hillyard suggested tasking Chair Facer and Gordon as the spokesman to the commission. Commissioner Thorne suggested reaching out to big employers such as the State and Intermountain Health Care to get the word out about the commission’s meetings for a better outreach.

1. Logo and Website Update spokesperson for the group.

Designers are still working on the logo and the logo should be ready tomorrow. The website is a work in progress as they try to figure out the content of the website.

1. Discussion: Future Public Hearing Locations and Dates

Chair Facer opened the conversation regarding the schedule that was presented and attached the Utah Public Notice Website. Commissioner Hillyard raised a concern for the 24th of July since they might be a lot of individuals traveling. Gordon suggested that cities are having events and that might be a prime time to have interns to show the software to members of the community. The public needs to be engaged as this is the people’s redistricting. An option to attend online to the meetings will still be provided for people to participate. Commissioner Durham expressed a concern with one date, but if the option to attend online is available she will be able to make it along with her other commitments. There are seven areas where the commission has to hold meetings and in the map shown there are yellow triangles where the commission is hoping to hold the meeting. Chair Facer asked for feedback from the commission to know if they are areas according to the map that the commission feels like needs to be visited.

Commissioner Baker asked about when the maps will be drawn as they travel he feels the commission might need to schedule more meeting especially if they have to be public meetings. Chair Facer suggested that they might have to do a meeting before the public meeting to draw the maps and after the maps are drawn to invite the public to comment on the maps. Commissioner Hillyard suggested to bring maps from where the boundaries are at these moment and maps that they have drawn and to let the public tell the commission where the communities of interest are at and to be able to add comments because it’s easy to complain, but it’s not as easy to solve the problem. It’s easier if they add comments about why would they not like to be split for x and y reasons, but they need to back up their explanation not just draw a line in the map. Commissioner Thorne second that. Chair Facer agreed and said we need to get a why behind their interest.

Commissioner Thorne suggested having a facilitator to ask question to the public to ease the burden from Gordon and Chair Facer. The commission agreed to maybe use Pat Jones to facilitate the conversation. Commissioner Hale suggested translators at the meetings. Commissioner Thorne suggested having a republican and a democrat to facilitate conversations to show a bipartisan effort through the process.

Chair Facer moved the conversation about travel regulations and as a state body the commission has to follow state travel regulations. Chair Facer brought the topic of traveling due to a conference by the NCSL coming up in July and wanted commissioners to get together with Gordon for hotel arrangements, if needed. Commissioner Hillyard moved the conversation about his previous experience of the NCSL conference and suggested to attend the whole conference to get the most out of the conference. Gordon suggested that once a firm gets hired to get training on things that can be said and cannot specially during the conference since a lot of legislators will be in attendance. Commissioner Bishop suggested that the commission needs to prioritize the criteria, before public is getting involved. Chair Facer is hoping to get legal counsel involve helping the commission make that prioritization. Chair Facer showed a slide with the numbers of the maps that need to be drawn. Commissioner Baker highlighted that there is a total of 369 districts that they ought to be represented on the maps. The next slide he showed some of the redistricting criteria.

Commissioner Baker raises a concern regarding annexations. He suggested three options to address the issue. One is doing nothing. Second, is to set a date for Cities to let them know of possible annexations. Third, is for Lt. Governor to freeze annexations. Commissioner Bishop is leaning towards the option of setting a date.

Chair Facer liked the idea to contact Lt. Governor to communicate with the Cities to let the commission know regarding future annexations. The Second comment Commissioner Baker wanted to know if the commission had received any comments through the email that the commission set up. Commissioner Durham suggested staff to summarize the comments and be presented to the commission each meeting so the commissioners can be up to date on the comments from the public. A word cloud was shown to the commission regarding the comments that have been submitted thus far. One last item that was address by Commissioner Baker was hiring GIS experts. We have hired someone; the issue has been that computers are delayed. Gordon spoke about the software that the commissioners will use and what the public will use. Gordon is hopping to have around ten staff members to go out and teach the community on how to use the software to draw maps. Commissioner Baker suggested that he has a lot of GIS connections to get volunteers or interns involved in the redistricting process.

Chair Facer asked for a motion to close the meeting.

Commissioner Hale moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m