

## **Commission Meeting Minutes**

The following are the minutes of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission meeting. The meeting was held on Saturday, September 25, 2021, in Ephraim City Hall. 5 S Main St, Ephraim, UT 84627

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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.

### **Attendance - Commission Members**

Chair, Utah Independent Redistricting Commission - Rex Facer

Commissioner Karen Hale

Commissioner Christine Durham

Commissioner Jeff Baker

Commissioner Robert Bishop

### **Attendance - Staff and Others in Attendance at Anchor Location:**

Gordon Haight, Executive Director

Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator

Sariah Benion, Intern

Joey Fica, Intern

Cassidy Hansen, Intern

Sandy Neill, Sanpete County Clerk

Lloyd Call, Sanpete Messenger

Kip Hansen, Richfield City

Mark Taylor

Joanne Taylor

## **I. Open House**

At the start of the meeting, an open house was held to allow the public to view drafted maps.

## **II. Welcome – Chair Rex Facer**

Chair Facer welcomed everyone to the meeting at 11:02 AM, and introduced the commissioners in attendance, excusing Commissioner Thorne and Commissioner Hillyard and noting they were absent due to prior commitments.

## **III. Presentation: Redistricting Process – Rex Facer**

Chair Facer moved to the next item and stated that he would explain some of the process of redistricting and how the commission functions.

He began by explaining that Proposition 4 in 2018 began the creation of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission and after some compromise legislation in 2020 the Commission was created. Chair Facer explained that the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission is an advisory Commission to the Legislature and would be giving the Legislature three drafted Congressional, State House, State Senate, and State School board maps. He then explained that the Utah Independent Redistricting

Commission was working to create maps informed by the people in a transparent way. Part of these efforts include livestreaming all meetings and mapping sessions and working to get public input.

Chair Facer then went on to explain the criteria to be used by the commission. More information about these criteria can be found here: <https://uirc.utah.gov/uirc-meeting/synopsis-criteria-and-standards/>

In this explanation, Chair Facer mentioned the requirements for equal populations as being the fundamental criteria as the commission works to create maps for the Utah Congressional seats, Utah House, Utah Senate, and State School Board. He presented the various population numbers for each map type. He presented the question of what counties and areas Sanpete County would like to be included with to meet those population requirements.

Chair Facer then moved to explain the additional criteria adopted by the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission which can be found in the link above. In this explanation he touched on the importance of communities of interest, both as a way to ensure representation and to help the commissioners understand where communities can be split if necessary. He also mentioned that the commissioners have decided not to consider political data as they map.

Chair Facer explained the Commissioners' efforts towards acting transparently, and explained that mapping sessions are all streamed on YouTube. He also explained that the public can comment through various avenues, including mapping the state or submitting a community of interest.

He also explained the different mapping teams the commissioners had split into and noted that each team contained at least one commissioner appointed by each party.

#### **IV. Presentation: City and County Delegations**

Chair Facer then asked Sandy Neill, the Sanpete County Clerk, to share a few words. Sandy Neill then addressed the commissioners. She mentioned Sanpete having previously been split into three districts and those splits creating very small voting precincts. She mentioned the issues of having such a small precinct, but redistricting had made those precincts small by necessity. She explained that for a previous cycle she had tried to reach out regarding the concerns of creating small precincts, and also explained that small precincts even add ballot costs.

Commissioner Durham thanked Sandy for her comments and noted that Commissioner Baker mentions concerns for precincts while mapping. Commissioner Baker then mentioned some personal experience with redistricting and small precincts he had last cycle in his work with another county.

Sandy then asked if the commissioners knew of any changes to how incarcerated individuals were counted for redistricting. Chair Facer explained that there had not been any changes and that prisons did create some complications to redistricting. Commissioner Bishop mentioned some complications for other areas such as college campuses, and noted that these complications are understood across the state. Chair Facer then explained to attendees the delay in census data this year and how that affected the timeline for mapping as well as the timeline for giving public comment.

## **V. Presentation: Public Comment – Sariah Morey**

Chair Facer then turned the time to Sariah Morey to present on the commission website - [uirc.utah.gov](http://uirc.utah.gov) and how the public can use the website to submit comments. Sariah explained how the public can submit communities of interest, full maps, and written comments, as well as view the drafted maps created by the Commissioners. Tutorials and links to these resources can be found at [uirc.utah.gov](http://uirc.utah.gov).

A question was asked about whether or not publicly submitted maps need to meet the population criteria. Staff and commissioners explained that for full maps of the state the software does make that requirement. A question was asked about resources for help using the software and staff explained that any questions could be sent to [uirccomments@utah.gov](mailto:uirccomments@utah.gov) and staff would respond promptly.

Commissioner Bishop asked the attendees to help commissioners understand where to combine counties when they give public comment. He explained that Sevier and Sanpete Counties do not have enough population for a senate seat for instance and asked attendees to help commissioners understand what direction to look to gain the necessary population.

## **VI. Presentation: Public Hearing Format – Gordon Haight**

Chair Facer asked Gordon to explain the format for giving comments.

Gordon explained that generally there is a five-minute limit for comments and reminded attendees that staff would be present after the meeting to help answer questions.

Chair Facer reminded attendees that staff can also help the public to use the mapping software if needed.

## **VII. Open Public Comment**

Chair Facer invited members of the public to give comments.

Lloyd Call from the Sanpete Messenger then addressed the commissioners. His comments largely addressed the size of state school board districts and how that related to local school districts.

Kip Hansen from Richfield City then addressed the commissioners. He discussed the similarities and ties between Richfield and Ephraim and suggested that northern Sanpete County has a lot in common with Southern Utah County.

Members of the public and commissioners briefly discussed what area some previous legislators had come from.

Kip Hansen explained that the connection between Ephraim and Nephi was not very clearly defined, but that the connection between Nephi and northern Sanpete County was clearer.

Commissioner Hale reminded attendees that the commissioners would be delivering maps for various district types and asked for thoughts on how to best draw the congressional districts.

Commissioner Durham referred to comments received in other hearings and explained having heard concern from people about preserving and maintaining the voice of southern Utah and rural Utah. She asked for thoughts on how to weigh urban and rural interests.

Commissioner Bishop mentioned that Sanpete County was currently in two districts. Sandy Neill expressed a desire that Sanpete would be made whole, but suggested that if the county was split then the best place to do that would be along the school district line.

Commissioner Bishop asked about access to Carbon County and Lloyd Call explained the possible routes to travel there. Commissioners and members of the public discussed some possibilities of how Sanpete could remain whole for congressional maps and commissioners explained the domino effect of moving one area or another.

A member of the public asked if anticipated growth was something that could be factored into the boundaries. Chair Facer explained that for population numbers, the census data would be used, but communities could ask for currently empty areas with anticipated growth to be included in a given district.

Lloyd Call mentioned that Sanpete and Emery Counties had traditionally had water feuds and wouldn't suggest having northern Sanpete County and Emery County in the same district. Commissioner Bishop noted that water issues can traditionally be fairly large and have led to the split off of new cities. Commissioner Hale asked Lloyd Call how he would encourage others in Sanpete and nearby counties to get involved in the process. Lloyd responded that the Messenger would be publishing a story and suggested that looking at what ties counties and areas might have could help appeal to people.

Commissioner Baker and staff then scrolled through some of the drafted congressional maps to show the public various possibilities considered. After some brief discussion on the drafted maps Chair Facer encouraged the attendees to reach out with any additional comments they might have after the meeting. He asked for any final comments.

### **VIII. Close Public Comment**

With no additional comments Chair Facer asked for any final comments from the commissioners.

### **IX. Adjourn**

Chair Facer asked for a motion to adjourn.

*Commissioner Hale motioned to adjourn the meeting.*

*The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 PM*