

Commission Meeting Minutes

The following are the minutes of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission meeting. The meeting was held on Friday, October 29, 2021. Anchor Location - Taylorsville State Office Building 4315 S 2700 W, Room # 1400 Taylorsville, UT 84129.

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 Lyle Hillyard
Commissioner William Thorne

Attendance - Staff and Others in Attendance at Anchor Location:
Gordon Haight, Executive Director
Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator
Cassidy Hansen, Intern
Sariah Benion, Intern
Joey Fica, Intern
Julianne Kidd, Intern
Matt Cannon,
Jackie Rosen,

I. Call to Order

Chair Facer began the meeting.

II. Welcome – Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer noted that Commissioner Thorne would be arriving late and as such action items would wait until he arrived.

Chair Facer explained that staff would present the report to be voted on in an action item. Gordon Haight explained that staff hoped to have copies of the report distributed to the commissioners that evening. Chair Facer explained that he had read through the vast majority of the drafted reports and had been working with staff to suggest changes.

Cassidy Hansen presented on the drafted report to give to the legislature. Please refer to 2:17 in the recording to hear the presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 29, 2021, post. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>

In this presentation Cassidy discussed both the content and the structure of the report. Much of this focus was on the structure of the report and the efforts staff had made for the report to be engaging and informative to both the legislature as well as the general public. Cassidy also explained that the report

would include a second volume consisting of all public comments received in total. Cassidy also noted that staff would be prepping media kits to be distributed on the day the commission presented to the legislature.

Gordon Haight explained that staff would be sending copies of the drafted report to the commissioners as soon as possible. He asked the commissioners to try to get any requested changes to staff as soon as possible for the report to be finalized and printed.

Chair Facer clarified that staff would deliver an electronic copy of the report and maps to legislative staff on the upcoming Saturday. Gordon further explained that staff would be printing and binding a physical copy of the report for each member of the legislative redistricting committee.

Commissioner Hillyard asked how commissioners should give input for changes and Gordon explained they could just reach out to Gordon. Chair Facer and Gordon noted that they would be available with staff all weekend to make any required changes. Gordon explained that legal counsel and Nate Persily would be providing letters in the report regarding legal compliance with statute.

Commissioner Baker expressed appreciation for the structure of the report and the efforts to make it engaging and accessible.

Commissioner Hillyard suggested having somebody read the report with a critical eye, looking for potential issues.

Cassidy explained that the report would also contain a summary and table of contents.

Commissioner Hillyard and Gordon discussed the exact timeline of when commissioners could expect a copy of the drafted report.

Chair Facer suggested moving on to item five on the agenda to discuss the presentation to the legislature while the commissioners waited on Commissioner Thorne before moving to action items.

V. Discussion of the presentation to the Legislative Redistricting Committee

Gordon explained that Chair Facer had helped provide an outline for presenting to the legislature and staff had been working on slides for that outline.

Chair Facer then explained this outline. He suggested first starting with an overview of the charge given to the commission and how they had remained faithful to that charge. He then suggested discussing public outreach and input. He then suggested discussing the maps maintain the criteria given to the commission. He then suggested talking about the lack of conflicts of interest as well as the work and dedication put into the process, citing things like Commissioner Hillyard's long drives.

Commissioner Durham asked about including the analysis the commissioners considered with maps to help explain that process and how the commissioners had evaluated maps.

Chair Facer explained he also wanted to discuss the transparent map drawing process, as well as explain how drafted maps had been presented to the public and how outside experts had evaluated the maps drawn. He also wanted to discuss the efforts they had made for maps to be compatible with county election operations.

Chair Facer then explained to the other commissioners that if there was any topic they were particularly passionate about he would welcome their help in the presentation, mentioning that as an example Commissioner Baker would likely discuss some of the technical work to keep maps compatible with county election operations. Chair Facer explained he would reach out individually to look for topics commissioners might be interested in presenting on. He also explained that staff could help create any requested slides or other presentation aides.

Chair Facer explained that after these portions of the presentation he wanted to present the maps themselves, including analysis and a discussion of some key features. He suggested presenting in order of school board, senate, house, and then congressional. He explained his sense that the congressional map had the most public interest and presenting those last might keep engagement highest.

Commissioner Hillyard asked if there had been specific changes requested by the public for maps other than congressional, or if the comments mostly discussed congressional maps.

Staff explained that they had comments on all maps, as an example school district officials had made some requested changes that Green Team had implemented into their school board map. Staff also explained that public comments since the 12 maps had been selected has been positive, though some commenters appeared to have favorite maps.

Commissioner Thorne apologized for being late and noted that he had heard some criticism online that the commissioners had been biased because they had districts that put two incumbents in the same district. He suggested that situation had probably occurred multiple times, given the lack of political data used by the commissioners.

The commissioners discussed this, as well as the potentiality that some districts might have no incumbent. Chair Facer noted that they might explain that they had not intended to group incumbents, but the criteria and mapping process used certainly could have led to some incumbents being in the same district.

Chair Facer suggested that he saw this presentation as an opportunity to share their process and their results, rather than an opportunity to refute certain claims, though they could clarify when needed. Commissioners discussed potential comments and discussion, particularly the likelihood that people would ask why specific lines were in specific places. They suggested that focusing on having three different maps for each district type helped provide options and helped people understand the different ways in which a map be drawn.

Chair Facer also noted that as commissioners had mentioned in other meetings, there had been no discussion of potential election outcomes for any map. Chair Facer then briefly discussed the logistics of meeting before the presentation to the legislature. Staff and commissioners discussed this in more detail.

Chair Facer asked for any final discussion of the presentation, noting that they had not seen exact slides yet. He asked the commissioners to let him know if they wanted anything included or had any comments. Commissioners Durham and Hillyard noted they would be happy to speak if Chair Facer had a particular area he wanted them to speak.

Chair Facer then moved on to item three in the agenda.

III. Action Item: Voting on the maps to present to the Legislative Redistricting Committee

Chair Facer explained that the commission had voted earlier in the week on the maps to adopt and present to the legislature. He explained that in that vote they had allowed for some potential cleanup and small changes to be made, noting that as an example he and Commissioner Hale had adjusted some boundary lines in Magna in their congressional map. He noted that this change was not substantive but offered to present that map. Commissioner Hillyard noted that he and Commissioner Thorne had met to clean up boundaries, and a lot of that cleanup seemed to be done.

Chair Facer asked Commissioner Baker if he wanted to speak regarding the map cleanup given his involvement and technical help.

Commissioner Baker asked staff if the changes to the Green School Board map requested by school district officials had been posted online after the Green Team had finalized those changes. Staff explained that they had and that map had been forwarded to the school districts as well. Commissioner Baker asked if they wanted to change the naming convention of their maps, or if they wanted to stick with maps such as Orange 3-3. Commissioners and staff discussed that they would leave the names intact to help people that had followed the process and to remain consistent with naming done in analysis.

Commissioners and staff also discussed having staff renumber the districts to most accurately reflect the current numbers and changes that might lead to.

Commissioner Baker explained that the cleanup effort to make districts easily compatible with county election operations had been very successful, though was not 100% done. He suggested that they could be described as highly prepared, though perhaps needing some small tweaks. He explained that even with that said the data was very clean.

Commissioner Hale thanked Commissioner Baker for his work on cleanup.

Chair Facer and Commissioner Baker discussed the help the commission had received from outside GIS volunteers.

Commissioners also briefly discussed the logistics behind how the language for the bill was drafted and how that might interact with the cleanup process.

Chair Facer asked for any additional discussion on the maps and after no additional discussion asked for a motion to adopt the maps with final changes.

*Commissioner Durham motioned to adopt the maps with final changes.
Commissioner Hale seconded the motion.*

<i>Commissioner Jeff Baker</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Commissioner Christine Durham</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Commissioner Lyle Hillyard</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Commissioner Chair Rex Facer</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Commissioner Karen Hale</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Commissioner William Thorne</i>	<i>Aye</i>

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Action Item: Voting on the Report to present to the Legislative Redistricting Committee

Chair Facer noted that the next item was a vote to approve the report to the legislature, and wasn't sure how the commissioners wanted to proceed given that the report had not been finished and delivered to the commissioners.

Commissioner Hillyard suggested noticing a meeting just before presenting to the legislature to approve the report. Commissioners noted that they needed to approve the report before delivering it to the legislative staff. Commissioner Hillyard raised some concerns with approved the report before language had been finalized.

Gordon suggested noticing a meeting for the next day to approve the report.

Gordon asked Chair Facer for a brief recess.

A short recess was taken.

Commissioner Durham explained that they had learned that the Speaker of the House had appointed a replacement for former Commissioner Bishop. She noted that given the very recent vote creating a timetable of events seemed appropriate. Commissioners briefly discussed this timetable, noting that Commissioner Hale had been a replacement appointee earlier in the process.

Chair Facer asked counsel for any input.

Matt Cannon noted that there was statutory language regarding a statement to the governor regarding qualifications and would look into how that might interact with a vote on the report as soon as possible. He also noted that he did think it was important to have a vote approving the report before delivering that report.

Staff and commissioners discussed having an electronic meeting the next day to approve the report.

Commissioner Hale asked for thoughts on how the new commissioner needed to be included in that meeting.

Gordon explained he would work with Matt to understand the situation as soon as possible and suggested staff would immediately start giving the new commissioner the same information delivered to the other commissioners.

Chair Facer noted there was still an agenda item to discuss a press conference and moved to item six.

VI. Discussion of Press Conference

Gordon explained that staff had offered the press an opportunity to talk to commissioners after the presentation. He also suggested that the upcoming week would likely have a lot of discussion and excitement before the legislative session and votes on the maps.

Commissioner Hillyard suggested that commissioners needed to be careful to avoid saying anything that might be construed as combative.

Chair Facer noted that the commissioners understood their advisory role and none of the commissioners appeared to view their role as anything other than helping the legislature to create and approve good maps.

Commissioner Baker explained that he had previously suggested an application to allow the individual legislatures to view the maps on their own devices, but noted the limited time the staff had available.

VII. Adjourn

Chair Facer asked for any further discussion and hearing none asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Hillyard motioned to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.