

Commission Meeting Minutes

The following are the minutes of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission meeting. The meeting was held on Monday, October 18, 2021 at the 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 Robert Bishop (virtually)
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
Matt Cannon, Legal Counsel
Jackie Rosen, Legal Counsel
Chase Clyde, Utah Education Association (virtually)
Stuart Hepworth (virtually)
Chris Campbell (virtually)

I. Call to Order

Chair Facer began the meeting.

II. Welcome – Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that Commissioner Bishop was in attendance virtually.

III. Action Item: Approval of Minutes – September 24, September 25, September 27, October 1, October 4, October 8, 2021.

Chair Facer moved to the next item. He asked for any requested changes.

Commissioner Hale requested a slight change in the September 27 minutes, changing the word personal to personnel.

Commissioner Durham moved to approve the minutes.
Commissioner Hale seconded the motion with that requested change.

All members voted aye.

The motion carried.

IV. Presentation: Map Presentation - Utah Education Association

Chair Facer moved to the next item and explained that a representative from the Utah Education Association had a school board map to present.

Chase Clyde then addressed the commissioners to present a proposed school board map. To view this presentation and discussion around it please refer to 4:35 in the recording to hear Chase's presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post.

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>.

In this presentation Chase Clyde noted that keeping school districts or LEAs intact where possible was a priority, and when districts had to be split efforts were made to follow the feeder systems in that district.

V. Presentation: Legal Discussion – Matt Cannon

Chair Facer then turned to the next item.

Gordon explained that while Matt Cannon was in attendance virtually, and explained that staff and Matt were working on a memo regarding legal criteria, and suggested that that memo would be done Thursday of this same week. Matt explained that he had no other pressing discussion but was available during this meeting and would plan to present the mentioned memo on Thursday.

VI. Discussion: Map Refinement and Criteria – Gordon Haight and Cassidy Hansen

Char Facer moved to the next agenda item.

Staff and commissioners discussed how many maps each team had drafted and if those teams wanted to present those maps to the legislature.

In this discussion, Commissioner Durham suggested that she and Commissioner Baker were no longer interested in moving forward with the Green Congressional Map.

Gordon clarified that no final decisions or votes had been made, and that staff wanted to help facilitate a general narrowing down of maps. Commissioner Hillyard and Baker discussed the logistics of a precinct for school board districts between Grand and San Juan Counties.

Staff and Commissioners then briefly viewed and discussed the drafted school board map from each team. To view these maps and the discussion around them in full detail, please refer to 42:07 in the recording to hear the discussion. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post.

<https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>.

Commissioner Durham and Commissioner Baker explained that they may be interested in pursuing the presented map from the UEA rather than the green team map.

Commissioner Bishop asked some questions about the Orange School Board map and Commissioners Hillyard and Thorne explained their focus on maintaining small deviations, and keeping cities together. They discussed some potential issues such as a split in Beaver County, and possible solutions, including a possibly higher deviation.

Commissioners discussed potentially presenting maps with different priorities, with their example of the UEA map prioritizing avoiding district splits, while the Orange Team map prioritized small deviations.

Commissioner Bishop expressed his appreciation with giving maps with different priorities to the legislature, and several other commissioners agreed with the overall sentiment.

Commissioners viewed a publicly submitted map from Stuart Hepworth, to view this map and the discussion around it please refer to 59:10 in the recording. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>.

Commissioner Hillyard asked if any school board maps had been presented by the legislative redistricting committee. Chair Facer explained that they had not.

Staff then presented some of the initial district splits in the various school board drafts.

Commissioner Hillyard explained his view, that while people might call out what they see as partisan leaning one way or another in a map, he felt that gerrymandering was something that would need to be intentional, and that intent wasn't something he felt was present in these maps, and he felt they had defensible reasoning for the choices they had made. Commissioners also mentioned that the attached report with the submitted maps should help with that explanation.

Gordon mentioned that Commissioner Baker had been working with staff to help in cleanup for the drafted maps and respond to technical concerns from the various county clerks. Gordon asked if the commissioners had three maps they wanted to move forward with. Commissioner Durham explained that she would prefer a final opportunity to review and consider the publicly submitted maps first. Chair Facer and Commissioner Durham suggested having staff do initial analysis to find public maps that would be competitive with the maps drafted by the commissioners.

Staff and commissioners then briefly discussed the house maps each team was working on, and if there were any maps the commissioners would not like to consider.

Staff and commissioners then briefly viewed two publicly submitted house maps, please refer to 1:30:29 in the recording to hear Chase's presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>.

Staff then briefly presented some of the initial district splits in the various house district maps and discussed which maps the commissioners were interested in discussing further.

Gordon noted that Tyler Jarvis and Moon Duchin were in attendance online to present regarding data they were seeing and analysis they had done.

Moon Durchin then presented slides regarding data analysis in Utah. To view this presentation please refer to 1:46:50 in the recording to hear the presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>.

This presentation including explanation of computer-generated plans and how various commission plans compare, starting with county splits and moving to compactness. Moon explained the cut edges measure of compactness in this explanation and explained how this compactness measure interacts with city boundaries.

This presentation then moved to discussing racial statistics, noting that while there does not seem to be any indication of Utah districts meeting requirements in the Voting Rights Act, but using this presentation to add to the discussion of characteristics that are or are not considered. Moon noted that the data shows that the drafted congressional plans statistically show that the commissioners did not consider racial characteristics. Finally, Moon noted that she planned to present on how the maps took municipalities into account, communities of interest, and publicly submitted maps.

Commissioners, staff, Moon, and Tyler briefly discussed specifics for future analysis for things such as allowable population deviations.

Matt Cannon asked some technical questions regarding how the computer-generated maps prioritize different criteria and Moon explained please refer to 2:06:44 in the recording to hear the presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the October 18, 2021, post. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>. She explaining that contiguity and deviation are firm requirements and compactness and county integrity were both included, but can be weighted in different ways.

Commissioner Hillyard noted that compactness can be very difficult given the different population densities of areas.

Tyler noted that the commission plans were stacking up decently well thus far and Moon agreed that while nothing about the commission plans was alarming, this analysis helped provide context and helped envision options.

Commissioner Hillyard asked for advice on making a map more compact quantitatively, and Gordon explained his view that while this quantitative analysis was useful, it may be more helpful for comparison and discussion, and while maps could be refined to improve these scores, that likely should not be the only weight in determining what maps to finalize.

Commissioner Baker asked Moon if the number of submitted COIs (between 700 and 800) would be enough for analysis. Moon explained that while she hadn't looked at the submissions in detail, that number was within the range of some other states using COIs. Moon also discussed that some COIs seemed to essentially give instructions in the narratives, and that the geographic portion of the COI was easier to analyze.

Commissioner Hillyard asked about repeat submissions. Moon explained that while she did not want to give anything more than analysis, she felt that repeat submissions weren't necessarily an issue, but that it was really up to the commissioners on determining how to weigh that.

Staff explained that there had been some initially sorting and categorizing of the submitted COIs, and that process should help alleviate some of the mentioned concerns.

Gordon then asked the commissioners for which senate maps they would like to get analysis on, and it was determined that staff would provide analysis on the senate map from each team, plus 2 or 3 public submissions, and they would provide similar analysis on the congressional maps.

Commissioner Hillyard noted that he and Commissioner Thorne would like to work with Commissioner Baker to view the maps Orange Team was still considering and clean them up.

Staff and commissioners discussed what data was the most useful in these analyses, and noted that data on how large city and county splits was useful. They also discussed what level of analysis to provide on public submissions.

VII. Presentation: UIRC Legislative Report – Gordon Haight

Chair Facer moved to the next item.

Gordon explained that a draft of the report had been created, and staff was finishing some initial edits and would provide a copy to the commissioners soon. He explained that the hope was to get a draft of the report and the appendix done hopefully this week, to allow a final week for cleanup and discussion of presenting maps to the legislature in the week before that presentation.

Commissioner Hillyard noted that he felt like the legislature would be more interested in the specific maps than fine details of the overall process.

VIII. Open Public Comment

Chair Facer turned the time to the next agenda item and opened the meeting to public comments.

Stuart Hepworth addressed the commissioners. He presented his board of education map mentioned earlier in the meeting. His presentation focused on Salt Lake County and North, explaining his efforts to not create a district combining a portion of Davis and Salt Lake Counties. He also mentioned a discrepancy between the school board overlay within the legislative redistricting committee's software and the layer being used by the commissioners.

Chris Campbell addressed the commissioners. He presented a house map he had drafted. He noted his efforts to keep cities and counties together, and balancing communities of interest, city boundaries, and other criteria. He mentioned that it was difficult to determine in some cities if the city boundaries or using I-15 better kept communities of interest together. He also explained that the deviations in this map were low enough to accommodate changes if the commissioners were interested.

IX. Close Public Comment

Chair Facer asked for any comments and with no further comments, closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Chair Facer asked for any final comments from the commissioners, and briefly explained that staff would work to get printed maps and analysis for the remaining commission maps and some of the public submissions.

X. Adjourn

Chair Facer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Hillyard motioned to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned.