

COUNCIL PRESENT: Dunagan, Wangemann, Hamrick
COUNCIL ABSENT: Bruner, Figueras
STAFF PRESENT: Padgett, Palmour, Jordan, Grayson
STAFF ABSENT: Sheppard

Mayor Pro Tem Dunagan called the meeting to order.

SPECIAL SESSION - REDISTRICTING PROJECT:

Presentation

City Clerk Denise Jordan stated this was the second meeting regarding the redistricting project. She stated the July 20th discussion was video recorded and has been placed on the City's website. She noted the redistricting portion of this meeting would be recorded and available on the website as well.

Mrs. Jordan reviewed the history of the previous redistricting project addressing the 2000 census data. She noted the City and the School Board worked together on the project and agreed upon the same map. The City adopted the map via Home Rule Powers and the Board of Education worked with the local Legislative Delegation to implement the change.

Mrs. Jordan provided an overview of the redistricting meetings to date. A power point presentation was used to discuss various information. Points of interests were noted as follows:

- The Project Team
- The six goals
- An overview of discussion at the July 20th Meeting
- Approval of a Home Rule Ordinance to adopt a map
- The proposed map (PROP2RE)
- Suggestions to (1) increase the minority statistics for Ward 3 and (2) try to keep Ward 5 the same as it is based upon the deviation information

Upon request, Ms. Jordan identified the project team members as follows.

- Board of Education Office - Dr. Merrienne Dyer and Christine Brosky
- Community Development Department – Matt Tate
- Hall County Elections Office - Charlotte Sosebee
- Legal Counsel - Attorney Bubba Palmour and Attorney Drew Whalen
- City Clerk's Office – Denise Jordan

She further noted there were others that worked behind the scenes to provide the maps and other information required to complete this project.

Attorney Drew Whalen stated he had some concerns with the proposed map. In reviewing the application of the 2010 census data to the current wards, there was very little deviation shown in Ward 5. He wanted to see if another map could be drawn that didn't change the boundaries of Ward 5. The other concern was the decrease in the black minority population within Ward 3. The proposed plans were reviewed and analyzed by Ms. Meggers, former Director of the State's

Reapportionment Office. Mr. Whalen noted the importance of keeping incumbents within the same district for both the Council and Board of Education Members.

There was discussion about a slight change in the census data affecting three census blocks for Hall County. The updated census information had been distributed and offered minor changes to the percentages.

Mr. Whalen stated Ward 3 was reevaluated to see if there could be an increase to the black Voter Age Population (VAP) for PROP2RE. Ms. Meggers advised she was unable to identify any changes to achieve this goal without over populating the area. He showed the deviation information for PROP2RE indicating it looked very good. There was discussion about the VAP and the Voter Registration information that was included in the agenda package. He felt the numbers shown on the Voter Registration Report told the true story. According to this information, he felt the black population could still elect its candidate of choice in Ward 3 because the Hispanic population was not participating in the election process. In closing, Mr. Whalen stated the plan was defensible. He asked the Council and Board of Education to express any concerns/questions noting it would be helpful to have that information today.

Charlotte Sosebee, Hall County Elections Office, addressed the Council and expressed the importance of both the Council and the Board of Education using the same boundaries. She emphasized it would be more cost effective to have the same ward boundaries for both elected bodies. Currently, there are five different ballot styles. If each elected body uses a different map, there was the possibility of needing 15 different ballot styles. The other matter to consider was minimizing confusion among the voters.

Public Comments

Board of Education Member Willie Mitchell stated he received some concerns from citizens in the community regarding the meeting times. He requested some evening meetings.

There were no other comments.

Council Comments

Council Member Wangemann commended the Project Team for their hard work and a job well done. He stated he felt the team had the best interest of the community at heart when they drew the lines in a non-political manner. He noted Mr. Whalen went the extra mile by talking with the expert to address his concerns. He realized the Ward boundaries were more important to the Board of Education since they are elected by the district. Mr. Wangemann expressed his desire to have balanced wards which allowed the voting strength to be the same.

Council Member Dunagan concurred with Council Member Wangemann's comments.

City Manager Kip Padgett commented on the next steps to move forward with the proposed ordinance and public hearing at the next meeting.

City Clerk Denise Jordan gave an overview of the timeline which included the following schedule:

- Proposed ordinance presented as part of the August 11th Work Session. The meeting would be advertised as a public hearing.
- Upon concurrence to proceed, the caption of the ordinance would be advertised.

- Public hearing and first reading of proposed ordinance at the September 6th Council Meeting.
- Public hearing and second reading of proposed ordinance at the September 20th Council Meeting.

Attorney Whalen stated he had met with the School Board Attorney and they were requesting to meet with Ms. Meggers to discuss other options.

Mr. Hartley confirmed the Board of Education was working under the same goals and received the proposed map at the same time as the Council. The Board wanted to arrange for Ms. Meggers to demonstrate the process and address questions. It was the Council's decision as to their level of participation. They were looking at August 11th as a potential date for that meeting.

Council Member Dunagan felt Ms. Meggers already had done this. He didn't see a problem with the request and didn't see a need for a joint meeting. Mr. Dunagan stated the cost would be incurred by the Board of Education.

The special session ended at 9:40. The Work Session began immediately thereafter.

/ag

Ruth H. Bruner, Mayor

Denise O. Jordan, City Clerk