

NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT

Minutes of the

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Tuesday and Wednesday, August 23-24, 2011
Klefstad Room, North Dakota State University Alumni Center
Fargo, North Dakota

Senator Ray Holmberg, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members present: Senators Ray Holmberg, Randel Christmann, Dwight Cook, Tony Grindberg, Jerry Klein, Stanley W. Lyson, Ryan M. Taylor, John Warner; Representatives Larry Bellew, Bill Devlin, Richard Holman, Nancy Johnson, Jim Kasper, Jerry Kelsh, David Monson, Mike Nathe

Others present: Jim W. Smith, Director, Legislative Council, Bismarck

Representative Al Carlson and Senator Gary A. Lee, members of the Legislative Management, were also in attendance.

See attached [appendix](#) for additional persons present.

It was moved by Representative Monson, seconded by Representative Johnson, and carried that the minutes of the August 4, 2011, meeting be approved.

Chairman Holmberg said the upcoming meetings of the committee are:

- September 16 - Bismarck;
- September 27 - Devils Lake; and
- October 11-12 - Bismarck.

Chairman Holmberg said after the final meeting in October, the committee will forward a redistricting plan to the Legislative Management. He said the Legislative Management will then forward a final plan to the Legislative Assembly.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Chairman Holmberg said the committee may wish to vote on parts of a statewide plan as plans are developed; however, a vote will be taken on the final statewide plan as a whole.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg, Mr. John Bjornson, Committee Counsel, said the committee will vote on a generalized plan; however, the bill draft that will be presented to the Legislative Management will include the actual metes and bounds that describe each district in the plan.

Chairman Holmberg called on Senator Grindberg for a presentation of a proposed plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) (to view these files you need to download and install [Google Earth](#)) for the Fargo area. Senator Grindberg said the plan was developed after consultation with Fargo area district representatives. He said the proposal is based upon a 47-district state plan. He said the plan concentrates on Cass County and adds a new even-numbered district to Fargo. He said from the 2000 census to the

2010 census, Cass County's population showed a net increase of about 4,400.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Senator Grindberg said the new district would include parts of Fargo and West Fargo.

In response to a question from Senator Christmann, Senator Grindberg said the boundary in the northeast corner of District 13 of the proposed plan was chosen because it follows the river.

In response to a question from Representative Nathe, Senator Grindberg said the only current legislator who would be affected by the proposed plan would be Representative Randy Boehning.

In response to a question from Senator Christmann, Senator Grindberg said the plan could be adjusted to shift more of the population of Districts 13 and 16 to District 22. He said the proposed District 22 includes much of rural Cass County.

Chairman Holmberg called on Ms. Carol Sawicki, League of Women Voters of North Dakota, for comments regarding the proposed Fargo plan. Ms. Sawicki said she has not had an opportunity to review the plan properly. She said as a league member, she believes that legislators should not be drawing the legislative districts. She said there have been attempts to get ballot measures that would create an alternative redistricting process that would be nonpolitical and transparent. She said the current process is the equivalent of the fox building the henhouse.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsh, Senator Grindberg said under the plan, the current District 13 is encompassed by part of District 22.

In response to a question from Representative Monson, Senator Grindberg said even though District 27 in this plan is under the ideal size by 1.91 percent, there is a fair amount of growth in that area. He said the new high school is in that area. He said when a school is built, the homes usually follow.

In response to a question from Representative Holman, Senator Grindberg said there are nine districts in Cass County. He said this plan would create 13 districts that take in parts of Cass County.

Senator Cook commended Senator Grindberg for creating a workable plan for the Fargo area.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Senator Cook presented a plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) for the Mandan area and the southwestern

portion of the state. Under this plan, he said, 1,224 people from the northwest part of District 34 would be moved into District 31. He said the area west of the Missouri River has the population base to keep all six current districts.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Representative Johnson reviewed a proposed plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) for the Dickinson area. She said the proposal has been discussed with area legislators.

In response to a question from Senator Holmberg, Representative Johnson said there have not been any concerns expressed to her about dividing Dunn County.

Senator Warner said there are three precincts south of the Fort Berthold Reservation in District 4 which are very isolated. He said he would like to move those precincts into District 36. He said this area, which includes Dunn Center, Dodge, and Halliday, would rather be associated with a west river district rather than a district that is north of the river.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Representative Bellew reviewed a proposed plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) for the Ward County area. He said the dilemma in the Minot area is that two districts are below the ideal population and others were high. He said under the plan, District 40 took population from District 3, and District 38 took population from District 5. He said under the plan, the Oak Park area would be located in District 5. He said Minot State University would remain in District 40. He said the Minot Air Force Base is split between two districts, as it is now. He said the state fairgrounds would be in District 3.

In response to a question from Representative Nathe, Representative Bellew said he is unsure about what areas of Minot may not be rebuilt as a result of the recent flooding.

Representative Bellew said the plan does not change the current district dividing line through the Minot Air Force Base. He said it is expected that there will be a population shift back to the base once the housing project is completed. He said he has worked with local officials and others on this plan.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Senator Lyson reviewed a plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) for the Williston area. He said District 1, which includes the city of Williston, has excess population. He said the plan moves some of this population to District 2. He said the plan leaves the city of Stanley and Burke County in District 2. He said under the plan, District 1 would be .59 percent over the ideal population, and District 2 would be 2.42 percent over the ideal population.

In response to a question from Senator Christmann, Senator Lyson said the District 1 plan keeps the school district and other natural boundaries intact.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Representative Nathe reviewed a plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) for the Burleigh County area.

He said current District 47 is 33 percent over the ideal population, District 8 is 31.87 percent over the ideal population, District 35 is 5.49 percent under the ideal population, District 32 is 1.91 percent under the ideal population, and District 30 is 9.12 percent over the ideal population. He said this plan creates a new district (District 48) out of part of District 47. He said most of those who live in this new district work in Bismarck and consider themselves Bismarck people even though they live outside the city limits.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsh, Representative Nathe said under this plan, Apple Creek Township would stay in District 8.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Representative Nathe said there are not any incumbent legislators who live in the new District 48.

In response to a question from Representative Kelsh, Senator Holmberg said if the Cass County and Burleigh County plans go forward, two rural districts would have to disappear.

Representative Holman said if the Cass County and Burleigh County plans go forward, there will be more urban representation in the next legislative session.

Chairman Holmberg called on Ms. Renee Stromme, Bismarck, for comments regarding the plan proposed by Representative Nathe. She said the plan would take away one of the polling places for District 47. She said Horizon Middle School, which is a District 47 polling place, would be in the new District 48.

Senator Lyson said the polling place for all precincts in Williston is located in the same building. Representative Johnson said the same is done in Dickinson. Representative Bellew said Ward County is considering reducing the number of polling places.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Ms. Vonette J. Richter, Committee Counsel, reviewed two Jamestown area plans that were prepared by Senator Nething. Ms. Richter said the first plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) would add to the southwest part of District 12 by taking population from District 29. She said the second plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) would include all of Bloom Township in District 12. Under this plan, she said, District 12 would be 2.56 percent under the ideal population.

Chairman Holmberg called on Representative Craig Headland for comments regarding the Jamestown proposal. Representative Headland said with regard to District 29, the second plan is friendlier than the first plan. He said the second plan could be changed slightly to give more back to District 29. He said another option would be to include the Spiritwood Township in District 12.

Chairman Holmberg said additional work will need to be done on how to interface Districts 12 and 29.

In response to a question from Senator Cook, Representative Carlson said he would like to see a statewide plan that includes the proposals for Grand Forks, Minot, Fargo, Williston, the second Jamestown

plan, and the area west of the Missouri River. He said this would allow the committee to see the population numbers for the remainder of the state.

In response to a question from Senator Christmann, Senator Holmberg said all districts in the Devils Lake area are under the ideal population.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Mr. Bjornson said the five districts in the northeast part of the state, not including the Grand Forks area, have a population of 60,127. He said this is the population necessary to make four districts. He said the population in the eight districts in the center of the state is about 101,000, which is the population necessary to make seven districts.

At the request of Chairman Holmberg, Mr. Bjornson reviewed a statewide [plan](#) that included Rolette County as a single district and the previously proposed plans for Cass, Burleigh, Williams, and Rolette Counties and the Williston, Jamestown, and Grand Forks areas. He said the population in the remainder of the state not included in any of the proposed plans is 157,240.

The committee worked on a plan ([PDF map](#) or [Google Earth image](#)) to assign into 11 districts those areas that make up this remaining population.

Chairman Holmberg said the committee will continue to work on the statewide plan at the next meeting.

No further business appearing, Chairman Holmberg adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

John Bjornson
Committee Counsel

Vonette J. Richter
Committee Counsel

ATTACH:1