

House Special Committee on Redistricting

Coos County Public Hearing

Lancaster Town Hall

Lancaster, NH

October 25, 2011

7:00 p.m.

OK
Mirski
2011.11.16

Members of the committee present: Rep. Paul Mirski, Chairman; Rep. Spec Bowers, Rep. Lucy Weber, Rep. Herbert Richardson and Rep. Gene Chandler

Other Reps. Present: Rep. John Tholl, Rep. Robert Theberge and Rep. Gary Coulombe

There were approximately 11 people in the audience (which included Reps. Tholl, Theberge and Coulombe).

Materials made available to the public:

1. Map of Coos County with 2010 populations
2. State and federal constitutional provisions and state laws addressing redistricting
3. The algebraic formulas for calculating deviation with the aggregate method and the component method
4. Instructions for finding the House Special Committee on Redistricting website
5. The schedule for all of the county public hearings

Chairman Mirski called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and read his prepared script

Rep. John Tholl, Whitefield, recalled that they used to have small single-member districts. Now, there are 9 towns in a 4-member district. Almost all of the Reps come from a single town. This disenfranchises small towns. He suggested that Dalton/Whitefield was the right size for a single-member district. He advised against joining towns through Kilkenny, which is an impassable mountain peak. Similar examples are Ervings Location and Success, which divide rather than join towns.

Rep. Robert Theberge, Berlin, asked whether unincorporated places (not just towns and cities) would be included in districts.

Rep. Mirski responded that yes, they would.

Paul Robitaille, Gorham Selectman, remarked that Randolph, Gorham, and Shelburne go well together, and also with the unincorporated towns to the south. He also remarked that Randolph and Jefferson do not connect well.

Rep. Gary Coulombe, Berlin, stated that Berlin, Milan, and Dummer go well together. Responding to a question by Rep. Bowers, he said that Berlin is eliminating its ward lines. He mentioned that the federal prison has caused an increase in population of ward 3. There is talk of changing to 2 wards (perhaps just polling places, not true wards), from the current four unbalanced wards. There is no timeline for a possible change of ward lines.

Rep. Theberge added to the discussion of Berlin wards. He stated that there was a public hearing in Berlin the previous night. The concept is to have one ward with everyone elected at-large. There will be a referendum on the ballot for the January Presidential primary.

There being no other speakers, the hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Spec Bowers

No Handwritten Comments Submitted