

House Special Committee on Redistricting

Grafton County Public Hearing
UNH Cooperative Extension
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
N. Haverhill, NH
October 20, 2011
7:00 p.m.

OK
Pro/Con
2011.11.10

Committee Members Present: Rep. Paul Mirski (Chairman), Rep. Steve Vaillancourt (Clerk), Rep. Gene Chandler, Rep. Herbert Richardson, Rep. Lucy Weber, Rep. David Pierce and Rep. Spec Bowers

There were approximately 22 people in the audience.

Materials made available to the public:

1. Map of Grafton 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 Paul Mirski called the hearing to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Mirski – Read usual introduction (attached) 10 public hearings throughout the State. Rep. Bates holding another one tonight. Recording the hearing for the record.

Testimony

Karen Hill and Nicole Carmen (Lebanon City Councilors):

Karen Hill – Two major points. Request on behalf of city and clerk who is spearheading the redistricting.

Currently four state reps. represent Lebanon – almost exactly same population to warrant four reps. Crucial to continue this way unfortunate timing not ideal to match up with state. We vote in March – not in November. Most other cities bringing proposals to voters in November. We

have set in place March, 2012 ballot for redistricting plan. Ask to allocate four reps. and know about charter – we will have three equalized districts. **Nicole Carmen** – Meet math criteria for four reps. and is socioeconomic unified city. Regional hub of upper valley I-89, Rt. 10 Rt. 4.

November 2nd on city council agenda.

Rep. Steve Vaillancourt – Ask about ward lines not changing to abut other towns.

Nicole Carmen – Should not change that.

Chairman Mirski – Concerned that voters in March might not approve this and entire state plan might be in trouble. Amendment passed by House would waive limitations between now and January 7th. Assuming Senate will meet to pass this. Could you schedule election at the primary date?

Karen Hill – Charter requires certain notice. Certain time frame. Even if the Senate returns tomorrow, not enough window to do this. Noticing requirements in charters.

Chairman Mirski – Can State waive charter provision?

Nicole Carmen – Formula is mathematically based. “I would be very surprised. I’m not going to say I’d eat my hat” if voters didn’t approve it. Can’t recall redistricting ever failing – or ever being an issue – in Lebanon.

Rep. Lucy Weber – If you were able to proceed with special election what would it cost?

Karen Hill – At least \$10,000 according to the city clerk.

Nicole Carmen – We have unbudgeted expenses from Irene.

Rep. David Pierce – What if you could hold on the day of the presidential primary ?

Karen Hill – Less money, but still have to have ballots printed.
Will get the number
72 days in order to set in motion

Chairman Mirski – Ask council to look at whether the State can waive requirements in the city charter.

Karen Hill – Legal counsel has been consulted.

Rep. Susan Almy - Lebanon, Ward 1- borders Plainfield

January 21st earliest day using current state law. November 2 start. Can't do presidential primary unless Nevada and Florida change their minds. City cannot disobey existing state law on right-to-know. Governor would have to sign off on it. We can't start process until then. "That makes it pretty impossible." I think you're going to be faced with problem that Lebanon wards are what they are now. Could have Lebanon at-large – constitutional problem. A lot harder for you to create a map if you move Lebanon in with other towns.

Rep. Almy – Executive Council – Don't want move any area out of Ray Burton's district. People will be extremely upset.

Rep Weber – Would you prefer four reps. at large?

Rep. Almy – Easier to run that way. Three wards are reasonably similar. "It's going to be impossible to redistrict the state without being unconstitutional in one way or another." This may as well be the way. No one in Lebanon will object or sue.

Rep. Chuck Townsend – Canaan (Grafton, District 10) – Constitution says 375-400 members. No requirement to contain within single county. Could we not district across counties? If group of towns don't go together to make one Rep. could they make more than one Rep.?

Appreciate Joel Anderson's calculations work on deviation- two different ones – component and composite. It makes a difference. How much flexibility will committee allow from best mathematical grouping?

Has his own map. Float of Enfield, Hanover, Canaan

Chairman Mirski – School Districts? Enfield – Canaan

Try to keep from having physical barriers between districts going with Hanover goes over mountain.

Rep. Townsend – Alexandria would be crossing another mountain. Secretary of State 10 years ago said no need to stay within county lines. Plainfield (Sullivan County) goes with Lebanon.

Rep. Mirski – Reason for 375-400 explanation. Historical background. Mathematic since 1784. Good to have every town have Rep. even if only for one- third of session. Think of towns as incorporations. No prohibition constitutionally on county lines, but Legislature has Reps. serve in county government. “Would be awkward.” “One man one vote” affects us. 1965-Voting Rights Act – NH must have plan and reviewed by Dept. of Justice. We’re under federal review along with Alabama for discrimination DOJ-60 day review. Plans are commonly sued so we need to get this done the sooner the better. Aggregate method just is not going to fly and court cases argue against it. Creates wicked problem for this committee.

Rep. Gregory Sorg (Grafton 3) – Easton (254 people)

Truly diverse district. Supreme Court has made numbers the thing. Other considerations – history, geography’s sacrificed.

Lincoln and Waterville totally different from other towns I represent. Casino gambling (Rep. Gionet) might be good for Lincoln where he’s from not from where I’m from.

As Washington & Lee University student, Chief Justice Rehnquist visited and asked for questions. I asked if court would ever reverse “1 man 1 vote” ruling. He said “not in my lifetime.” He’s dead now.

Rep. Herbert Richardson – Any fire department or police department shared?

Rep. Sorg – Best to have as many single districts as possible.

Hon. Susan Ford, former state representative (Easton, District 3) – Reiterate what Rep. Sorg said.

Barbara McIlroy, Etna (Hanover) – Fascinating meeting. Web Site also illuminating. Public mapping software almost free.

Rep. Suzanne Smith, Plymouth/Hebron (Grafton, 7)

Hebron, Bristol, Bridgewater, Alexandria – separated by water. Look at topical map great idea. Thanks for work you are doing.

Rep. Rick Ladd (Haverhill, Grafton 5) – Tied to Vermont. Orford tied to Vermont. Bath – Haverhill tied together . Some Grafton County towns eyes look north.

Hearing adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature consisting of the letters 'S' and 'V' in a cursive style, enclosed within a hand-drawn black circle.

Rep. Steve Vaillancourt, Clerk

No handwritten testimony submitted.