



Board of Apportionment Public Hearing

July 29 ,2021 Meeting Minutes

Monticello, Arkansas

The Arkansas Board of Apportionment had a public hearing on July 29, 2021, in the Fine Arts Center at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Public notice of this meeting was provided to media on July 15, 2021, and posted on the Board's calendar of events at: <http://arkansasredistricting.org/events-calendar/>.

Arkansas PBS streamed the meeting on its ARCAN platform. A recording of the meeting can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpbHC2SdoSM>
A transcript of the meeting will be prepared by Cris Braswell, a court reporter with Bushman Court Reporting.

The Board's Redistricting Coordinator, Justice Betty Dickey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All three members of the Board had their representatives in attendance, which includes Andres Rhodes from Governor Hutchinson's Office, Kevin Niehaus from the Secretary of State's Office, Brad Nye and Doug House from the Attorney General's Office, and Shelby Johnson State Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Officer

Justice Dickey began the meeting by introducing the representatives of the members of the Board and explained the meeting's agenda and redistricting timeline. Redistricting Coordinator Dickey explained that the Board is six months behind in their work because of the lack of 2020 Census Data. Betty Dickey went on to mention a prognosis of a 2019 map that was put out by the American Community Survey, which was shown to the audience. Justice Dickey proceeded to mention that the Board of Apportionment would have the 2020 Census Data on or before September 30th.

Justice Dickey then stated that the purpose of the meeting was to get the input from the audience before the Board began the redistricting process. Coordinator Dickey proceeded to note the criteria and the goals which the Board of Apportionment will attempt to meet. First, that the criteria are based on the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, then proceeded to state that it ensures one person, one vote. Justice Dickey proceeded to explain that there are 100 House Seats with 30,000 constituents per district and 35 Senate Seats with 86,000 per district. Coordinator Dickey noted that when districts are deemed illegal it is not in reference to a representative, but to the population amount within a district.

Justice Dickey stated that the second criteria of the Voter's Rights Amendment of 1965 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or language minority. Coordinator Dickey continued by stating the third criteria is the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and noted that it limits drawing boundaries based on race. Justice Dickey proceeded to mention the rest of the criteria being geographic principles, compactness, and ensuring that maps are not gerrymandered. Justice Dickey continued by stating that ensuring that maps are contiguous and

that the board strives to keep counties whole, as well as keep communities of interests together. Justice Dickey proceeded to introduce Arkansas State GIS Officer Shelby Johnson.

Shelby Johnson stated his role at GIS and the technical support he provides to the Arkansas Board of Apportionment. Shelby Johnson noted that the map presented at the meeting is from the Census Bureau's annual estimate that is produced at the county level and assists GIS predict population trends. Shelby Johnson stated that the map demonstrates where population has shifted and changed.

Shelby Johnson proceeded to make notes of the map regarding Drew County, he stated that the county has seen little population decline over a nine-year period. Shelby Johnson noted that in South and Southeast Arkansas has seen the most dramatic population decline.

Shelby Johnson brought attention to a second map at the meeting and the analysis that was conducted using the 2019 data and that data was placed within the current Arkansas Legislative maps. Shelby Johnson proceeded to describe the colors of the map, stating that red means the population is too low and the district needs to grow. Shelby Johnson proceeded to state that shades of white and blue are closer to equal population, and those districts will need to shrink in size, so that other districts can gain equal population.

Shelby Johnson used another example to address the map. He stated that Southeast Arkansas, House District 11 needed to gain 4,300 population to become equal. Shelby Johnson proceeded to note that next to House District 11 is House District 9 needs to gain 1,900 to meet population variance. Shelby Johnson made a note that that these districts must grow or shrink to meet the equal population.

Shelby Johnson proceeded to move onto the Arkansas State Senate map and pointed out Senate District 26 and noted that the population of the district needed to grow to meet equal population. Shelby Johnson contrasted this district Senate District 1 in Northwest, Arkansas and noted that district is 27,000 above target, so it will have to shrink for it, and other districts, to become more equal in population. Shelby Johnson summarized and made a point to point out the timeline to receive the legacy data from the U.S. Census Bureau will be released during the second week of August and take a week to 10 days for processing.

Justice Dickey turned the microphone over to the audience and proceeded to ask them to state their name, district, and county for suggestions.

Corey Breeve from Bradley County noted to the Board of Apportionment that he understood how the House and Senate maps were created, however he asked if Cities, Counties, and JP districts will have their own redistrict process.

Justice Dickey affirmed his statement that cities and counties will have to have their own redistricting process. She proceeded to ask Shelby Johnson to provide more information.

Shelby Johnson affirmed Corey Breeve's statement and noted to him that is why the board will avoid splitting counties to the extent possible and create precincts to help county clerks.

Benny Ravord of Draw County approached the mic and made a comment that was inaudible.

Justice Dickey noted to the audience to visit ArkansasRedistricting.org and to fill out the forms, so that they can be accounted for when drawing maps.

With no more business to attend to, Justice Dickey Adjourned the meeting.