

LIVINGSTON COUNTY BOARD
MINUTES OF June 17, 2021 PUBLIC HEARING OF THE COUNTY BOARD

2021 Reapportionment Plan Hearing

OPENING

County Board Chair Kathy Arbogast called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., in the County Board Room of the Historic Courthouse, 112 W. Madison, Pontiac, Illinois. She announced that the meeting was being streamed live.

The clerk called roll with the following **present:** John L. Vietti, Jason Bunting, Michael L. Kirkton, Gina Manker, Joel J. Barickman, John Slagel, Marty Fannin, Joseph D. Steichen, Tim Shafer, Ronald L. Kestner, Seth Welch, James A. Carley, Robert F. Weller (arrived at 5:10 p.m.), Linda Ambrose, James Blackard, Gerald Earing, Kathy Arbogast, Bill Wilkey and Mark Runyon **Absent:** Scott Mennenga, Paul A. Ritter, William Mays, Steven Lovell and John Vitzthum

Also Present: County Clerk-Kristy Masching, Executive Director-Alina Hartley, State's Attorney-Randy Yedinak, Human Resource Director-Ginger Harris and Treasurer-Nikki Meier

AGENDA

Chair Arbogast called for approval of the agenda. *Motion by Carley, second by Fannin to approve the agenda as presented.* **MOTION CARRIED ON UNANIMOUS VOICE VOTE.**

ACTION AGENDA

Resolution: Approving 2021 Reapportionment Plan Pending Results of 2020 Census & Ordinance: Amending Ordinance Reapportioning Livingston County Board – Elections, Rules & Legislation Committee (ERL) Chairman Mike Kirkton stated that the reason for the hearing was to discuss the resolution approving the 2021 Reapportionment Plan. Kirkton explained the four main aspects that the ERL committee debated and individually voted on in committee. The first aspect was to determine the size of the County Board. The second aspect regarded the size of the districts within Livingston County and how the population base was divided within those three districts. The third aspect regarded the census population data which presented a challenge due to the fact that the federal Census Bureau hadn't released their census data, which by law, was to be released by the end of February. As a result, Governor Pritzker is to sign legislation which allows the state and counties to use data from the American Community Survey for reapportionment purposes. Kirkton noted that their proposed resolution was written in such a way so that when the federal census data became available, the resolution would be updated or changed where necessary. The fourth aspect was to present the committee's reapportionment plan to their constituents and residents via a public hearing prior to presenting it to the County Board for their consideration. The public hearing would give the residents of the county an opportunity to discuss and ask questions directly to the committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Ambrose, a resident of Belle Prairie Township had questions about the reapportionment process, whether it was required or not. Ambrose also voiced his concern about moving forward with this process without having the population data from the required federal census. He stated that he is also an advocate for more representation rather than less, since less representation puts more power and influence in the hands of fewer people. He felt that twenty-four board members is good and urged the Board to keep the number of county board members at 24. *(Kirkton responded that every ten years the federal census is conducted. After the census, counties and municipalities are required by federal law to review their reapportionment plan. The reapportionment plan includes the number of districts and the size of their districts based on the population, in accordance with the Federal census. It was recommended that the total number of members on the County Board be reviewed at this time as well.)*

Jon Goembel, a resident of Belle Prairie Township and former fourteen year District #3 County Board member echoed Tom Ambrose's sentiments. Goembel doesn't want to see the twenty-four member County Board reduced

in size. He stated if the reduction was financially based, it would be an infinitesimal amount of savings based on the size of the budget and if it was in order to make the Board easier to control then by who and why do they want to control it.

Roger Henrichs, voiced his concern over the fact that the committee had used the American Community Survey rather than the required federal census data. He is also concerned with the proposed reduction of the Board. Henrichs felt that the rural areas would be under represented. *(Kirkton responded that the state government required that the reapportionment plan be completed by July 1, 2021. The Governor is to sign legislation which would allow them to use the ACS data as well as extended the deadline to December 31. He noted that if the Board didn't complete the process by July 1, then the Board would lose control of reapportionment. An ad-hoc committee of non-board members would decide the reapportionment of Livingston County. The committee felt that it was better that they decide, talk to their constituents, decide reapportionment, make the deadline and use the best data that was available, which was the 2010 census and ACS data. The census data was used specifically and looked at in conjunction with the three districts. They felt that the composition of the three districts, developed years ago was done correctly. Based on the 2010 census data (pop. 40,000) and the ACS data (35,000), our loss in population for the county was about 6,000 people, with the assumption being that it was spread evenly throughout the county.)*

Bekah Fehr, an Indian Grove Township resident voiced her concern over the proposed reduction of the county board from twenty-four to eighteen members. She wondered what the reason was for reducing and the method used to determine that number. Ms. Fehr cited her reasons for leaving the county board at twenty-four. She noted that county boards are our closest form of government and make decisions that impact our day to day lives and are available to citizens. She asked that the Board vote to keep the members at twenty-four. She thanked the board members for their commitment to being the good representatives of Livingston County and their time and efforts in being good stewards of Livingston County.

Linda Ambrose, a current District #3 Board member prefers not to lower the county board members to eighteen because that would lower the points of contact of representation of the people. She feels that the local level is where a person's vote counts the most. The local level is where you have the most chance to interact with decision makers who will affect your life. Ambrose feels that better decisions are made when more people are involved.

Joe Steichen, current District#2 Board member thanked the citizens who showed up and spoke at the hearing.

Jim Blackard, current District #1 Board member thanked the citizens as well. He noted that they made valid points. His reason for reducing the size of the board is the competition and accountability, with eighteen positions, candidates would have to go out and earn the votes rather than running unopposed.

Mark Runyon, current District #3 Board member asked what would happen if the Board didn't have an apportionment plan in place by July 1. *(Kirkton stated that an ad-hoc committee would be established by the County Clerk and comprised of certain appointees, the state's attorney and representatives from the Republican and Democratic parties. The ad-hoc committee would make the reapportionment decisions. The County Board would be eliminated from the process altogether.)*

Joel Barickman, current District #2 Board member questioned what would happen if the board voted down the eighteen member board. *(Kirkton explained that the County Board would be voting on the four aspects of the reapportionment plan at their meeting, immediately following the hearing. He noted that reduction and size of the board was one aspect of the plan. The Chairperson and member's per diems and pay are also a part of the plan. He stated that there would be no increase in the rate of pay for the Chairperson or the members pay for the next ten years, if approved at the County board meeting. The mileage rate would be the IRS rate.)*

Ms. Alina Hartley explained that the deadline for passage of the reapportionment plan was by July 1 or the date of the regular July County board meeting which would be July 15. A supplementary resolution would be presented at the July 15 meeting if the reapportionment plan was voted down at tonight's County Board meeting.

Gerald Earing, current District #2 Board member asked if the board could bundle the aspects that pertain to the reapportionment plan for one vote and call for a separate vote on the number of members to be on the board. *(State's Attorney Randy Yedinak confirmed that they could separate the aspect regarding the number of board members from the reapportionment plan and vote on it by itself.)*

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m., on motion by Kestner, second by Welch. **MOTION CARRIED ON VOICE VOTE.**

Kathy Arbogast, Chair

Attest:

Kristy A. Masching
County Clerk

Minutes CoBd 061721.A PublicHearing-Reapportionment Plan