

**Buckingham County
2011
Redistricting Committee**

At an organizational meeting of the 2011 Redistricting Committee held on Thursday, February 17, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the County Administration Building, the following members were present: Chairman E.A. "Bill" Talbert; Brian D. Bates; Danny R. Allen; John D. Kitchen, Jr.; Joe N. Chambers, Jr.; Rebecca S. Carter; E.M. Wright, Jr.; Rosalyn Going; Rebecca Cobb; Karl Carter; Kevin Flippen; Jamie Shumaker; Margaret Thomas; James Jones; Acie Allen and Jennifer Lann. Those absent were F.D. "Danny" LeSueur, I. Monroe Snoddy; Richard Austin; and Steve Finan.

Re: Establishment of a quorum

Chairman Talbert certified there was a quorum-five of seven members were present.

Re: Call to order, invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Talbert called the meeting to order. Supervisor Chambers gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all who were in attendance.

Re: Redistricting Organizational Meeting

Mrs. Carter started the meeting off with introductions.

Our mission tonight is to develop an ordinance to be recommended to the Board of Supervisors for adoption. We have to have a public hearing. As you all know we do have elections in November so we are on a very tight schedule. As we know right now, the deadline for candidates will be some time in August unless someone has an update. If there is a primary, districts will need to be established well before that date so voters can be notified. So, as you can see we have quite a task before us. Also, the plan that's proposed and accepted by the Board of Supervisors has to be approved by the Department of Justice and they have at least 60 days to object and ask for additional information. So, so far we have proposed to the Board of Supervisors a schedule of meetings on Thursday nights of each week until we accomplish its task. Acie Allen has said he would like to change some of those dates but he's not here yet but so far that is what we are looking at.

The Preparation and Compliance, Mr. Wright, do have a schedule of that.

Mr. Wright: Jamie has put together a calendar. I've heard several comments that maybe every Thursday night wouldn't work so I asked Jamie to put a calendar up there so we can look at the dates to see what we want to do. Time does really get to be of the essence on this thing. So the hope is to those of us that have the responsibility of getting it on to Justice after you all adopt it, we can have it in place as soon as possible to get to the head

of the line. So we are down to the 17th today, assuming that this committee sees fit to task the staff with the notion of developing a couple plans and bringing it back, we would probably have those in position to bring back on the 24th. It would be hard to move that date forward that week because it's going to take a little bit of time to get together some proposed plans so perhaps we will do this by consensus. Does the 24th work for the group for next week? (it was fine with everyone) So that would be the first meeting and to give you an overview of what we expect to come back to you is if the committee chooses to have the staff develop plans, we would bring back to you a couple of plans that are worthy of your consideration. They will be things for us to work off of.

Mrs. Carter: When Mr. Wright says we, the Board of Supervisors has appointed a working committee to work to bring these things back to you all. That is Mrs. Cobb, Mr. Carter, Jennifer, Kevin and Jamie and Mr. Wright and myself. We will be doing all the work to collect the information and bring it back to you.

Mr. Wright: We are basically your staff. So then we go to the following week. The meeting date will be the 3rd. Does that work for most everybody? (it did) We hope with the plan that we brought back before, you would have given us a little direction to refine that so that we could come back to you on the 3rd with either one plan refined the way you all want it or a come back with a couple variations of it so you can begin to narrow that down. If everything went magical, on that date you would be in a position to recommend a plan to the Board of Supervisors. It's all magic by that time. If not and you need a little further work, then the following week gets to be a little problematic for me, I have a commitment and I've heard other people say they have a commitment so is there a date that will work the week of the 7th.

Mrs. Carter: We certainly want Mr. Wright involved in all of it, any of you all that worked with it the last time, knows it's his responsibility to submit all of this to the Department of Justice and make sure all the t's are crossed and i's are dotted.

Mr. Wright: I can meet the 7th, 8th, does the 8th work on that week? That week we will tentatively plan to meet on the 8th.

Bates: If things are going well and the meeting that week is a follow up refinement, can we meet earlier on the 7th and recommend to the Board that night because we have a Board meeting then and then we don't have one...

Mr. Wright: I'll be here on the 7th, if we look good on the 3rd and all we needed to do was some fine tweaking, then we could just meet on the 7th.

Bates: Since the idea is to get something to the Board quick enough to get it to the Justice Department.

Mr. Wright: So if that goes well, either the 7th or 8th that week, again if things are going well and this committee would recommend to the Board of Supervisors that that be the

plan, that's why we are trying to keep things going now from meeting to meeting then the Supervisors at that meeting while we are here could go ahead and set the matter for public hearing for comment. Then we would be in a good position to have the public hearing and I'm going to ask the Board to consider whatever date, say we agree to it on the 7th, I'm going to be asking the Board to consider having a special meeting at the earliest possible moment after we have completed our advertisement. Purely for the purposes of receiving public comment on it and so we can get it ready to ship on out to Justice. The Objective is to get it to Justice before the end of this month (March). That will put us well ahead of the curve.

What we are talking about then is next Thursday, then the 3rd, then the 7th or 8th depending on how much time we are going to meet, then if we need to come back do we want to go back to the Thursday schedule on the 17th or some other date on that week.

Bates: Why don't we wait to see where we are at that point? If we can schedule it out far enough to the 7th or 8th, let's just see where we are when we get closer to then.

Mr. Wright: We can always revise, but right now the tentative schedule will be what we outlined this evening. Is that agreeable to everybody? I realize that some will have to drift in and out but this is just so time sensitive that it gets to be a top priority on this side and unfortunately we will be dragging you all along to make it a top priority of your schedule.

What staff has done has put together this book. This sort of has a little historical significance to it and gives you some data of where we've been and where we are going. The first tab is what we currently have, Jamie can you show what we've got...and while Jamie is getting that up, what I want to say to that is Jamie, Kevin, Jennifer, Karl and Becca have done a tremendous job of putting this thing together. They deserve an immense amount of credit. Put it in a proper perspective, this data didn't get released until just a couple weeks ago. It's all data for the state of Virginia along with some other states. What they have managed to do is go and collect the data off the census sites, feed it into this program, it doesn't come all tied up into a nice pretty little package, they have put it into this program and have had to do a tremendous amount of leg work to make it work. We had a bid just to prepare the data, this is not doing anything other than preparing the data to plug it into the computer so we can use it at a little less than \$5,000, what we have done, we, I don't take credit for this what they have done is make that happen and so I'm giving them an immense amount of credit because what they have done is make that happen. So I'm giving them an immense amount of credit because they deserve it to get us up and running this quickly because if we had to wait, no telling when...

Mrs. Carter: I might mention that we had the opportunity to work with the software with CRC but we felt that since we are so fortunate to have such a great staff, and with the time frame, that we couldn't use the time involved in using someone else. So we are doing this in-house.

Mr. Wright: So what you see up there now is the...this one is a little faded, those looking at this screen is a little more pronounced, this ordinance if you read through all those sections what you will see, those are the lines that are outlined in there. They are the ones we currently have. Then if you turn the page, you will see a very poor map of it but its old technology stuff, that's actually what's in the submission that we made to Justice in 2001. So all I did is pull it out and copy it. You see the labels on it, now, this has the roads on it if you need to see what your roads on it if you need to see what the roads are, and this is what they've done among other things. Pick a section so we can highlight, the courthouse will be good, when you get to worrying about particular things we'll be able to look at it that particular detail. If you really want to get your mind blown, pull all the way back out, take the roads off and lay the census tracks on there. They are the census tracks. Those are where the counts are made in the County. They are identified census tracks in the County. Here is what we are going to be working with. When you click on that census track it will tell you the number of people, all about that particular track. There are 20 people in that so the census tracks in the county are broken down into that small. So that gives you some idea of the mapping and what you will be able to see. If you turn the page with me, this where...you get an idea of the population of each of the districts. You get the breakdowns of the white, black, American-Indian, Asian, so you get some idea of what or how that works. If you notice there are 2 numbers off to the right at the top of the page. One says total and one says ideal district. The total, you probably know this number by now, this the population of what the census says for the people in Buckingham County. They say we are 17,146. We were 15,800 and some in 2000. So it's grown...

Talbert: This includes the prison, right?

Mr. Wright: This includes the prison.

Talbert: So actually it's about 15,000 and some.

Mrs. Carter: But the growth is not additional prisoners.

Mr. Wright: The prisoners are pretty much matched up with what we have, the prisoner hasn't changed that much. Right now the ideal district means, if you take the 17,146 people and divide it by 7 districts, if everything floated just perfectly, there would be 2,449, actually 2,448 and you have to cut a few of them up and distribute them among other districts but that's not a good thing. So we say that the ideal district is 2,449 people. Now if you turn to the orange tab, you will see where this comes in. This is where the works begins. You see the districts labeled down the left hand side of the page; you see the population that the census says each one of those districts. That's that ideal number we talked about. The next number, the red number means that that district needs to gain people. The black number means that people need to come out of that district to make it comply with that ideal. But look at the number beside that. We don't think we'll ever be perfect, ok. There is a range, my understanding, and Margaret can

help me here, is that you would like to be within a 5% tolerance. You'd like to be 5%...not more than 5% above and not more than 5% below the ideal. The range is what exists there on that range. If you have a population in District 1 for example, between that range, we would feel fairly comfortable with the number of people in it. Now we talk about the review by Justice while this page is in front of you. We send it to Justice because we are required to as is most of the State of Virginia except for those districts who have gone to court and themselves opted out. Justice reviews this to make sure that we haven't disturbed the voting patterns and diluted the voting strength of particular groups here in the county and what is comes down to is the black districts. So it's not complicated in some ways other than making the districts be compact and other things that are required when they review it. We've got to look at those particular districts and make sure that the ratios of and the percentages are somewhat counted for. We can't just do it totally without some regard to that. So we need to be aware of that and staff as they begin to develop that will have to take that into account. But that gives you an idea of what's happening in each district. Now the Board of Supervisors at an earlier meeting last year, adopted some proposed guidelines and if you look behind the yellow tab, these are the guidelines that they set and we are going to try to operate within.

The following proposed Redistricting Guidelines are recommended:

1. To create districts whose population falls within five (5) percent of the ideal district.
2. The boundaries will be geographically contiguous where possible and politically fair, in that they do not dilute the voting strength of one party to the benefit of another.
3. If possible current boundaries should not be split. County Precincts can be established with no more than five thousand (5,000) registered voters and no fewer than one hundred (100) registered voters.
4. Racial minorities should not be diluted or concentrated into one district.
5. If possible, incumbents should not be drawn out of their district
6. "Communities of Interest" should be recognized- that is, groups of voters with common interests.
7. Comply with all Legal Guidelines.

Grab the green tab, but hold your place, turn the page and you will find the blue mark represents where the supervisor's incumbents live and the read will be where the school board members are so that gives you some idea of how we have to work with that. If you happen to be a Board of Supervisors and you are not identified in the right place let us know but I think we've identified where we believe those people live. So the notion is not to gerrymand an incumbent out of their district. So that will be one of the things.

Those are the raw parameters of which this committee will be operating with and what we need to be thinking about. The rest of it is a...if you want some extra reading...here's some extra reading material. This is what the state puts out and it talks about the process and otherwise.

Usually there is a curiosity of how the county matches up with other places. So if you look at what we stuck in here for informational purposes the population of the other jurisdictions around the state. The state population as you see there is 8,001,024. That is just informational purposes. Then finally the last tab is the committee and the staff. I asked that you look at your number and address and if your address is not right, let Jennifer know. She's the one that takes care of seeing that things show up in the right place. If you would also, we will send out a pass out sheet where you can put your best contact telephone number and if you have email and would like to receive your notices by email, stick that on there too. It makes the contact a little easier.

Any questions on what we are here to do. There are some other things that go on that you probably need to be aware of and I haven't asked if she would be willing to do this but I know how knowledgeable she is on things that go on and where we are with that. Margaret also has some time constraints on the things that she needs to do as far as notification and all that. Margaret, would you like to talk a little bit on how this integrates with what you do.

Margaret Thomas: I figure I need to adopt this about 115 day; do we have that much time prior?

Mr. Wright: If we stick to the schedule, we can probably meet that.

Margaret Thomas: We think the primary will be August 23rd but the General Assembly has to adopt that date and that's the date that has passed the House and the Senate but hasn't been signed by the Governor. So, I will have a primary on August 23rd. Prior to that, like E.M. said we have to get the districts drawn, sent to Justice Department and they have to approve them. I have to send new voter cards to everyone that is affected by the changes and then I have to have enough lead time to get ballots printed and everything set up for the election so the sooner the better.

Mr. Wright: You said the primary but that is also the filing deadline for the candidates. So those of you that have to put your name on the ballot, and I believe that is supervisors, constitutional officers and school board. So that's the date that you will have to have your filing information in. We have reason to believe that the Governor's not likely to veto that so we think August 23rd will be that magical date. You will have that link of time to get your petitions in and get your signatures and get your finances in order as far as reporting and go from there. They have done a tremendous job of talking about what they can show you. We can go from the outline. Jamie, is there anything in particular you might be interested in seeing.

Jamie Shumaker: Well, this is what we started with; this is the table from the census that we have to create. Basically there are 1583 blocks with each block containing all the information regarding the population of that block and from there we take it and put it

into map based on that block. So that was the heart of the start of it. Other than that, I mean once we get in blocks it's just a matter of manipulating the data.

Mr. Wright: It's pretty interesting. When we come back with the final product, we will put it up and you will be able to look at census blocks, we will be able to put roads on it so if you have a question of whether so and so's road is on this or whatever, we'll be able to show you that type of information. Remember when we showed you the roads earlier, that's why we put that layer in there. So if someone says, is that road 666 and by names, you will be able to see but those are the roads and streams in Buckingham County so if you try to look at them back like the scale, it gets a little complicated. But the software, their efficiency on it will be a big aide in getting this think accomplished.

Talbert: If I want to get off the Board and run for Commonwealth Attorney, can you start now because you are doing the whole county, is that going to affect the candidates that's running for...

Margaret Thomas: It's countywide so it will have no affect. It will only affect the people by district.

Mr. Wright: The deadline is still the same. It is very time sensitive. I think that one of you fellas told me that you had called Justice today to get a little tweak on some of this data and they said if yall have gotten that far, yall are way ahead of what's going on so I think we are in front of what's happening around us and if we can get it done and get it into Justice. I saw the number somewhere and it may be 10,000 people that have to be pre-cleared by Justice. I don't want to be 9,837 piece of paper that shows up. I'd like to be in the first wave that shows up so we can buy as much time for them to review it. They have a certain length of time to review it, if they are not happy with it; they have a right to ask for additional time which basically resets their clock. So that's why we send them the amount of material, those of you that went through it before, we sent a stack of material about that thick including cd's and tapes and all types of fun things.

Mrs. Carter: Thank you very much. Does anyone else have any comments or discussions?

Margaret Thomas: I hate to bring this up because it opens up a can of worms, has it been decided whether the prison population will be included or excluded?

Mrs. Carter: That has not been discussed.

Mr. Wright: I've had a chance to talk to a lot of people informally. I think the consensus was that we are so close to the cut off number, if we pull the prisons out, it really does demand a new order. You will not be changing a few people, it would cause a total restructuring of the districts. I can't speak for the Board, I can't speak for this committee, if the committee wants to discuss that and consider that and make a recommendation, ultimately the Board of Supervisors would have to decide whether they accept or reject

that. The informal discussions that I've had, in the preparations that when I talked to these folks that are doing the heavy lifting on this thing, we've talked about including the prisons on the projection, but we serve at your pleasure.

Talbert: When we suggested, I was on it the time before it, we suggested to take the prisons at large and have a non voting supervisor to represent the prisons. You have 2,500 prisoners; you've got 2,000 and something in each one of these districts and wouldn't change a thing. I don't know if it would work or not. Of course you'd have to pay a supervisor I guess to sit in at large but at that time it ruled out because you could work the districts where it all came up within and the prison could stay like it was. Now I don't know. Like you said, it would be a heck of a thing to take it out.

Mr. Wright: Again, that is up to yall. If that's the way you want to go with it, we'll take it on as a work project.

Talbert: Let it set. They ain't going nowhere no way.

Mr. Wright: Let's take our first, if I might, Mr. Chairman, let's take our first and formal consensus, I've watched them operate in the legislature and when they get down to discussing and don't want to take a formal vote, they'll say let's take a temperature. It's not recorded, they have to record the votes so sometimes they take the temperature and then they'll decide if they want to vote on it or don't vote on it. So we are going to take the temperature of this group. Is the temperature that we continue on and leave the prisons in they way we proceed?

So the consensus is by temperature, is that what we want to develop or what you are going to ask staff to develop, we are just going to leave the prison count in.

Anything else?

Chambers: On the page with the districts, if a supervisor is not going to run for the next election, then we are not included as an incumbent, right?

Mr. Wright: The whole Board is on this, so if they want to say they don't care where I am, then that could happen. Right now the formal direction of the Board is if you are on the Board you are an incumbent until somebody else takes your place. These are guidelines; they are not hard and fast.

Kitchen: They can be changed.

Mr. Wright: True. These are guidelines. That's exactly right.

R. Goin: Those that have more than one precinct, is it broken down by precinct?

Mr. Wright: We will be able to do that once we get the districts in place is my thinking. Once we have the districts set, then we can see where the precinct line is and then adjust the precinct line within that district so, my thinking is, and we haven't talked about precincts, my feeling will be is we get the district set and then adjust internally the precincts as we need to.

Talbert: On behalf of the Board and I know I speak for the Board, we thank yall for the hard work yall have done and I know Becky and E.M. have been tied into this and work and Margaret, we appreciate all the hard work you do and you are fair and honest with everybody and we appreciate that. I guess we can just recess.

Margaret Thomas: Thank you.

Mr. Wright: I think you will recess to reconvene next Thursday.

Bates: So next Thursday, we are going to see some...

Mr. Wright: Next thing is, I think in Becky's letter it said to task the staff with the notion of coming back with two or three plans. This is going to be interesting. I think that maybe much more than two and if it looks like we might bring three back if it fits together but is it the desire of this group that we try to bring back two plans or three plans to you next week so you will have something to look at and we'll really get down to punching the numbers next time around. So are we clear on our mission?

Acie Allen: Have we picked dates for the rest of the meeting?

Mr. Wright: Let's clear those. We've come up with some dates, we are here on the 17th, then come back on the 24th.

Acie Allen: We are supposed to have a budget meeting but not positive.

Mr. Wright: Mr. Allen is suggesting something other than...he has a conflict on the 24th. How do you look on the 25th or the 23rd? 23rd will not work for me.

Acie Allen: 25th is a Friday, that's not good at all.

Mr. Wright: Well, is it better than the 24th.

Chambers: Mr. Wright, I think we have already agreed to meet on the 24th I suggest we leave it.

Mr. Wright: Alright than the 24th is the next date. Then the 3rd of March and if we are in good shape on the 3rd we are going to try to meet early on the 7th at 6:00 and if we have a lot more editing to do we will do it on the 8th.

What the staff is going to do, we will bring you back the plans on paper too. We will probably bring you another set of tabs and you can open up your notebook and put them in there. These are your working notebooks to do as you want to.

There being no further business, Chairman Talbert recessed to reconvene on February 24, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the County Administration Building.

ATTEST:

Rebecca S. Carter
County Administrator

E.A. "Bill" Talbert
Chairman