

MINUTES OF THE GLADES COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RE-DISTRICTING WORKSHOP HELD TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2017 AT 1:00 P.M. IN THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM, GLADES COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MOORE HAVEN, FLORIDA

The Glades County Board of County Commissioners met on Tuesday, February 14, 2017 for a Workshop at 1:00 p.m. with the following Commissioners present:

John Ahern, Chairman
Tim Stanley, Vice Chairman
Donna Storter Long
Weston Pryor
Donald Strenth

Others present:

Julie Mann Braddock, Administrative Secretary
Richard Pringle, County Attorney
Paul Carlisle, County Manager
Jenny Allen, School Board Member
Inga Williams, Community Development Director
Aletris Farnam, Glades County Supervisor of Elections
Raoul Bataller, Hendry Glades Sunday News
3 citizens

REDISTRICTING WORKSHOP

Chairman Ahern called the workshop to order at 1:10 p.m. He stated this workshop was convened to discuss the possibility of redistricting. He suggested that the floor be opened to discussion and that each Commissioner present his or her ideas on the matter.

Commissioner Pryor stated he would go with the pleasure of the Board. He stated it made no difference to him whether the redistricting was done this year or not. He stated the idea had been discussed for several years now. He suggested evaluating each map and then making a decision.

Commissioner Storter Long stated the redistricting could only be done in an odd year. She stated she did not believe the Board had to do anything. She commented on the areas that were growing faster than others within the County. She asked if the statute regarding redistricting was available.

County Manager Carlisle read a portion of the statute into the record. He stated the Board from time to time shall consider redistricting based on the current census track and proportion the districts as close to an equal number of residents as could be reasonably accomplished. He stated the district bounds were slightly off. He stated the population was approximately 2,300 per district. He stated in Glades County the elections were open to all and no one was disenfranchised. He stated he was still trying to get some

GLADES COUNTY COMMISSION WORKSHOP – FEBRUARY 14, 2017

clarification regarding whether or not the commissioners would remain in their seats or if a special election would have to be held. He stated this point would need to be clarified prior to making a final decision.

Inga Williams, Community Development Director, referred to an Attorney General Opinion that stated the commissioners would remain in their seat until the next election.

There was a brief discussion regarding the creation and/or deletion of districts and how it would affect the commissioners' terms.

Commissioner Storter Long asked what date the new redistricting would become effective, if adopted.

County Manager Carlisle stated he believed it would be effective immediately and was not sure if the Board could approve the redistricting and then make it effective at a later date.

Chairman Ahern stated the new census was already being planned for.

Commissioner Storter Long stated 1990 had been the last basis for the last redistricting and that redistricting had been challenged in court.

Commissioner Strenth stated part of the area's population would vary depending on the time of year the census was taken. He stated there were 3 large campgrounds in his area and if the census was taken during the winter time the population would be increased.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she believed the count date was April 1st.

Diane Cianfrani, resident of Muse, stated she had worked the 1999 census. She stated that census had started in January and had been completed in April. She explained that the count was based on the number of primary residents as of January.

Chairman Ahern stated he believed a lot of the residents in the campgrounds were most likely primary residents of another state.

Commissioner Storter Long stated the census she had received by mail was to be completed as of April 1st.

Vice Chairman Stanley asked if the numbers were even in the districts in 1990.

County Manager Carlisle stated he did not have the numbers from the 1990 redistricting. He stated the numbers would have had to be as close as possible without meandering.

Commissioner Storter Long stated that redistricting was appealed twice and the Plaintiff's had lost both appeals.

GLADES COUNTY COMMISSION WORKSHOP – FEBRUARY 14, 2017

County Manager Carlisle stated there had been some population increases in several areas of the County. He stated Muse had seen a pretty significant increase.

Chairman Ahern stated his district was too small based on the population counts.

Commissioner Pryor stated the size of the districts did not really matter if the County voted at large.

Commissioner Storter Long stated the district lines may change but they would not affect the voting.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated none of the current commissioners lived in District 1 in some of the options presented. He stated this would create the need for a new commissioner in that district or someone would have to move there. He asked what the cost would be if the redistricting was done this year.

Aletris Farnum, Supervisor of Elections, stated there would be costs related to postage, printing, and assistance with the mapping. She did not have an exact figure.

County Manager Carlisle stated new voter registration cards would have to be issued and information related to the new districts would have to be distributed to the residents.

Mrs. Farnum stated there were approximately 6,665 registered voters within the County.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated the redistricting had been put off in years past and would have to be done at some point; however, another census was due in 3 years and the numbers may change then. He stated that he would rather wait do this then. He stated he did not want incur all of these costs and then have to do it all again in 3 years.

Commissioner Storter Long clarified the Board did not have to redistrict, they only had to consider it.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated there were basically 5 communities (6 if the Seminole Indian Reservation was counted) within the County. He stated he believed that each district should be represented by a commissioner.

Mrs. Farnum stated each community would not be able to have their own commissioner.

Commissioner Strenth agreed with Vice Chairman Stanley. He suggested waiting for the new census to come out in 3 years.

County Manager Carlisle stated the County would have the final numbers form the 2020 census until 2021 which was a non-election year and an odd year. He stated the Board could consider redistricting then.

GLADES COUNTY COMMISSION WORKSHOP – FEBRUARY 14, 2017

Commissioner Storter Long stated if the School Board made a change in their redistricting the Supervisor of Elections would incur costs anyway. She stated the Supervisor of Elections would have to make a lot of changes for the voters based on where they were voting for the School Board members.

Chairman Ahern stated including the Moore Haven Mosquito Control District into the same district would make sense. He stated right now Washington Park was in the Moore Haven Mosquito Control District and Bowden Subdivision was not in the same precinct.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated he did not believe the School Board would change unless the County did.

Mrs. Allen stated the School Board had been looking at redistricting for years. She stated they were waiting to hear what the Board did.

Mrs. Farnum stated there were several things going on within the County that she believed would create growth in the near future.

Commissioner Pryor stated there would also be growth from the River to the county line when the airport was completed.

County Manager Carlisle stated there were also other prospects for the Americas Gateway project. He stated he and Mrs. Williams had meet with a developer this week that was planning to develop a section in the Buckhead Ridge area. He stated the Board just adopted a COMP Plan change for a new RV Park this morning. He stated the park included 380 lots. He stated the County was seeing some growth already. He stated building permits had increased. He stated Muse Village had renewed their water permits and there was a possibility that they would start that project again.

Chairman Ahern stated the economy was certainly better than it had been in the past.

County Manager Carlisle stated the Board was right to consider the costs and how the population was going to change.

Chairman Ahern asked the Board if they wished to hold off on the redistricting until the next census.

Commissioner Strenth stated he would like to wait for the next census.

Chairman Ahern agreed.

Commissioner Storter Long asked if Attorney Pringle had found the statute relating to redistricting yet.

Attorney Pringle stated Chapter 124 was the statute regarding redistricting. He stated Section 124.01 talked about the division of counties into districts and county

commissioners. He stated there shall be 5 county commissioners' districts in each county and each shall be as nearly equal in proportion to population as possible. He there shall be one county commissioner for each of such county commissioners' districts, who shall be elected by the qualified electors of the county. He stated sub section 3 stated the commissioners shall from time to time fix the boundaries of the districts so as to keep them as nearly equal in proportion to population as possible; provided, that changes made in the boundaries of county commissioner districts pursuant to this section shall be made only in odd-numbered years. He stated the statute did not define how often the board needed to consider redistricting. He stated there were some old opinions from the Attorney General's Office that said the Board had to redistrict after each census. He stated if the populations within the districts did not significantly change he did not believe the county needed to redistrict. He stated population changes would trigger the need for a change in the districts.

There was a discussion regarding the Board's previous considerations for redistricting.

Commissioner Storter Long stated she would agree with waiting until the 2020 census came out. She asked if there was a statute that obligated the School District to redistrict.

Attorney Pringle stated he did not know the statute number.

Mrs. Allen stated she believed F.S. Chapter 1001.36 covered the School Board's redistricting.

Attorney Pringle referred to one of the older Attorney General Opinions on this matter. He stated there could be divergence from one district to another when there was a practical reason for it. He stated the commissioners had a responsibility to consider redistricting. He stated numbers alone were not the only consideration.

Vice Chairman Stanley stated that because it was practical that the population would change in the next 3 years he felt the Board should wait. He stated the redistricting may be challenged if done now.

Attorney Pringle stated that was a possibility and could be defined as a practical consideration. He stated the Board would not look at just the population. He stated the fact that the County was small and the population had not grown drastically could be considered. He stated the total numbers were not changing but the percentages were. He stated there were other considerations. He stated he wanted to review the Attorney General Opinion that stated the Board had to report something to the State after the census came out. He stated he would like an opportunity to make sure that the Board could leave the boundaries just like they were and that if they did leave them as they were, what was needed to make sure the Board had complied with the law.

Chairman Ahern stated the Board could continue on the path that it was on now and give Attorney Pringle time to research the matter a little more. He stated another workshop could be held later.

GLADES COUNTY COMMISSION WORKSHOP – FEBRUARY 14, 2017

Attorney Pringle stated the Board would need to take some sort of action regarding the redistricting – either leave the districts as they are and explain why, or change them and explain why, or state that the County Attorney had determined that nothing had to be done and explain why.

County Manager Carlisle stated he and Attorney Pringle would look at the Attorney General Opinions and the statutes governing redistricting and bring the matter back to the Board in the future.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion Chairman Ahern adjourned the workshop at 2:05 p.m.

John Ahern, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sandra H. Brown, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Approved: March 14, 2017

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD. TAPES ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN LISTENING TO THE ENTIRE MEETING.