



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, August 23, 2011

Council Session

Item G13

Approval of Appointments to Redistricting Committee

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Chad Nabity, AICP

Meeting: August 23, 2011

Subject: Redistricting Council Wards Based on 2010 Census Results

Item #'s: G-13

Presenter(s): Chad Nabity

Background

Every 10 years, following the U.S. Census of Population and Housing governments at all levels have the responsibility to examine their voting districts to ensure that our representative form of government is equally representing the citizens. Mayor Jay Vavricek is recommending the creation of a committee to review the existing boundaries and make recommendations to Council regarding potential changes.

The charge of this committee is to examine the existing City Council ward boundaries and to make a recommendation to the City Council about redrawing these boundaries to best equalize the population in each ward based on data provided by the 2010 U.S. Census of Population and Housing. In a representative democracy each member of the legislative body (City Council) should represent approximately the same number of people in the community to preserve the concept of equality (one person one vote.) In reality, it is acceptable for each ward to contain the ideal number of people plus or minus ten percent.

Discussion

Based on the 2010 Census each ward would ideally represent 9,704 people. The Census counts people, not voters so districts need to be divided by people. Another reason to count people instead of voters is to insure that children are equally represented. They are a constituency that is entitled to representation but without the ability to vote.

The population of the wards as currently drawn is as follows:

Ward 1	10,743
Ward 2	9,432
Ward 3	8,949
Ward 4	10,012
Ward 5	9,374

The courts have determined that district boundaries need to be redrawn when the population difference is 10 percent greater or less than the ideal number. In Grand Island for 2010 this means, that all wards must have at least 8,734 and no more than 10,674. As shown above only Ward 1 is outside of those parameters and in need of adjustment, but the Committee will have the option to make adjustments to all of the wards. Grand Island City staff will work with the Committee using the Hall County/Grand Island Geographic Information System (GIS) to manipulate the ward boundaries and calculate the population in each ward.

The Mayor has contacted a number of people representing a variety of constituencies and is recommending that the following people be appointed to the Committee:

Hall County Republican Designee	Jerry Piccollo
Hall County Democrat Designee	Glen Murray
Hall County Independent Designee	Gary Rosacker
Community Youth Council Member	Alex Wirth
Community Youth Council Member	Ashley Bykerk
City Council Representative	Bob Niemann
City Council Representative	Linna Dee Donaldson
At Large Community Representative	Anita Lewandowski Brown
Staff Member (Chairman)	Chad Nabit

The members of this committee will serve until Council approves ward boundaries consistent with the 2010 Census of Housing and Population. It is expected that the Committee will have their recommendations prepared for Council no later than October 14th.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council approve the appointments.

Sample Motion

Move to approve the appointments to the Redistricting Committee as submitted.