

**MUSKEGON COUNTY APPORTIONMENT
COMMISSION 2011
MINUTES**

Hall of Justice
990 Terrace, 4th Floor
Muskegon, MI 49442
Wednesday, May 4, 2011
9:00 a.m.

Tony Moulatsiotis, Muskegon County Treasurer, Chairman
Tony Tague, Muskegon County Prosecutor
Nancy A. Waters, Muskegon County Clerk
Steve Markel, Democratic Party Chair
Christina Achterhoff, Republican Party Chair

Tony Moulatsiotis, Muskegon County Treasurer, Chairman, Presiding.

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chairman Moulatsiotis.

Roll Call:

Present: Tony Moulatsiotis, Tony Tague, Nancy A. Waters, Steve Markel,
Christina Achterhoff

Absent: None.

Also Present: County Commissioners Scott Plummer and Bob Scolnik, Equalization GIS Thomas Van Bruggen, Fruitland Township Supervisor Sam St. Amour and Clerk Karolyn Rillema, City of Muskegon Heights Council Members Dorothy Scott and Bonnie McGlothin, Chief Deputy County Clerk Marcia Wilkes, Secretary to the County Clerk Jeanne Pezet, Kay Punter, Jim Riley and other public citizens.

COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

As a follow up to the return of the Autobound software, the software was returned and the bill of \$4,340.00 had not yet been processed for payment so there was no actual refund. A purchase order has been processed to pay \$600 for the License upgrade for the GIS portion.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review of Sample Plans

Thomas Van Bruggen, GIS and IT Support of Muskegon County Equalization had been asked to prepare sample plans for Muskegon County Commission Districts with 7, 9, 11, and 13 districts. He had also been asked to present a 5 district plan. Mr. Van Bruggen explained the three criteria used in developing the sample plans based on: 1. equal populations, 2. keeping jurisdictions whole where possible and 3. that Muskegon Heights would be able to be represented by a minority.

The Commission agreed to look at one plan at a time beginning with the five-district plan.

Plan 5-1: This plan kept all jurisdictions whole with the exception of the City of Muskegon which would be divided into three districts which is a reduction from it's current five Commission Districts.

Plan 7-1: This plan also kept most jurisdictions whole although both the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Charter Township would have two Commission Districts.

Plan 9-1: This plan split the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Charter Township into four, Norton Shores into three and Sullivan Township into two Commission Districts.

Plan 11-1: This plan split the City of Muskegon and Muskegon Charter Township into three, Norton Shores into four and Fruitport Charter Township into two Commission Districts. It was noted that the current 11 Commission District boundaries with the 2010 population numbers would have a 30%+ deviation so could not continue with the same boundary lines.

Plan 13-1: This plan split several municipalities and creates several irregular Commission District boundary lines.

Commissioner Markel suggested taking from larger districts and adding to the smaller districts when attempting the tweak the numbers to lower the deviation.

Commissioner Tague requested a 15 district plan. Chairman Moulatsiotis requested an 8 district plan. Discussion ensued regarding issues with an even number of districts.

Chairman Moulatsiotis opened the floor to public comment on what had been presented.

Councilwoman Dorothy Scott of the City of Muskegon Heights, asked if the majority/minority is considered. It was noted that in all plans currently proposed, the district which includes the City of Muskegon Heights has a black majority.

Kay Punter from the Village of Ravenna requested clarification of numbers represented on the different plans. Ms. Punter also suggested that some of the divisions and issues may be corrected by increasing the divergence from 5% to a higher allowable number.

It was noted that all the presented data will be posted on the County Clerk's website following the meeting.

Sam St. Amour, Fruitland Township Supervisor, recognized the difficult task of this Board. Mr. St. Amour suggested plan 13-1 divides his barn in half, although it does not actually, that is something to be aware of in dividing municipalities. He expressed confidence in the Commission to make a decision that would be beneficial for all of Muskegon County.

Jim Riley addressed the Commission asking why having one commissioner in a municipality is better than more than one in a municipality. He was also in favor of an even number of districts, maybe 10 or 12.

Chairman Moulatsiotis addressed Mr. Riley stating financial concerns in Michigan and across the Country are causing everyone to look at consolidation of services. Information was reviewed as to what savings would take effect with less than our current 11 districts in the course of a year and over the course of the ten years before the district lines will be redrawn. Obviously, increasing the number of districts will increase costs to the County.

Commissioner Waters presented several articles regarding how several Counties have already approved plans to decrease the number of Commission Districts in their County. Chairman Moulatsiotis also noted that several Counties have completed their apportionment process, most of which already had only five or seven districts. Not all Counties provide benefit packages but the salary and benefits are set by the Board of Commissioners and that is not something this Apportionment Commission can change. Kent County went from 19 to 17 districts and Eaton County went from 15 to 7 districts.

Commissioner Markel noted Mayor Warmington requested reducing commission districts within the City of Muskegon from 5 to 3. When asked Mayor Warmington stated he thought the City of Muskegon would be better represented by 3 commissioners rather than five. More districts does not necessarily mean better representation. Chairman Moulatsiotis noted we have only one State Senator representing this area, does that mean he is only looking out for Hart and doesn't care about Muskegon? When County Commissioners are elected, they are elected to serve the entire County.

Councilwoman Bonnie McLaughlin of the City of Muskegon Heights, appreciated the dialog and information on costs. She also asked about the numbers for the five district plan and the black population. It was noted the number is larger because District 4 on plan 5-1 includes all of the City of Muskegon Heights and a large central portion of the City of Muskegon.

Jim Riley continued discussion supporting more representation.

County Commissioner Plummer stated the Commissioners represent the people of Muskegon County and are aware that their votes don't only affect their district but the entire population of Muskegon County.

Kay Punter urged reducing representation is not good at a time when services would need to be consolidated.

Commissioner Markel asked County Commissioner Plummer his opinion about even number of Commission Districts to which he replied that he is not in favor of an even number of Board members.

The Commission recessed at 11:30 a.m. to reconvene at 1 p.m.

Reconvened at 1:10 p.m.

Roll Call:

Present: Tony Moulatsiotis, Nancy A. Waters, Steve Markel, Christina Achterhoff

Excused: Tony Tague

Also Present: Equalization GIS Thomas Van Bruggen, Chief Deputy County Clerk Marcia Wilkes, Secretary to the County Clerk Jeanne Pezet, and Kay Punter

Tony Tague arrived at 1:27 p.m.

Thomas Van Bruggen presented one of the requested plans which he worked on during the break:

Plan 8-1: There was a need to increase District 8, for this plan a portion of Norton Shores was added but it is not visible on the map as presented because it falls under the word "Heights" which identifies the City of Muskegon Heights. In this plan City of Muskegon and the City of Norton Shores would be represented by 3 districts and Muskegon Charter Township would be represented by 2 districts.

After some discussion, Commissioner Tague withdrew his request for at 15 district plan.

Commission members decided to remove Plan 5-1 and Plan 13-1 from consideration.

2011-18 **REQUEST MR. VAN BRUGGEN TO WORK ON 7, 8, AND 9 DISTRICT PLANS WITH A FEW OPTIONS AND ALSO TWEAK THE 11 DISTRICT PLAN FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE NEXT MEETING**

Moved by Achterhoff, seconded by Tague, to request Mr. Van Bruggen to work on 7, 8, and 9 district plans with a few options and also tweak the 11 district plan for consideration at the next meeting.

Voice Vote

Motion Carried

Schedule of Commission Meetings

The next meeting of the Apportionment Commission was scheduled as follows:

Date: Monday, May 9, 2011
Time: 1:00 p.m.
Place: Michael E. Kobza Hall of Justice
Board of Commissioner Board Room
990 Terrace, 4th floor
Muskegon, MI 49442

A meeting had been previously scheduled for:

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2011
Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Place: Michael E. Kobza Hall of Justice
Board of Commissioner Board Room
990 Terrace, 4th floor
Muskegon, MI 49442

The May 11th meeting time will be confirmed or rescheduled at the May 9th meeting.

All meeting notices will be posted to the County Clerk's Apportionment page at:
<http://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/clerk/apportionment.htm>.

2011-19 **AMEND MOTION 2011-16 TO READ “THE COMMISSION WILL STRIVE NOT TO EXCEED A 10% POPULATION DEVIATION FROM THE LARGEST TO SMALLEST DISTRICT UNLESS VOTED OTHERWISE BY A MAJORITY OF THE COMMISSION”**

Moved by Tague, seconded by Achterhoff, to amend previous motion 2011-16, “that, as a matter of policy, the Commission will strive not to exceed a **5%** population deviation from the largest to smallest district unless voted otherwise by a majority of the Commission.” to read “that, as a matter of policy, the Commission will strive not to exceed a **10%** population deviation from the largest to the smallest district unless voted otherwise by a majority of the Commission.”

Voice Vote

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

ADJOURN

2011-20 **MOVED TO ADJOURN**

Moved by Achterhoff, seconded by Waters, to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

Tony Moulatsiotis, Chairman

Nancy A. Waters, County Clerk

NAW/TM/jmp

Please address comments to the County Clerk by calling (231) 724-6316 or by email at clerk@co.muskegon.mi.us

<http://www.co.muskegon.mi.us/clerk/apportionment.htm>

Preliminary Minutes of May 4th to be approved May 9, 2011.