



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: April 16, 2025

SUBJECT: Formation of Committee to Create Commissioner Districts

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Ballot Measure #9-173 passed in November 2024 which expands the County Commissioners to a five seat Board. The two new positions will be elected in 2026, for an initial two-year term which will begin in January 2027 and will be at-large seats. In previous Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meetings in November 2024 and March 2025, the BOCC indicated interest in creating Commissioner Districts through a Ballot Measure process in place of having 5 at-large Commissioner Positions.

On March 31, 2025, the BOCC voted to move forward to develop a process to draft Commissioner Districts for voter consideration. The BOCC supports a district map drawing process via a committee and directed staff to research and present options for forming a citizen committee to commence the map drawing work. Specifically, the BOCC directed staff to present options on the committee formation processes for the following:

1. Local Appointments
2. State Home Rule Charter Committee Appointment Process
3. Civic Assembly/Application Process

In addition to compiling research from the City of Portland and two Oregon counties which have completed a re-districting or new districting process, staff has talked extensively with the consultant who led the Civic Assembly process last fall. Based upon that information as well as staff background and experience, the following options are presented for BOCC discussion and decision:

Local Appointments Options (combination of any of the following)

- Cities
 - How many appointments?
 - Each city appoints 1 member or a weighted formula is created based on proportional voter population
 - The voting population data by city as of April 1, 2025:

| City | Voting Population | Percent of Total Deschutes County Voting Population (163,826) |
|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| City of Bend | 77,587 | 47% |
| City of La Pine | 2,317 | 1% |
| City of Redmond | 26,954 | 16% |
| City of Sisters | 3,206 | 2% |
| Other | 53,762 | 33% |

- BOCC
 - How many appointments?
 - 3 = 1 each
 - 4 = 1 each plus 1 selected by majority vote of the BOCC
 - Other options
- State elected officials from Deschutes County
 - How many appointments?
 - 1 each
 - Proportional appointments based on voting population
 - Other
 - The voting population by office as of April 1, 2025:

| State Senate | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Elected Official | District | Deschutes County Representation | Voting Population (Deschutes County Only) | Percent of Total Deschutes County Voting Population (163,826) |
| Senator Broadman | 27 | All | 113,120 | 69% |
| Senator Linthicum | 28 | Partial | 29,263 | 18% |
| Senator McLane | 30 | Partial | 21443 | 13% |
| State House | | | | |
| Elected Official | District | Deschutes County Representation | Voting Population (Deschutes County Only) | Percent of Total Deschutes County Voting Population (163,826) |
| Rep. E. Levy | 53 | All | 58746 | 36% |
| Rep. Kropf | 54 | All | 54374 | 33% |
| Rep. Reschke | 55 | Partial | 29263 | 18% |
| Rep. Breese Iverson | 59 | Partial | 21387 | 13% |
| Rep. Owens | 60 | Fraction | 56 | 0% |

- At large appointments by citizen applications
 - How many appointments?
- Other
- Recommended Timeline
 - Appointment nominations due by May 30th
 - Appointments confirmed during June 16th BOCC meeting

- Budget Impact
 - If appointment only, no budget impact anticipated
 - If application process, costs involved could include translation services for notices and print advertising costs (potentially)

State Home Rule Charter Committee Appointment Process (9 member committee)

- BOCC Appoints 4 members
 - 4 = 1 each plus 1 selected by majority vote of the BOCC
 - 4 selected by majority vote of the BOCC
 - Other
- State Senators and State Representatives representing the County appoint 4 members
 - Please refer to the chart of listed state elected officials above
 - 1 each by elected officials that have majority representation in the County (Senator Broadman, Rep. Levy, and Rep. Kropf) and 1 combined by the remaining elected who have partial representation in the County (Senator Linthicum, Senator McLane, Rep. Reschke, Rep. Breese Iverson, and Rep. Owens)
 - Other
- BOCC appointees and State Senator/Representatives appointees combined appoint 1 member
 - For state elected officials - weighted nominations based on voting population represented or each puts forth a nomination
 - BOCC – each put forth a nomination or selected by majority vote of the BOCC
 - All parties vote on nominations and top vote gets the nomination
 - Other
- Recommended Timeline
 - Appointment nominations due by May 30th
 - Appointments confirmed during June 16th BOCC meeting
- Budget Impact
 - No budget impact anticipated

Civic Assembly/Application Process/Hybrid

Background: In the Fall of 2024 a Civic Assembly was formed in Deschutes County with the intent of having a group of demographically represented citizens come together and present a large range of recommendations on a complicated issue (Youth Homelessness). Forming a committee with one set goal (drawing Commissioner district maps) has unique considerations and the process for the formation of the Civic Assembly may not be entirely compatible with forming a district maps committee. However, staff believe that there were some great processes in place for the formation of the Civic Assembly that could potentially be adapted and implemented to form a district maps committee.

- Engage Josh Burgess with Democracy Next in the process?
 - Josh may be available to conduct some light consulting work on the process

- Advertise on social and traditional media platforms to solicit applications
 - Use a QR code for easy access to application process
 - Reverse process of demographic representation?
 - The assembly sent out targeted mailing using software that selected 12,500 registered voters who were demographically represented and invited those selected to apply to participate on the assembly
 - County could cast a wide net of applications and potentially use software to randomly select a demographically represented group for application review and committee selection
- Costs
 - Assembly paid a stipend to participants as well as offered reimbursements for childcare and transportation
 - Stipend for Committee members?
 - A consideration for the BOCC for committee members whether the committee is formed through an assembly, nomination, or application process
 - Total cost of the assembly was \$250,000, currently the County has \$12,000 budgeted for the district map process
- Meeting schedule
 - The assembly met for 5 days for 8 hours a day
 - Staff propose a meeting schedule that takes place over the course of 8-12 weeks, 1-2 times a week, 2-hour meetings each
- Timeline
 - The assembly required at least 6 months of prep work before the meetings began
 - Please refer to the PowerPoint from the March 31, 2025, BOCC meeting for a draft timeline assuming the ballot measure is on the May 2026 election

Other items to consider in developing a process to form a Committee:

- Committee Size
 - Recommend that the committee has an odd number of members
 - Recommend a Committee size between 11-19 members, however a smaller committee size is also an option (7-9 members)
- Committee member requirements
 - Registered voter?
 - Deschutes resident?
 - Eligible to run for a Commissioner seat in the 2026 election?
 - Demographic representation?
 - Geographic representation?
- If application option is part or all of any option then:
 - Who selects the applicants?
 - Blind (redacted identifying information) application review?
 - Rating system for applications?

- Commissioners, staff, representatives from cities/communities, and/or others involved in the application review?
 - Other?
- Software generating demographically represented applicants and randomly selected?
- Online application option?
- Timeline for announcing applications, deadline, and selection process
- Engaging students from COCC and/or OSU-Cascades in the committee process?
 - Students were trained in facilitation and moderation for the Civic Assembly
 - OSU-Cascades – A laboratory for the American Conversation
 - COCC – Political Science department

The next BOCC work session to discuss the process to create district maps will occur on May 5. Topics likely to include:

- Committee meeting facilitation
- Meeting schedule, including when to start
- Charter formation
 - Map drawing criteria
 - BOCC or Committee decision?
 - District map options – how many and who decides
 - BOCC or Committee decision?
 - District Numbering
 - BOCC or Committee decision?
 - 5 Districts or 4 and 1 at-large
- Public Input
 - Timing
 - Type of outreach
 - Public Hearing(s)

BUDGET IMPACTS:

\$12,000 has been budgeted for FY 2026 to complete the process.

ATTENDANCE:

Nick Lelack, County Administrator

Jen Patterson, Strategic Initiatives Manager

Steve Dennison, County Clerk