

John Galusha, Chairman
Arica Andreatta, Commissioner
Karl Sporleder, Commissioner



HUERFANO COUNTY GOVERNMENT BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

Date: May 9, 2023
To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Carl Young, County Administrator
Re: Redistricting Public Hearing – Hearing Officers Opening Statement
Attachments: (1) Public Hearing Format; (2) Proof of Notice Publication; (3) Map of Current Commissioner Districts; (4) Proposed Maps A through D

The purpose of this hearing is to receive public input regarding the statutorily required redistricting of the Huerfano County Commissioners Districts under the process set forth in C.R.S. § 30-10-306 subsections (4), and (5).

In order for this hearing to be conducted in an orderly fashion, I request that anyone wishing to speak on this matter to sign up to speak. Those on Zoom are requested to put their name in the chat and those who are in-person to sign the list at the podium if they have not done so already.

Before you today are four staff prepared proposed redistricting maps. These maps take into account population balance and legal description and are an attempt to generate illustrative options. You are not limited to choosing one of these maps.

Under State law, all counties must review their commissioner district boundaries after each federal census to ensure the districts are as equal in population as possible. Specifically, there should be no more than a 5% difference between the most populous and the least populous district in each county, at the time such district boundaries are adopted. County Staff have reviewed our Commissioner Districts and determined that redistricting is required. Currently, District 2 is the largest district with 2175 people and District 3 is the smallest with 1685. A deviation of approximately 25%.

Counties are required to use population data prepared by staff of the Legislative Council and Office of Legislative Legal Services. This is the same data used for Congressional and State Legislative Redistricting and the numbers are not the same as the general population count. More information on that requirement can be found in C.R.S. § 2-2-901 and C.R.S. § 2-2-902

Traditionally, this review occurred in the year following the federal census. However, significant delays in availability of population data from the 2020 Census due to the COVID-19 pandemic led the State Legislature to pass HB21-1047, which extended the statutory deadline for counties to complete Commissioner redistricting until September 30, 2023.

Article 5, Sections 46-48.3 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado, establishes several criteria for the state to use in congressional and legislative redistricting. While these are not entirely imposed on Huerfano County in this process, we recommend that you consider the following factors in giving direction today.

1. A good-faith effort is made to achieve mathematical population equality between districts
2. As much as reasonably possible, preserve whole communities of interest and whole political subdivisions
3. Districts must be as reasonably compact as possible
4. No map should be adopted that if it has been drawn for the purpose of protecting incumbents, declared candidates, or any political party.
5. No map should be adopted if it results in the denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen to vote on account of that person's race or membership in a language minority group, including diluting the impact of that racial or language minority group's electoral influence.

One criteria I want to discuss in more depth, in case it is unfamiliar, is the preservation of communities of interest. Community of interest is defined in the State Constitution, Article V, Section 46(3)(b), which says, in part, that the term means any group in Colorado that shares one or more substantial interests that may be the subject of state legislative action, is composed of a reasonably proximate population, and thus should be considered for inclusion within a single district for purposes of ensuring its fair and effective representation. Such interests include but are not limited to matters reflecting: Shared public policy concerns of urban, rural, agricultural, industrial, or trade areas; and Shared public policy concerns such as education, employment, environment, public health, transportation, water needs and supplies, and issues of demonstrable regional significance. If you take this into account in this process, you might consider if an area has more ties and commonalities to areas within one district or another.

After the conduct of this public hearing staff will require direction, in the form of a motion, to prepare a final map for adoption. As mentioned before, you are not limited to the proposed maps presented to you today. Once you give us that direction we will confirm that the math on the population side is under the 5% threshold, prepare the legal descriptions, and ultimately draft a resolution for your approval. Should we encounter an issue that requires clarification of direction, such as an issue with the math, we will bring the issue and ideals for revisions back to the Board. The soonest you could adopt a final map is 30 days after this hearing. The next meeting date after that window is June 13th.