



## **REDISTRICTING REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Regular Meeting  
City Hall, City Commission Chamber  
200 E. Broadway, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Annex, Hobbs, New Mexico

**Thursday, November 4, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.**

David Pyeatt, Chair

B. J. Choice  
Pat Duran  
Oscar Gonzalez

Guy Kesner  
JoAnn Penick  
Brad Reimers, Vice-Chair

---

## **A G E N D A**

Watch via Livestream at [www.hobbsnm.org](http://www.hobbsnm.org)

This meeting is open to the public to attend. Members of the public are asked to wear a face mask and follow 6' social distancing guidelines. The public is invited to address public comments to the Committee in person at the meeting or submit written comments prior to the meeting. Written comments should be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 4, 2021, addressed to the City Clerk by email at [jfletcher@hobbsnm.org](mailto:jfletcher@hobbsnm.org) or faxed to (575) 397-9334.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**
  - October 25, 2021
- 5. Discussion**
  - Redistricting Proposals
- 6. Communications from Citizens**

**7. Next Meeting Date** – Monday, November 8, 2021 @ 5:30 p.m.

**8. Adjournment**

NOTICE is hereby given that a quorum of the Hobbs City Commission may be in attendance at this Committee Meeting. No official vote or other action of the City Commission will occur during this meeting.

If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the above meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (575) 397-9200 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting or as soon as possible. Public documents, including the agenda and minutes, can be provided in various accessible formats. Please contact the City Clerk's Office if a summary or other type of accessible format is needed.

Minutes of the City of Hobbs Redistricting Review Committee held on Monday, October 25, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. in the City Commission Chamber at City Hall, 200 East Broadway, Hobbs, New Mexico.

Mayor Sam Cobb called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The City Clerk called the roll and the following answered present:

B. J. Choice  
Pat Duran  
Oscar Gonzalez  
Guy Kesner  
JoAnn Penick  
David Pyeatt  
Brad Reimers

Also present:

Mayor Sam Cobb  
Commissioner Joe Calderón  
Commissioner Don Gerth  
Commissioner Dwayne Penick  
Commissioner Chris Mills  
Commissioner Larron Fields  
Manny Gomez, City Manager  
Efren Cortez, City Attorney  
Keith Manes, Lea County Clerk  
Mollie Maldonado, Deputy City Clerk  
Jan Fletcher, City Clerk  
22 citizens

Mr. B. J. Choice gave the invocation and Mr. David Pyeatt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Cobb thanked the members for their willingness to serve as a volunteer on this important committee.

Mayor Cobb briefly reviewed the origins and objectives of redistricting. In New Mexico, cities with a population over 10,000 are required to have districts. He stated the purpose of districts is to have effective representation and full minority representation. Current City ordinance requires that the City's six (6) single-member districts be reviewed after each U. S. Census count to insure that ethnicity/language minority groups, compactness, contiguity, substantial equality in population, community interested, and other criteria set out in the Voting Rights Act and Court decisions are maintained in each single-member district. He stated the City's population has grown by approximately 6,376 residents and each district will need to have enough population to balance the districts. While some districts have grown on their own, others will need to be adjusted. Mayor Cobb stated districts are allowed to be no more than five percent (5%) off from a mathematically perfect equal population across all districts.

Mayor Cobb stated by ordinance, the committee has 60 days to submit a redistricting recommendation to the City Commission; however, time is of the essence to reach a redistricting plan. Under State law, the redistricting adjustment needs to be concluded before December 31, 2021. Candidate filing day is the first Tuesday in January – January 4, 2022.

Mayor Cobb stated the City has hired the professional services of Research & Polling, Inc., of Albuquerque, New Mexico, to analyze the census data and formulate some proposed redistricting plans for the committee to review. He stated the City's population has grown from 34,122 to 40,498 and when divided by six districts, the target number for each district is 6,749. He stated the committee can deviate by no more than five percent (5%), up or down, from this target number.

Ms. Jo Ann Penick nominated Mr. David Pyeatt to serve as Chairman of the Redistricting Committee. Mr. Brad Reimers seconded the nomination. There being no discussion, all members voted yes and Mr. Pyeatt was elected as Chairman.

Chairman Pyeatt requested nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Mr. B. J. Choice nominated Mr. Brad Reimers to serve as Vice-Chairman. Ms. Jo Ann Penick seconded the nomination. There being no discussion, all members voted yes and Mr. Reimers was elected as Vice-Chairman.

Chairman Pyeatt introduced Mr. Michael Sharp of Research & Polling, Inc. Mr. Sharp attended the meeting telephonically. Chairman Pyeatt verified that Mr. Sharp and the Committee members were all able to hear each other clearly.

Mr. Sharp stated his firm has 40 years of redistricting experience and has done over 150 redistricting projects for state and local governments. Mr. Sharp explained which elected bodies are required to redistrict. He stated the April 1, 2020, Census was delayed due to the health pandemic and the results were not delivered by the Census Bureau until August, 2021. The deadline for the City of Hobbs to complete its redistricting process is December 31, 2021.

Mr. Sharp stated redistricting consist of drawing and re-drawing lines that determine which voters are represented by each district. According to New Mexico Statutes, all municipalities with populations over 10,000 are required to be districted. It is required after Decennial Census data is released for use of the most current population data. The data shows patterns of growth in the community and reflect the inequality within the districts.

Mr. Sharp reviewed the five principles of redistricting:

1. Equal Population
2. Minority Voting Rights
3. Compactness
4. Contiguity
5. Communities of Interest

Mr. Sharp stated the first four principles are the basic framework, similar to four sides around a picture frame. The fifth item is what happens inside the picture frame.

Mr. Sharp stated everyone gets counted in the Census, including, but not limited to, adults, children, college students in dorms, prisoners, and non-citizens (documented immigrants, undocumented immigrants and foreign students). He stated people are counted at the place where they live and sleep most of the time.

### Population Change 2010 to 2020

District	2010	2020	Change	% Change
1	5,915	6,697	782	13.2%
2	5,927	8,383	2,456	41.4%
3	5,444	6,027	583	10.7%
4	5,433	5,681	248	4.6%
5	5,928	8,166	2,238	37.8%
6	5,475	5,544	69	1.3%
Total	34,122	40,498	6,376	18.7%

The population of Hobbs is 40,498 reflecting an increase in growth of 18%. When divided by six districts, the ideal population of each district would be 6,749. The growth in each district is not equal. Districts 2 and 5 have seen bigger growth. District 5 has the Zia Crossing Subdivision with a population of 1,000 people. Mr. Sharp stated the University of the Southwest and the New Mexico Junior College have both constructed dorms and the community has seen a big job explosion and increasing housing construction. District 2 has seen an increase with the Homestead Estates in the areas North and South of Bender and the Ledgestone Apartments just south of Navajo.

Mr. Sharp provided some case law on the constitutional mandate to redistrict. He stated the concept followed by the Courts is "one person, one vote" and equal population means equal representation. Congressional districts are divided as equal as "practicable". For City Commission, the total population deviation between the districts can be no more than 10% (+/- 5%). For Hobbs, the ideal population of each district would be 6,749 people. The deviation can be +/- 337 people with a range of 6,412 – 7,086. Mr. Sharp emphasized that the numbers are based on total population, not registered voters.

Mr. Sharp discussed minority voting strength. He stated the purpose is not to dilute the voting strength of ethnic/language minority groups as provided in the Voting Rights Act, Section 2, Native Americans, African Americans and Hispanics. The purpose is to give the minority population an opportunity to elect a candidate of their choice. Mr. Sharp stated districts cannot be created in which race is the predominant criterion in subordination of traditional districting principles.

Compactness of a district can be measured in different ways. Mr. Sharp stated compactness refers to the shape, not geographic size. Compactness of a district can be affected by a jurisdiction's irregular outer boundary. For illustration purposes, Mr. Sharp highlighted photographs of districts that were created in 1991 in Texas and North Carolina which were not compact.

Contiguity of a district means no islands of territory.

Communities of interest contains other factors which may determine where a district boundary could be drawn:

1. Respecting political subdivisions/neighborhoods/geographic boundaries
2. Respecting cultural/historical traditions
3. Maintaining core of existing districts
4. Avoid pairing incumbents

These factors can be considered as long as previous districting principles are not violated.

Mr. Sharp commented that redistricting plans are rarely perfect. It is a balancing act to consider many factors in making the decision. He stated splitting precincts is sometimes needed to make populations work. He stated the process of redistricting involves hosting public meetings where the ABCs of redistricting are discussed, public input is obtained and plans are reviewed. Changes can be made to revise any of the plans. Once adopted by the governing body, the County Clerk will assign voters to the correct districts.

Chairman Pyeatt asked the Committee if there were any questions on the principles of redistricting.

In response to Rev. Choice's question, Mr. Sharp stated his contract with the City was negotiated to make his presentation remotely.

In response to Chairman Pyeatt's question, Mr. Sharp stated he can easily move boundary lines on the fly while meeting with the Committee.

Mayor Cobb commented there has been discussion among many cities in the Permian Basin area of challenging the census data as the timing of the Census came during the pandemic which resulted in a negative impact to many communities with businesses closed and student populations returning to their homes. In response to Mayor Cobb's inquiry, Mr. Sharp stated population adjustments can be made at the city level as the result of a challenge but the Census Bureau is not able to break down that data by the Block Level and appropriately know where to apply the population.

Mayor Cobb stated Hobbs is unique as many people were in the area living in hotels that were not counted.

Mr. Sharp stated it would be tricky to take those numbers and distribute them throughout the City.

In response to Commissioner Dwayne Penick's question, Mr. Sharp stated the proposed plans are based on the current census numbers.

Mr. Sharp continued his presentation and presented a data table showing the most growth in Districts 2 and 5 while the population numbers in Districts 3, 4 and 6 are below ideal. Based on the data, all 6 Districts will need to change to increase the population areas of Districts 3, 4 and 6. Mr. Sharp presented proposed maps of redistricting plans labeled Plans A – F. He described the proposed areas and changes of each plan. Mr. Sharp stated when changes are made to one area, a ripple effect occurs. He stated he is open to questions, comments and any suggestions.

In response to Chairman Pyeatt, Rev. B. J. Choice stated he would need some time to study the plans and understand them thoroughly.

Ms. Penick commented she studied the various plans which were provided and she likes Plan D or Plan E. She stated they would be less disruptive to the citizens. Ms. Penick stated she would like to receive the data on registered voters. Mr. Keith Manes, Lea County Clerk, was present in the audience and stated he could provide that data to Ms. Penick; however, districts are formed on population, not registered voters.

Mr. Kesner stated it is hard to understand the dynamics of the areas or suggest possible changes without knowing the precinct population numbers.

Mr. Sharp stated he could provide the population data by precinct. As an example, he stated Precinct 33 has 1,400 people and moving precincts from one area to another could swing it from way over the population deviation to under population.

Commissioner Chris Mills inquired if the proposed redistricting plans take into account the neighborhood areas.

In response to Commissioner Mills' question, Mr. Sharp stated he did not look specifically at neighborhood districts as he primarily focused on the population numbers to comply with the Voting Rights Act and to make them compact as well.

Chairman Pyeatt stated population is going to be paramount and then look at the communities of interest. Districts 2 and 5 have seen a lot of new construction whereas southern areas of Hobbs have existing infrastructure concerns. Chairman Pyeatt also stated that District 6 contains a large quantity of State-owned land which has never been developed. Mr. Sharp stated he was not aware of this.

In reply to Chairman Pyeatt's question, Mr. Sharp stated the area North of Millen has bridges on both sides of Grimes and, theoretically, could add a portion of this area to District 1.

Chairman Pyeatt stated he was concerned with the District 2 and its areas of community interest. He was also concerned, like Mr. Kesner, that changing District 3 would dilute the minority representation. He suggested enlarging District 3 West of Dal Paso and enlarge District 4 up to Sanger.

Mr. Oscar Gonzalez stated he favors Plans A and B. He commented that a little slice of District 3 has been carved out for Larron Fields.

Chairman Pyeatt requested comments from the audience.

Mr. Larron Fields stated he, too, is concerned about taking the minority votes away and would prefer that District 3 be enlarged toward the west. He stated the Committee will have to decide what is best.

Commissioner Dwayne Penick stated he looked over the plans and he likes Plan B which keeps the minority together in District 3. He commented that he did care for the shape of District 2.

Mr. Kesner stated Plan B changed the whole dynamic of Districts 1 and 2.



Commissioner Chris Mills stated in splitting neighborhoods from Broadmoor to Steven and Silver to Albertson change the geographic of District 2 substantially. He suggested keeping blocks and similar neighborhoods together.

Mayor Cobb stated he would like the Committee's comments on Plan A. It does provide additional population in Districts 3 and 4, keeps it contiguous and keeps neighborhoods close.

Rev. B. J. Choice stated he likes Plans A and B on District 3 but Plan B considerably changes District 2.

Chairman Pyeatt stated balancing common interests is very important and District 2 is extremely diverse with new and used homes in the Taylor Ranch Area located west of Dal Paso. He suggested moving the boundary lines of District 3 west to Turner.

Mr. Kesner stated it would be much easier to understand these changes if Mr. Sharp could do a zoom session with the committee and if the committee could receive the population numbers of each precinct.

Mr. Reimers agreed and stated it would help to see the population numbers and changes.

In response to Chairman Pyeatt's question, Mr. Sharp stated he could attend via zoom and can make changes on the maps which would show the population numbers. Ms. Fletcher stated the City will help Mr. Sharp by having a zoom meeting in the Commission Chamber but she is not sure if the Livestream viewing of the meeting will work during a zoom session.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would meet on November 4, 2021, and November 8, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

In response to Mayor Cobb's question, Mr. Efren Cortez, City Attorney, reviewed the timelines for adoption of an ordinance and stated redistricting must be complete by December 31. If an ordinance and redistricting plan are presented to the Commission by November 15, 2021, there would be ample time for the Commission to review, approve and publish an ordinance to be adopted in December. If need be, the Commission could call a special meeting to consider action on a proposed ordinance. Mr. Cortez stated it is difficult, at times, to call special meetings around the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays.

Mr. Choice stated it would be very helpful for the committee to have some visual aids such as the zoom meeting with Mr. Sharp.

Mr. Cortez clarified that the last possible day for Commission action to formally adopt a redistricting ordinance would be December 20, 2021.

Chairman Pyeatt suggested that the Committee members should give some thought to the proposed plans and submit any suggestions for revisions to Ms. Fletcher. The next meeting date will be November 4, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

In response to Chairman Pyeatt's question, no additional comments were received from the public. Ms. Fletcher stated no public comments were submitted in writing to the Clerk's Office prior to the meeting.

There being no further discussion by the Committee or communications from citizens, Mr. Gonzalez moved that the meeting adjourn. Mr. Kesner seconded the motion and all members voted yes. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

---

DAVID PYEATT, Chairman

ATTEST:

---

JAN FLETCHER, City Clerk