



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 13, 2021

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Executive Office and County Counsel

SUBJECT: Redistricting

Redistricting is a process that takes place every ten years, when census data becomes available. There are three possible methodologies for the redistricting process: an Advisory Committee (which provides recommendations to the Board and receives direction from Board), an Independent Commission (a body, other than the Board that is empowered to adopt the district boundaries) or a Hybrid Commission (a body that recommends 2 or more maps to the Board which the Board must adopt without modification). Based on Board direction from June 22, 2021, staff understands the Board is interested in the Advisory Committee option and a proposal for how it can utilize members of the public. In 2011, Mendocino County relied on a community-based Advisory Committee. In the two prior redistricting processes, Mendocino County relied on a staff-based Advisory Committee.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, census data has been significantly delayed and the redistricting process has become extremely compressed. While final census data may not be available until October 24, 2021, maps must be adopted by December 15, 2021 or the County will lose its jurisdictional authority to complete this process.

Community participation is critical to either of the Advisory Committee options. Utilizing a staff-based or community-based Advisory Committee requires the County to encourage public participation through establishing a Redistricting webpage as primary portal for public information/access with up to date information and ability for public to provide feedback and comments and critical webpage recording and record-keeping requirements. The Board of Supervisors must have at least 4 public hearings (one before any draft map is drawn), and at least two after maps are drawn. The process will include at least one meeting in the evening after 6:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday or on a Saturday or Sunday. Other public outreach will include press releases, public notices and robust civic engagement through community based organizations and other active community groups.

If the Board chooses to utilize a staff-based Advisory Committee, a proposed schedule is included for review by the Board for the minimum four (4) public hearings/workshops including an initial workshop led by the Advisory Committee during the summer on a weekday after 6:00 p.m., followed by at least four additional public hearings before the full Board of Supervisors following anticipated receipt of the final census data, timing the last public hearing for Board adoption in December to meet the deadlines required by statute.

With a community-based Advisory Committee, the Board determines how members are appointed, which membership may not include elected officials, their family members or paid election campaign staff. A community-based Advisory Committee can be achieved through each Supervisor recommending a member to be appointed by the full Board. The process of selection will require a few weeks for soliciting applications followed by Board consideration of the applicants, appointment, and then staff training of the members of the committee. If the Board chooses the community-based Advisory Committee, staff will begin soliciting public applications and return to Board on the first meeting in August, for Board selection and appointment of the committee and a proposed schedule for the required public hearings in accordance with the deadlines. Because of the compressed schedule, it is recommended that a quorum of any community-based advisory committee be set at two (2) members present in a scheduled meeting to minimize potential delays.

Based on preliminary timelines, the Board could elect to establish an Advisory Committee that is staff-based or community-based and meet the key deadline of December 15. Either option will include significant public participation, but the community-based Advisory Committee may include additional scheduling challenges for training and meeting. In recognition of the compressed schedule this year, a staff-based Advisory Committee remains as a viable option that will not preclude public participation in this important process.

Direction is requested to either (1) establish a staff-based advisory committee or (2) solicit interest from the public in serving on an advisory committee and return to the Board at the first meeting in August, with applications from community members interested in appointment to a 5 member community-based advisory committee, with each Supervisor endorsing an applicant for approval by the full Board, further establishing that a quorum of this committee would consist of two (2) members at a scheduled meeting, and review the proposed schedule for public workshops and hearings.