MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
LAWTON REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 14, 2012

George Moses, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted at City Hall as required by the Open Meeting Act.

ROLL CALL
Present: Godlove, Ernest; Henry, Pat; Jester, Kent; Knippenberg, Don; Moses, George; Smith, G. Wayne; Stewart, James.
Absent: Holland, Dennis.
Also Present: Richard Rogalski, Planner Director; Denise Ezell, Deputy City Clerk.

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1. Approve Minutes of January 30, 2012 and February 1, 2012.

MOVED by Smith, **SECOND** by Godlove, to approve the minutes of January 30, 2012 and February 1, 2012 as written. **AYE**: Henry; Jester; Knippenberg; Moses; Smith; Stewart; Godlove. **NAY**: None. **MOTION CARRIED**.

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2. Elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.

Moses stated I have submitted my resignation effective for noon today. We need to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair so this Committee can continue to function. I believe you will meet again before the next census.

MOVED by Henry, **SECOND** by Smith, to appoint Ernest Godlove as Chair. **AYE**: Jester; Knippenberg; Moses; Smith; Stewart; Godlove; Henry. **NAY**: None. **MOTION CARRIED**.

Moses stated congratulation. I'll be turning the position over to you as soon as this meeting adjourns. Henry is currently Vice-Chair. Do you want to be replaced?

Henry stated anyone else is welcome if they would like the position.

Moses asked would anyone like to volunteer to serve as Vice-Chair? Seeing none Henry will continue to service as Vice-Chair. I assume you are in agreement to do so.

Henry stated I'll be happy to do that.

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3. Discuss and Review Draft Ward Boundaries and take action if necessary.

Moses stated the last draft has been published so there aren't a lot of changes that can be made. Are there any comments?

Rogalski stated yesterday I received a call from Keith Jackson, a former Councilperson, who will be attending the Public Hearing. He will be requesting you reconsider moving the area on east Rogers Lane.

Moses asked is that the little wedge?

Rogalski stated yes and the area south of it. There are three neighborhoods that were moved to Ward 2. He stated it has always been in Ward 4. He had some concerns that if he decided to run for Council he wouldn't be in a Ward that knows his background. He asked that I look at other alternatives. I stated the issue was trying to balance the population and the only way to do so was not to move the two areas we had previously moved because it has to be contiguous.

Henry stated if you read the task that was given to us it says that safe guarding a Councilperson is not an issue.

Jester stated my answer is we have already considered it. We looked and looked at trying to keep the Wards as close as possible.

Moses stated if Jensen were here I think he would tell us we have very strong ground. What do you think?

Godlove stated yes.

Moses stated it is good to know there will be a protest. We will politely listen and then move on. Ezell will update you on the notification research.

Ezell stated Baughman made the statement that by law she was required to notify every effected register voter of their redistricting. I have asked our legal department to research and see if the City has any requirements by law on whom they notify. Rogalski has drafted a letter and once we have an answer we will begin to notify either every effected person or every registered voter. The letter will be mailed after the signing of the resolution.

Stewart asked who is the person that is researching this matter?

Ezell stated the legal department for the City of Lawton.

Moses stated be assured there will be a notice sent. Does anyone want to discuss the Preferred Alternative any further?

Godlove asked at the Public Hearing will we explain what we have done or turn it over to staff and let them explain the various different procedures.

Moses stated I believe you could provide a copy of the public statement to anyone who attends the meeting. That is enough of an explanation and Rogalski may want to amplify on that.

Knippenberg asked did you send that to the Commission.

Moses stated it was sent by email. On the first draft Henry was concerned about some wording that went beyond what the Commission had decided to do. I took that particular paragraph out in its entirety. The rest was a simple explanation of what we did and how we arrived at this alternative. I think it was clear that we went through a lot of alternatives and tried to be careful not to shove people around.

Stewart asked we will have a unanimous consent at the Public Hearing. Is it agreed that we just pass on and not deal with it.

Jester stated we can't make that decision now.

Moses stated by law we have to listen. I think he will find that his objection is unfounded.

Godlove stated we don't take any action at the Public Hearing. We will hear any sort of discussion from the public and give them our insight.

Stewart asked we won't be making a decision at that time?

Jester stated not until the next meeting.

Rogalski stated our process is directed by the Charter. Once you make a decision you publish notice that a Public Hearing will be held and then ten days after the Public Hearing you make a decision.

Henry stated the commentary Moses wrote and accompanied by the map was very good. It summarized exactly how we have performed.

Moses stated I think we should send a letter from the Commission to the Mayor making whatever recommendations we think is needed as a result of our work. Part of our recommendation was to reconcile the size of our Wards with the size of our precincts. The larger the precincts the more difficult the problem is with eight Wards. It seems the direction we need to go is either having fewer Wards and smaller precincts. After talking to Baughman we have no control over how the precincts are shaped.

Jester stated it would be nice if we understood the process better. We need to take the time and effort to try and understand how the precinct lines are drawn and what their criteria is.

Moses stated I talked with Baughman about that and this was a response to our discussion. "As a result of the Commission deliberation the Commission felt compelled to make two recommendations. First, Lawton's precincts are too large to properly meet redistricting goals without continuing to break precincts among wards. Either precincts must become smaller in population or the number of Lawton's wards should be reduced and more reliance placed on "at

large" councilpersons." That is the part that went beyond our discussions. That sentence was a result of a conversation with Baughman when I was trying to understand how the precincts were put together. As I understand it legislators draw their Federal and State congressional/senatorial boundaries around the precincts. Those are sent to OU to be placed into a data base and then to the Counties. The Counties prepare their Commissioners and school boundaries. The precincts are based on what the State has done. We have no influence on any of that. The only control we have is the size and number of Wards.

Henry stated I felt the comment was premature since we just changed the Wards and there will be several voters that will be changing where they go to vote. It was premature for us to say we were even considering changing the number of Wards when we didn't vote on that or who would be sending the notices.

Moses stated you can take that paragraph and in one of your subsequent meetings decide what to do with a structural letter to the Mayor.

Henry stated I think early in the Public Hearing our criteria should be explained.

Moses stated there was an attempt to do that in this paragraph. You might read that before you make a public statement. The reason for the public statement was to let people know how we got to where we are.

Stewart asked do we anticipate a lot of objection to our decision.

Moses stated just the one phone call and if that is an indication I would say you are not going to hear from a whole lot.

Henry stated in our criteria it stated "the configuration of Wards should be neutral as to incumbents. The Wards must not be configured for the purpose of either protecting of defeating an incumbent." You may as well nip that to start with.

Godlove stated I think the approach would be to let people talk, have the notice available to give to them and not get into any discussion.

Moses stated Jensen needs to attend the meeting. He can make a statement that there is no basis for changing anything we have done. An objection from a former Councilman who thinks he might run again is not a basis for making a change to any Ward.

Godlove stated we did consider all those different things. We looked at gerrymandering some of the Wards and opted against it. The criteria requires us to keep them together as much as possible.

Henry stated we tried not to change them. We wanted them to look as much like they do today as possible.

Moses stated minimal disruption. I believe you can argue you have balanced the criteria as best we could unless somebody has another very imaginative approach that could magically make this come out better and I don't think they do.

Rogalski stated I would offer one thing in regards to the previous conservation. The last time that redistricting was done there were two issues that were requested by this body to those who draw the precinct line and they were both taken care of. They did respond even though they made other problems. The things you asked for they gave you.

Moses stated at the Public Hearing those in Precincts 32 and 33 objected strongly and we assured them we had no control over the way the precincts were drawn. We stated we would write a letter to the legislators to identify the problem and seek their help in participating to solve the problem. Apparently it helped because when we came back to meet this time those problems had been solved.

Henry stated the population was so unbalanced all over the City that it didn't make a difference. Now we have really made an attempt to balance the population.

Moses stated the size of the precincts make it extremely difficult to get a balance and it's only going to get worse as time goes on and natural growth occurs.

Godlove asked is this done every ten years or is it done more frequently.

Jester stated if there are any annexations we meet more frequently.

Godlove asked does that deal with the precincts

Rogalski stated no.

Godlove stated so the legislators set the precincts every ten years and if we send a letter to them we would really be directing a letter to somebody who is probably not even going to be in office at the present time.

Smith stated I thought the precincts changes were corrected within a year.

Moses stated I don't know when it was corrected. When this body got ready to convene I asked Rogalski and Baughman to research what had been done to fix the problem.

Godlove stated for information purposes I sat on the Charter Review Committee and we discussed changing the number of Wards both larger and smaller. We also discussed going to a Councilperson At Large. Because of the various considerations that were made by the Committee those were voted down. Not that it was a vote it was just considered and no changes were made in either the number of Wards or a Councilperson At Large.

Jester stated I was on that Committee before and we took the At Large out at that time.

Godlove stated I think the same reason went into not putting it back in as the Committee had for taking it out.

Jester stated I think it is a good argument that this is more important and we could persuade a future Committee to make the change if it could help.

Godlove stated from my memory expanding or limiting the number of Wards was not based upon anything we have talked about here.

Jester stated and it probably should.

Moses stated it was probably just the lack of input. In the larger scheme of things one has to make a judgment about how important is this tie in the other variable that has to be considered. At some point and time it will become a problem and rise to the top as being a major issue that has got to be solved.

Godlove stated making the precincts smaller would actually address it much more effectively.

Smith stated we can't control that.

Moses stated all we can do is recommend. This is not a unique problem to Lawton. I'm sure other cities have the same problem. It seems the denser the population becomes the smaller the precincts have to become in order to be able to move things around and keep things balanced. I will leave it to your discretion as to what kind of letter you want to write. I'm sure you have a very capable Chairman and Vice-Chairman to help you through that.

Godlove asked will you be available to assist in writing those letters to City Council.

Moses stated yes. I have drafts of the ones I wrote before and we highlighted the same problems. Is there any other business we want to discuss?

Henry stated before we leave we want to say a special congratulations to you. Thank you for your service on this Committee and we wish you the very best. You will be an outstanding Councilperson.

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4. Discussion.

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5. Audience Participation.

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6. Adjournment

MOVED by Godlove, **SECOND** by Jester, to adjourn. **AYE**: Jester; Knippenberg; Moses; Smith; Stewart; Godlove; Henry. **NAY**: None. **MOTION CARRIED**.

George Moses, Chairman
Redistricting Commission

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