

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
LAWTON REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 17, 2012

Ernest Godlove, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.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; Smith, G. Wayne; Stewart, James; Cunningham, Jim.

Absent: Holland, Dennis.

Also Present: Frank Jensen, City Attorney; Richard Rogalski, Planner Director; Denise Ezell, Deputy City Clerk.

Godlove stated I would like to acknowledge our new member Jim Cunningham. Cunningham is taking the place of our former Chairman George Moses. We certainly welcome you to the Commission and tonight when they throw stones I would ask they avoid throwing them at you. It would be the rest of us that deserves the stones. We would like to express our appreciation to George Moses for all the leadership he has given this Commission and for getting us to this particular point.

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1. Approve Minutes of February 14, 2012.

MOVED by Henry, **SECOND** by Jester, to approve the minutes of February 14, 2012 as written. **AYE:** Henry; Jester; Knippenberg; Cunningham; Smith; Stewart; Godlove. **NAY:** None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

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2. Hold a Public Hearing to Consider A Resolution Adjusting The Ward Boundaries For the City of Lawton, Based on 2010 Census Population Data.

Godlove stated behind me we have the Preferred Alternative map that we are going to consider this evening. I have an opening stated which I'll read. In accordance with the Lawton City Charter the Redistricting Commission is convening this Public Hearing to receive comments from interested parties wanting to be heard regarding the proposed Ward boundary map. On behalf of the Commission members I want to welcome you to this meeting and express our appreciation for your attendance and comments. Please be aware this plan is not perfect. There can and are alternate plans that could be proposed. Not everyone will be happy with the end result, but I would suggest that the Commission has engaged in good faith effort to balance the various considerations. The members of the Commission believe that the plan before us is a reasonable and fair redrawing of the Ward boundaries. It is consistent with the guidelines which have been given to us and the changes in the City's population. As required by the City Charter every ten (10) years the Redistricting Commission is assigned the task of preparing and filing

with the City a Resolution readjusting the eight (8) wards within the City based upon the latest Federal Census data. The guidelines which we were given for establishing the boundaries are:

1. The Wards should be substantially equal in population.
2. Each Ward, to the extent reasonably possible, should be compact consisting of contiguous territories with boundaries drawn to reflect and respond to the communities of common interest as well as respecting natural physical boundaries.
3. Precincts should be kept in tack to the extent possible.
4. Disruption to existing Wards and voters should be kept to a minimum.

Consistent with the guidelines the Wards were drawn without any intention of either protecting or defeating any incumbent. As was done by the last redistricting plan, which was adopted after the 2000 census, the population of Ft. Sill and the prison, located southwest of the City, were excluded during the population balancing process and simply added to an adjacent Ward after balancing the Wards. As a result the population figures for the affected Wards were skewed when Ft. Sill and the prison population are added back in. Over the past ten (10) years the population of our City has increased slightly more than 4%. The disparity among the Wards has grown to 24% between the largest and smallest Wards. For this redistricting effort the Commission adopted a target population for Ward of 10,426. This number excludes both the Ft. Sill and the prison populations. In developing the plan the Commission reviewed ten (10) alternate plans. This one was judged by unanimous vote of the Commission to be the best plan. The Wards as drawn by this plan, while having a population spread of approximately 11%, are balanced in population as well as attempting to minimize voter disruption and achieving the other guidelines. This Commission has no jurisdiction over the size or shape of the precinct lines. The precincts are established by the State Legislators and not by this Commission. Where a person votes is determined by which precinct they live in and not by which Ward they live in. To the extent possible the Commission attempted to keep from splitting precincts between Wards thereby minimizing voter confusion. Some of the other plans considered involved as many as five (5) split precincts and some of those had multiple splits. This plan has three (3) split precincts, but was deemed to be a reasonable compromise in the attempt to achieve equality and population between the Wards. With this overview of the Commissions work I'll open the floor to public comment. I would ask that each speaker limit his or her comments to no more than three (3) minutes unless additional time is needed to respond to questions from the Commission members. If you wish to speak please approach the microphone giving your name and address.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Bailey stated good evening. My name is Joe Bailey and I live at 2723 NE Euclid, Lawton, Oklahoma. I'm one of those in a split Ward. Looking at the map I can't help but thinking that the decision on my neighborhood seems very strange and arbitrary. Looking at the map just west of the number four (4) is a very small neighborhood. To incorporate my neighborhood into Ward 2 means sending a tentacle across a mile and a half of empty land when just north of our neighborhood you have a neighborhood exactly the same size and population. To me that makes more sense. I had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Godlove earlier today and he explained how difficult this procedure has been and I appreciate your time and effort. However, I do think since there is nobody physically located near us in any direction from Ward

2 that somehow this does not make sense to take our little 3 x 6 block out and ignore the ones further north. Thank you.

Jackson stated I'm Keith Jackson and I live at 2603 NE Garden Lane in the Garden Village area. I've lived in Ward 4 for a little over 47 years. In the 1980 census it was determined that Ward 4 would remain contiguous with I-44 and Cache Creek. So everything east of I-44 was to be in Ward 4. It was determined to be its own little community because of Cache Creek and MacArthur High School. I was nice to have Ward 4 as its own little community. Sometime after 2000 it was determined that Ward 4 was growing so south of Lee Blvd. was pulled out and inserted into Ward 7. This drew a little complaint but not a lot. At that time I was on the Council and didn't complain mainly because there was still a nice little square box and all was east of I-44. Now you have gotten a little ridiculous. You have stepped across I-44 and have pulled out a little bitty area to put into Ward 2. I have lived in Garden Village since 1992. You have split my precinct and moved us into Ward 2 and I'm opposed to it. I would like for you to give it back. If you need to find more population move west. That seems to be where Lawton Public Schools continue to move their lines due to the population shift on the west side of Lawton. Second thing is if you move me into Ward 2 and I decide to run for Ward 2 Council I cannot do so due to the Charter changes that were elected last Tuesday night. The Charter states you must be a residency of the Ward for six (6) months. In my opinion I have been gerrymandered clean out of the picture. It is not fair for Garden Village, Turtle Creek and Pioneer Park to be dismembered out of Ward 4. Thank you.

Leon stated my name is Tom Leon and I live at 120 NE Fullerton. I have lived there for 45 years. I live on the back line of Pioneer Park and I'm opposed to the map. When I moved to this area I was the 4th house built on that street. You are taking me out of my lively hood that I have been in for 45 years. I was the Ward 4 Councilperson in 1995 and this doesn't seem right. We have people sitting on these boards that do what they want to and don't ask the citizens of Lawton what they want. Ask for permission to do something like this. You have included Ft. Sill in Ward 1. How many of Ft. Sill comes out to vote? Can anybody tell me?

Godlove stated very few do, but Ft. Sill was not considered in the rebalancing.

Leon stated you have it in Ward 1.

Godlove stated as I suggested in the opening comments we excluded the population for Ft. Sill and the prison when we rebalanced the Wards.

Leon asked is Ft. Sill in Ward 1.

Godlove stated Ft. Sill is in Ward 1 and a part of it is in Ward 2.

Leon asked did you go to Randolph Road?

Godlove stated I think the map includes all of Ft. Sill that is included in the City.

Leon stated all those buildings are brand new. When they tore down Artillery Village you moved it down the road. You have to understand you have voters out there and they vote in this City. We don't just have a few that run the City. This is Lawton, Oklahoma with voters out there. You have to take that into consideration and I don't believe you did when you considered Ward 2. People are getting fed up. The reason people don't go to the polls is because you keep changing things. I don't like it either. That's my piece.

Godlove stated thank you. Do we have anybody else that wants to address the Commission. Anyone else. Seeing none I'll close the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

3. Discussion.

Godlove stated I would ask the members of the Commission if they have any questions or comments that they want to make at this point.

4. Audience Participation.

Godlove asked is there any further audience participation? If not, I want to express my appreciation for all of you that have attended. I also want to express my appreciation to the Commission members for all the work that they have put into this. I would that we adjourn this meeting and reconvene on the 28th day of February, 2012 unless there is a need to hold an earlier meeting to consider any of the comments that have been made tonight and make any revisions to the map that has been presented. Hearing no request I'll ask for a motion to adjourn.

5. Adjournment

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

Ernest Godlove, Chairman
Redistricting Commission