

## Commission on Reapportionment Meeting Minutes

**DATE & TIME:** May 11, 2022 – 6:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656,  
Meeting ID: 82049112461  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Sarah DeStefano  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Fawn Tantillo  
**PRESENT:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Chair Andy Monk, Donna Lutz, Kenneth Panza, Travis  
Rask, and Kathleen Waithe  
**ABSENT:** Regis Obijiski  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes  
  
**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Ulster County Attorney Kristin Gumeary; Robert Leibowitz, Ulster  
County Planning; Carol Nolan

1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair DeStefano called the meeting to order at 6:01

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### **Motion No. 1: To APPROVE the minutes of April 9, 13, 20 and 21, 2022**

**Motion By:** Commissioner Waithe  
**Motion Seconded By:** Commissioner Rask  
  
**Discussion:** None.  
  
**Voting in Favor:** Commissioners DeStefano, Monk, Lutz, Rask, Panza, and Waithe  
**Voting Against:** None  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 6  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Minutes APPROVED.**

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No public comments on agenda items

The commissioners discussed plans for the public hearing including the change of location for the May 16<sup>th</sup> hearing moving it to the Modena Fire House.

The committee discussed how they would present the information, the legal guidelines to do redistricting, how state law impacted prison populations, the considerations and priorities of the commissioners, setting time limits, setting up a process for the public to make comments remotely, how to answer questions the public may have but not debate, time limits for speakers.

See transcript for details.

Public Comment on general topics

Carol Nolan, a New Paltz resident, did not like that the way the Town of New Paltz was redistricted but she trusted the process, so it was easier to accept those districts. She hoped the commissioners could describe that process.

1<sup>st</sup> Chair DeStefano asked if there was any other comments or business. Hearing none:

**Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion Made By:** Commissioner Panza

**Motion Seconded By:** Commissioner Lutz

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 6

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Time:** 6:26 PM

**Respectfully submitted by:** Fawn Tantillo

## **Commission on Reapportionment Meeting Transcript**

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### **Sarah DeStefano**

Good evening, everyone. I'm calling the meeting to order. It's 6pm on Wednesday, May 11 2022. As the first chair, I'm taking over chairing duties today as our chairman Regis. Can't make it tonight. And so I guess that allows us to jump into our first order of business, which is approving the meeting minutes for four meetings, April 9, April 13, April 20, and April 21, of 2022. And can I entertain a motion? Get a motion from Kathy, and a second from Travis.

### **Fawn Tantillo**

Donna is having trouble getting in just go ahead.

### **Sarah DeStefano**

I'm all in favor of passing the four meeting minutes say aye. Raise your hand?

### **Committee Members**

Aye.

### **Sarah DeStefano**

All opposed. And none abstaining, I don't believe. Thank you. Moving on to our second point of the meeting, is our public comment on the agenda items, just any member of the public has any commentary they'd like to provide on the agenda items as as laid out this evening. All right. None heard. Let's move on to the meat of the meeting, which is a discussion of our public hearing presentation on May 16 and May 19. As Fawn sent out, there's been a change in the location for the May 16. I'm hearing is that right, Fawn?

**Fawn Tantillo**

That's correct. We're going to be at the Modena firehouse. Oh, I just thought I had the address here in front of me. But sorry, I thought I had it like, went to look for the calendar. And I guess I moved it hold on.

**Sarah DeStefano**

It's a 1953 route 44/55

**Fawn Tantillo**

That's correct.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Anyway, just for the record, so please do not go to the other location. It'll be at the firehouse. And then I guess, I guess this begs the question, how we will be going about leading this presentation, what sort of technological, like availability we have. And I guess I'd like to ask to start out how this went down. 10 years ago, you know, what, how are things presented? What if any information was shared ahead of time? How was the public engaged to speak at the meeting? Were there limits on the time that each person could speak things like that? If someone I'm I guess, fine, if you could share your thoughts on this, but probably robbed you?

**Fawn Tantillo**

Yeah, I think Rob was there also we, of course, we didn't have the ability to do anything electronic, like zoom at the time. So people had to physically come to the meeting, they made a brief presentation about sort of how they got there, and made some of the decisions. That was a big change, the last time. It was a dramatic change. And, and, and they do set time limits for people to speak. One of the hardest things, generally, for commissioners, I know, for legislators, is to not.. to just accept the public comments. Sometimes they're going to ask you questions or, you know, make criticisms you're going to be dying to explain to them. Generally don't want to do that. You want to just sort of let them make their comments. And you make it clear that from the beginning, that you're just there to accept their comments, and you're not going to you don't want to get drawn into a debate. And that was something that they had a little bit of a problem with, as I recall the last time but ,but I would suggest setting a time limit for the speakers, usually the legislative session, it's two minutes, but two or three minutes is probably good. We can we can do the timekeeping. And one thing we've done at the request of the commission, we're going to try to set up a way for the public to make comments to you. Unfortunately, they are not going to be able to see the presentation. What's going to happen is they're going to I'm going to bring them on one at a time, it's we're not going to have like a big zoom meeting with, with all these people on it, they'll be in the waiting room, I'll bring them in one at a time, there'll be they'll, they'll have they need to see all of you. And you will be able to see them on my screen. And, and they'll make their comments and then we'll go to the next person. The meeting will be recorded, not on Zoom, it'll be recorded on a tape recorder like we do a live meeting. And then we'll go from there. My next question is, how is Rob going to get the map up on a screen for us to

**Robert Leibowitz**

onboard computers? Are you doing it in person? Are we having personally having internet components? Is

**Fawn Tantillo**

it is an in person meeting, okay, you're

**Robert Leibowitz**

bringing in a few people at a time? Yeah, well,

**Fawn Tantillo**

Yeah, well, the public that's in the room will be in the room, and they'll be able to see the presentation and hear the presentation. And, but the people that are that decide to come to try to make comments electronically, are are going to be... are not going to be in the meeting ahead of time, they're not going to hear the presentation. So they're probably going to... this is something fairly new for us. And the clerk is not willing for us to run two meetings to have one on Zoom and one in person. So this was our this was the compromise that she and that, I guess, the attorneys, our legislative counsel came up with?

**Robert Leibowitz**

Well, I guess my first question is do we do we know if we have internet, these two facilities?

**Fawn Tantillo**

And I'm told we have internet access. I haven't gone out to try it.

**Robert Leibowitz**

Okay, so I don't know if I want to rely on it. So I'm thinking let's not rely on it. I think that's as a first choice. So maybe I can either, probably just display it in the standard program so that we can zoom in more easily see road see features? I think I think we just keep it at full screen. Unless there's somebody from the public has a very specific comment on a specific area wants us to zoom in. So we'll just be basically just be zooming in zooming out, I think is what I'll be doing. Yeah, I mean, last time was in front of a legislator. Sure. And I think it was at a legislative meeting. So it was very different in that they presented first. And then the legislator just kind of did their usual thing. So there was a lot of speeches, which wouldn't be the case at this time. So I think it would just be it would be more standard public comment. So I think it'll probably run more smoothly.

**Fawn Tantillo**

That was one of the best comments made by the legislature the last time, Wayne Harris said, you know, it's like, whenever you look at a group photo, you first look to see what you look like in the picture. And and I think that's very true. So, you know, that's a good analogy, when if people don't like the way their district looks in the picture, they need to look at the whole picture. But the one thing you can do in your presentation, too, is try to head off any questions you anticipate. One of the things that several people pointed out, since the maps book on public was the part of Ellenville that you cut away from the village. That's up around Lake Merritt tanza that's it didn't make sense for those people at the top of the mountain to drive all the way into the village to vote when the people across the street were

voting, you know, in Craig's more, so there was a very logical reason you did that. But it might be good to explain that to the public to let them know how thoughtful you were in making your determinations. I expect to see from Gardner to be there also.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Yeah, I guess it sort of begs the question. I know, we just had sent Andy and myself an outline of things that he wanted us to share. And admittedly, I haven't had the opportunity to really review it closely. But I guess it begs the question, do we want to keep it high level? In? You know, here's the work that we've done, here are the considerations we've had to keep in mind. Plus or minus 5%? You know, the 7000 number for each district? Or do we do we want to go on a tour of the map like that? It seems like it may be a little bit administratively difficult, excuse my cat who's not going zooming around the room if you can hear that. Always great. You know, does anyone have any thoughts on on how we can even efficiently if we want to go on a tour of the map like that, how can we go about it? in an efficient way,

**Robert Leibowitz**

I agree. Oh, no, you go

**Andy Monk**

ahead. And I wonder if there's a kind of compromise, I think. I agree that for the sake of the meeting, probably keeping our comments to a kind of a minimum and just giving a high level overview of who we are, what we did what the process was, but then I think I'm sorry. For examples, like cracks more where we had a very deliberate reason, I think we, I think it's okay to stay high level and then also give some specific examples of what we're talking about. Do you agree? So like pointing out cracks more and saying, you know, we did draw this line, because there's cliffs involved and it made more sense not to have people drive down and around the cliff. And that's like, similar to the way we thought about other lines that we drew in a similar way that maybe divided like, municipality, but we were using topographical features. And we thought about those things carefully. And then not say all of them.

**Fawn Tantillo**

Right, I would just maybe give some I like the idea of a high level explanation. And just to get to some specifics, maybe as an example, use Ellenville as an example of why you like you follow those criteria as closely as you could, as long as it was possible and practical. And that was a place where you broke away from that your criteria of keeping the villages whole. Or you know, but there was a deliberate reason for that.

**Sarah DeStefano**

So anyone else have any other thoughts on what we should or shouldn't share?

**Robert Leibowitz**

My, My thought was to stay high level unless somebody has a question specific question about his particular area, there's no reason to answer.

**Travis Rask**

That was that was kind of my philosophy.

**Robert Leibowitz**

Why didn't you only the only wide lead yourself into trouble or misspeaking or controversy? Why do that unless somebody actually invites you to say, Okay, let's have a discussion on this.

**Kathleen Waithe**

That was mine as well, I would avoid? Yeah.

**Sarah DeStefano**

I tend to agree with that. Also, though, I do. They ended up I guess I curious how we can work in our explanation for things that we get questions about, in a way that doesn't that's like a real explanation and doesn't come off as if we're trying to debate the speaker as they're these I don't want to, I don't want it to be adversarial. When you're going through a certain area. Maybe maybe Rob, if you have thoughts on that, or it's, I think you

**Robert Leibowitz**

I think you should know, for all, maybe somebody should maybe as committee come up with a write up of reasons why you did things or you're prepared. But you don't actually have so I would be prepared, but not necessarily dig in unless your questioned. So this way, your reasoning is already laid out, and you're not doing it off the cuff.

**Kenneth Panza**

For questions. I don't know. What Yeah, fits n

**Robert Leibowitz**

Actually, an additional public hearing. You're just there to hear her comments. So, you can say, Okay, thank you.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Sorry, I didn't hear you all that. Well, when you were commenting. What was your comment?

**Kenneth Panza**

That directed to me?

**Sarah DeStefano**

Yeah, I just didn't I didn't hear you. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Glitch.

**Kenneth Panza**

You know, if we're not answering questions from the audience, from the public, I'm not sure how what value there is to get into details that would run, you know, generate these questions. You know, if we stay at the high level, explain, you know, the very high level criteria that we use, but as soon as you get into, why we did Cragmoor, why we did Ellenville a certain way. I mean, some guiding questions. And then what do you do?

**Fawn Tantillo**

If you've seen the public comment we've gotten so far from the folks in Gardiner, you should be aware an email went out to, by the Democratic Committee of Gardiner. And they've been writing, you know, I shared the letters with the commissioners, that they want to keep Gardiner whole. I don't know that they really understand the whole process, or why Gardiner was divided. I don't think you should get into that debate with them. They're going to come and say they want Gardiner to be whole and you can say "thank you" for your comments.

**Kenneth Panza**

Yeah, well, every town wants to be whole criteria was, I mean, that was the basic assumption we worked with. We had to compromise on that.

**Fawn Tantillo**

The talking points that Regis made, I think we're fairly thorough and but I wouldn't have a presentation that's more than like 10 or 15 minutes if you're gonna, you know, just talk about who you are and how the commission you know.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Yeah. Like I said, I haven't had a chance to look at it super thoroughly yet, but it did. Feel long to me. I didn't think that part of it was all the things that we've done as a commission since the beginning of the commission. And then some considerations that Andy was going to share about, you know, how we thought about the map. I think the part that I was asked to speak to, which was all the things that we've done, can I, I do hope to streamline it just so that we don't spend more time speaking than we spend listening. But I haven't been able to really look at it too closely to know what I think should be cut from it. But mostly just, just to talk about the map and, you know, not our website creation and things like that.

**Fawn Tantillo**

And other than the main number you like the magic number you're trying to get in the 5%. above and below, Regis got into a lot of numbers in that. My experience is with sharing, sharing numbers like that, because I happen to be a numbers person, and I used to share numbers quite a bit... is people kind of glaze over once you give them more than like three or four numbers. So I would just streamline that for sure. It's just

**Travis Rask**

It's the story of my life

**Sarah DeStefano**

I agree with the fun. Less than lovers get confused, and you're misquoted. And? Yeah.

**Kenneth Panza**

One of the things the gardener emails didn't seem to recognize was the loss of the or the impact of losing the prisoners in the numbers count. I mean, they made a comment that, you know, the



population is area hasn't changed that much. Except that you're removed 1300 or 3500 prisoners from the, from the population counts.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Absolutely. But I suppose that's what we can explain in our report at the end of all of this, I'm assuming that we're taking the public comment, and then we can explain our rationale later on.

**Kenneth Panza**

I was just suggesting not like part of the overview. Yeah, right. The Overview includes that. So people know that, even though their talent didn't change that much from population to population, that entire area changed dramatically.

**Sarah DeStefano**

I think there was a reference to that

**Robert Leibowitz**

One thing you could say is, Okay, last time, when we went through this, we had a dramatic change was going from 33 to 23. This time, we're having a dramatic change. He's been moving to prisoners. Going forward, we might not see any, any dramatic changes. So the districts may not change that much next time. So you can say, well, it might be more stable as we move forward.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Alright, I guess, um, is there anything that any other sort of item like that, that people think is a must need in whatever presentation we have, as presented? And then I think we could, unless anyone has anything else further to say about it, we can wrap up a discussion on how long we think each speaker should be allowed to have to speak. Must need items in the in our short presentation, is the first question.

**Fawn Tantillo**

I have a speaker's timer folder that we use in the legislature. So you let me know how many minutes they have. And and we can certainly the people in the room, it's very easy to let them know the people online, it might be a little more difficult, we may have to put it on your table someplace where they see this changing as they're speaking. It will require whoever's chairing the meeting to let them know that they need to wrap up their comments. And you could judge, like if you get there, and there's two people, you may not want to set a time. If you get there and there's 30 people, you may want to say you know, two minutes, we'll have you there for an hour. So,

**Travis Rask**

Right.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Two people could have you there for an hour or two.

**Fawn Tantillo**

That's true.

**Sarah DeStefano**

You never know. I suppose if that's fair, we can see who actually shows up and maybe huddle up ahead of time to discuss it a time. I don't know if this is technologically available to you Fawn, but if you're sharing if you're bringing them in on Zoom, you may be able to share your screen and have the screen the countdown clock. And then that could be a way for them to know also.

**Fawn Tantillo**

I'll play with that, see if I can.

**Sarah DeStefano**

I've been on other things where that's been available as a shared screen. Okay, well, I guess the three of us will be working on shortening this presentation a little bit in alignment with things that we've discussed. And any last-minute comments on our meeting for next Monday and Wednesday. Kathy, is that a hand raised? Nope. Okay. Carol, did you have your hand raised earlier? I was just gonna wait till the public comments. Sorry, Carol, I don't mean to ignore you.

**Fawn Tantillo**

And I have tent cards with all of your names on it. So people will know who they're addressing when they're there. One thing we just talked about, you know, introducing, like, who are the commissioners, and he explained that you were seven volunteers, just whoever is doing that, I think should name you, you know, for the public and for the record. But I think you did a good job, and you should be very proud of it.

**Donna Lutz**

Thank you.

**Andy Monk**

Thank you.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Thank you. Okay, we'll wrap up that, and I'm sure we'll all be in discussion as we move forward to Monday, just so that we're all on the same page. But with that, we'll move on to the public comment on the general topics for this. This commission, and I'll recognize Carol Nolan first since she has been patiently waiting with your hand raised.

Well, thank you. I didn't know whether you wanted to hear from someone who wasn't on the commission or not. I just wanted to say so. As Fawn knows, I'm a New Paltz resident. And I don't like that we are split up. I don't mind as much as the Gardiner. people do that Gardiner got it to us. However, I trust your process. And I've seen as you know, a lot of your process. And that makes me not at all militant about what I don't like about the result. So, I think it's important to describe that

process well enough that anyone who hasn't sat through these meetings has the same level of trust. I've tried to do that to the people I represent.

The other thing I wanted to say is one question I got asked was, tell me about the demographics of the commissioners. And so I think in that intro of who you all are, that the range of what your experience and and location and perspective might be would be helpful, because I think it is kind of wide. That's all I need to say. Thank you.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Thank you, Carol, we will take that into consideration for sure. I think Carol

**Kenneth Panza**

The Commission is expecting a lot of people compliment us on our work.

**Sarah DeStefano**

It would be very nice if we did get a lot of complements

**Kenneth Panza**

I think we will hear I don't like the way our town has been treated.

**Sarah DeStefano**

I'm assuming those who really liked the map are not going to take the time to show up for it. But it would be nice if they would. All right on that note I any other non commissioners have anything that they'd like to add? Okay, nothing heard. I guess we could move towards wrapping up. Can I entertain a motion to adjourn?

**Kenneth Panza**

Sounds good. I'll move to adjourn.

**Sarah DeStefano**

Is there a second? All right, well, I will be seeing you all in person on Monday. And then Wednesday, and I'm sure it will be interesting. Sorry. My apologies. I will be there on Thursday, not Wednesday. But it's just in my calendar, which I rely on considerably. So have a good evening, everyone and I will see you then.