



Legislation

BOL Meeting Minutes - Published Draft

Committee Chair: Colin Smith

800 Michaelian Office Bldg.
148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601
www.westchesterlegislators.com

Friday, September 9, 2022

1:00 PM

Committee Room

CALL TO ORDER

*This meeting will be held pursuant to Chapter 1 of the New York State Laws of 2022 and Executive Order 11, as extended, which authorize any public body to meet and take such action authorized by law without permitting in public-in-person access to meetings and authorize such meetings to be held remotely by conference call or similar service, provided that the public has the ability to view or listen to such proceeding and that such meetings are recorded and later transcribed. To access the meeting, please visit:
<https://westchestercountyny.legistar.com>*

. With a quorum present, Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 1:16 PM.

Others in attendance: BOL - Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson, Legislator Erika Pierce, Legislator David Tubiolo, Legislator Catherine Parker, Legislator Tyrae Woodson-Samuels, Legislator James Nolan, Melanie Montalto, Marcello Figueroa, Lisa Hochman, Anand Singh, Karen Vele; Department of Law - County Attorney John Nonna, Chief Deputy County Attorney Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz; Members of the Public - Harry Bittker

Present: Committee Chair Smith, Legislator Barr, Legislator Borgia, Legislator Boykin, Committee Vice-Chair Gashi and Legislator Maher

Remote: Legislator Cunzio, Legislator Johnson and Legislator Shimsky

MINUTES APPROVAL

July 28, 2022 at 11:00 AM Minutes

On motion of Committee Vice-Chair Gashi, seconded by Legislator Boykin, the above item was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Committee Chair Smith, Legislator Barr, Borgia, Legislator Boykin, Legislator Cunzio, Committee Vice-Chair Gashi, Legislator Johnson, Legislator Maher and Legislator Shimsky

I. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Discussion on the Westchester County Redistricting Process

Guest: Joshua Simon, Senior Research Associate, The Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz

Mr. Simon introduced himself and described the redistricting process, and the requirements used in drawing them, such as contiguity or the exclusion of the inmate population. He also highlighted the significant influence of two pieces of enabling legislation and court rulings over the past few years that had to be accounted for when drawing the proposed lines. Mr. Simon

went through each district and spoke about the specific changes and the rationale behind them. He reiterated that this plan is a starting point, and in spite of the challenges of fitting the districts into the new legal framework, he said that it does a good job of respecting municipal boundaries and preserving communities of interest.

Chair Smith asked for clarification on Mr. Simons' reference to minority interest groups and he explained that geographically, there had to be a significant enough population of a minority group for them for it to receive said designation, citing legislative district (LD) 16's Hispanic population. Chair Smith asked about ideal election district counts and Mr. Simons said that he anticipates no issues, referencing the case of LD 2's splitting of the Town of Somers being grounded in municipal home rule law and knew of numerous other places that have justified splitting of municipalities using that legal framework.

Legislator Cunzio asked if individual legislators would have an opportunity to sit down and discuss concerns with Mr. Simons and if this was an ongoing process, citing concerns she had. Mr. Simons said that he is using a single point of contact with the Board of Legislators' Chief of Staff Montalto and views this as a starting point. Legislator Borgia said that notice was sent out to legislators to convey any specific requests pertaining to their district, and that the single point of contact is used for logistical purposes, noting that this is an imperfect process. Discussion ensued on specific requests and concerns within specific LDs. Legislator Boykin noted that this process started last year but had to be retooled because of the recent passage of the aforementioned legislation and said that this is not an easy process and Legislator Barr agreed saying that BOL staff and Mr. Simons have done a good job. Mr. Simons noted that due to population increases it necessitated the shifting of EDs among LDs and said that increasing the size of the legislature might be worth considering at some point in the future, but that even an increase of 2-4 seats would decrease a LD's population by thousands of residents, and concluded by saying that respecting municipal boundaries has always been a priority, when feasible.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

III. RECEIVE & FILE

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Legislator Shimsky, seconded by Committee Vice-Chair Gashi, the Committee adjourned at 2:30 PM.