



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 22-159, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 2/2/2022

TITLE:

Proposed Amendment to the Redistricting Schedule

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Amend the local redistricting schedule adopted by the Board of Supervisors in December 2021 to provide for a more accelerated redistricting schedule in anticipation of possible upcoming June primary elections; authorize notice to be provided; adopt redistricting guidelines.

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Walker, Kamptner, Herrick, Bessette, Washburne

PRESENTER (S): Greg Kamptner, Richard J. Washburne

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: Federal and state law require that local magisterial districts and voting precincts be reviewed every 10 years in order to achieve population parity among local magisterial districts, and in order to prevent the creation of split voting precincts. The Board of Supervisors adopted a proposed local redistricting schedule in December 2021. Because of the possibility of June primary elections, the local redistricting process must be completed as soon as reasonably possible in order to give voters the requisite notice of changes in their magisterial districts and voting precincts, while at the same time providing the requisite opportunity for public comment.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Engaged Citizens - Successfully engage citizens so that local government reflects their values and aspirations. .

DISCUSSION:

Accelerated Schedule

The Albemarle County Electoral Board and the Registrar of Voters have requested the Board adopt an accelerated redistricting schedule to ensure that the redistricting process, and all necessary resulting actions, can be completed before possible primary elections are held on June 21, 2022. The proposed accelerated redistricting schedule is provided in Attachment A. The proposed schedule has the Board holding the public hearing on the redistricting ordinance on March 2, 2022, but with the Board not acting on the ordinance until March 23, 2022, after the notice period required by Virginia Code § 24.2-129 (discussed in "Maps," below) has run. Although March 23 is not a regular meeting date of the Board, it is currently scheduled for a budget work session and the Board's action on the redistricting ordinance could be on the Board's consent agenda that date.

Maps

Virginia Code § 24.2-129, which became effective in 2021, requires localities to publish notice of proposed amendments to their magisterial districts, voting precincts, and polling places on their websites and through

other media of the opportunity for the public comment on the proposed changes. The public comment period is 30 days, but the Board may not adopt any proposed changes until at least 45 days after the public comment period begins. Based on 2020 Census data and the proposed redistricting guidelines, staff developed three maps (summarized in Attachment B, depicted in the maps in Attachment C, and demographics shown in Attachment D) for the public to comment upon during the 30-day comment period. These maps do not reflect the only options the Board may consider when it considers the ordinance amending the magisterial districts, voting precincts, and polling place locations. However, any changes made to these maps in response to public comment received will trigger an additional 15-day comment period.

Guidelines for Magisterial Districts, Precincts, and Polling Places

The proposed redistricting guidelines (Attachment E) provide direction and information as to how magisterial districts, precinct boundaries, and polling places will be identified and established. Some of these guidelines are requirements established by law, such as the requirements for geographical compactness and contiguity, the requirement that the population within each magisterial district be as equal as is practicable, and the requirement that precincts have no less than 100 and no more than 5,000 registered voters. Other guidelines reflect County-specific goals, such as having each magisterial district contain urban and rural areas.

The public was invited to comment on the preliminary guidelines at a public meeting coordinated by County staff on January 24, 2022, and those comments will be shared with the Board as part of staff's presentation on February 2.

BUDGET IMPACT: Redistricting is already incorporated into various offices' and departments' workplans. However, there will be costs associated with public notices provided for public meetings and the redistricting ordinance. If additional precincts and corresponding polling places must be established because of population increases, there will be additional staff and equipment costs associated with those new polling places during elections over the next decade.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board adopt the attached proposed redistricting schedule (Attachment A), authorize the three proposed alternative magisterial district and voting precinct maps (Attachment C) to be published to start the public comment period required by law, and to adopt the proposed redistricting guidelines (Attachment E).

ATTACHMENTS:

- A - Proposed accelerated redistricting schedule
- B - Summary of changes proposed in three presented options
- C - Alternative magisterial district and voting precinct maps
- D - Proposed redistricting demographics
- E - Proposed redistricting guidelines