

MADISON COUNTY BOARD
Special Board Meeting – Public Hearing

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
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COUNTY OF MADISON)

Proceedings of the County Board of Madison County, Illinois, was held telephonically due to COVID-19 restrictions on May 18, 2021.

TUESDAY, MAY 18, 2021
5:00 PM
SPECIAL SESSION

The Board met pursuant to recess taken May 11, 2021.

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The meeting was called to order by Kurt Prenzler, Chairman of the Board.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all members of the Board.

The Roll Call was called by Debra Ming-Mendoza, County Clerk, showing the following members present:

PRESENT: Kuhn, Pace, Meyer, Ross, Madison, Walters, Holliday, Stoutenborough, Malone, Gray, Pollard, King, Babcock, Eaker, Hankins, Valentine, Minner, Messner, Wiehardt, Foster, Petrillo, Glasper, Goggin, Guy, Harriss, Mueller-Jones, Dalton, and Kneedler

ABSENT: Doucleff

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Mr. Prenzler: I want to thank everyone for showing up this evening. As you know, there will be no vote this evening. This is strictly a public hearing, as required by state law. And so we do have a live meeting here. We do have one public comment. Has the public comment called in?. Okay, so the public comment has not called in. Basically, I'll just open it up for questions or comments or both from anyone attending virtually or also here live. I want to thank the I.T. Department, Chris Bethel, for making sure that this is up on the website for everyone to view. It's been instructive to take a look at it. We can go in with all this amazing GIS information to go ahead and zoom in and zoom out and take a look at things. So if I could just review the process, basically, for where this map came from. First, I actually I'll tell you the whole story. I went to SIUE and called the Political Science Department. They said we can't do this for you, but if we could, it would cost you 15,000, call UMSL. I called UMSL, UMSL told me to go back SIUE to the Geography Department. They have a very fine geography department at SIUE and they said that they could help me but they would rather not do it. And so they sent me to University of Illinois Springfield, and I actually was hoping to get two maps one at 21 and one at 25 with the budget that I had, I could only afford one, so I picked 25. And so basically, the instructions were no bias with the exception of minority neighborhoods that they would not be diluted. And then that was in the contract. And then after that obey state law, state law basically says that county board districts need to be very close, close in population. And then next, they need to be compact. And then after that, please try to follow township and municipal lines.

And after that, please try to follow precinct lines. And so with that, that was basically the recipe for where this map came from. Any questions or comments?

Mr. Holliday: Does a reduction in board members create a financial savings? With a smaller board, it's possible to be influenced by special interests. Keeping the board at it's current rate *inaudible* diversity backgrounds and experience. *Inaudible* debate by a broader perspective from county board members by keeping it at 29 members.

Mr. Prenzler: I think those are all valid points. I think as we look across the state of Illinois, we have 102 counties. We have maybe 15 in the south that have commission counties, where they have three commissioners. That form of government comes from the south. And then we have most of the counties in Illinois are county board counties with varying degrees, varying numbers of county board members. And then also some counties have multi member districts, for example, DuPage County, they have a total of 18 county board members, they have six districts and three members per district. In McLean County, they have 20 county board members, 10 districts and 2 county board members per district. I think in Champagne, they also have multi member districts. In Madison County, we have single member districts, and that's nothing that I changed. But I think those are all valid points. And that's why as we look across the state of Illinois, we see different counties have different numbers of county board members. Recently, we see our neighbor to the north, Montgomery, I think they reduced from 21 to 14. I think we see Rock Island going from 25 to 19 this year. But those are all very good points, Doc. Any other comments or questions?

Mr. Tanzyus: We do have some members of the public that are here. If anybody has any questions, we have 2 laptops that are set up if you want to go ahead and zoom in on your precincts or on the district's that's all available. We also have some hard copies up here as well. We just want to make sure because this is really for the public.

Ms. Ciampoli: My biggest question is if you want to go from 29 members to 25 members, are you all considering increasing the salaries or keeping the salaries the same?

Mr. Prenzler: That's a decision for the county board.

Mr. Ciampoli: But that's the biggest thing, I think, the citizens would like to know, is if you were going to decrease it. If you decrease it, and you stay at the same salary, then it's a benefit for the citizens. If you decrease it and increase the salaries, then I see no benefit to myself. And I find it that it'd be more difficult for anyone, any regular citizen to then run as a concerned citizen for those seats. It will be so large that you would almost need backing from a party to get elected. And I think that's unfair because the regular citizen who wants to get involved in government could then not do it. So, again, I would not be for it until you tell me, are you going to raise the salaries or not?

Mr. Prenzler: That's not my decision here. That's obviously the decision of the county board. So any other comments or questions?

Mr. Weaver: On face value, just looking at the lines on the old map versus the new map, it is obvious that the new map is much cleaner. When you look at the old map, you see a whole lot of islands and funny corridors and stuff like that, which in my mind, just felt there was gerrymandering that occurred for reasons other than the straightforward nonbiased that the current map was done on. So from that standpoint, I like the clean look of the new map.

Mr. Prenzler: Well, if I could speak to that, I have learned, Mike, thank you very much. I don't think that some of the islands that we have seen on the on the map that we have currently, I think Wood River 27, I think some of these things are actually the precincts themselves look very strange. We have Wood River

17, or I'm not sure, I don't remember, Granite City 25, Nameoki 3, Foster 5, Godfrey 11, and Venice 2. These are all precincts that have very strange shapes, and sometimes islands. And the reason they do is not because of gerrymandering, it's because of annexations in the past and coterminous townships. And so that now, I do think probably the most obvious gerrymandered precinct or county board district we have in the current map is the "C" that goes around Edwardsville. I mean, that stands out. As far as some of these precincts, it's really no one's fault. This is an old county, it's over 200 years old. We have towns that are also coterminous townships and municipalities, and so I think some of those funny shapes are not the result of bad actions.

Mr. Foster: First of all, I'd like to know who the gentleman was that was just speaking so I can notate. Who was making those comments?

Mr. Weaver: Mike Weaver.

Mr. Foster: Sorry, you broke up.

Mr. Prenzler: Mike Weaver.

Mr. Foster: Thank you. My second is, this is to you Mr. Chairman, what would your recommendation be to the board as far as the salaries of the board districts that would be under the new map?

Mr. Prenzler: I don't really, that's a decision for the county board. And I that would be a collaborative decision.

Mr. Madison: Regarding salary increases, I can tell you from firsthand experience that has been discussed heavily amongst board members. I can tell you from firsthand experience that many of us put many, many hours into this every month already to the point where I know, I can tell you that it makes my job suffer, and I know plenty of other members who have made their jobs suffer. It's much more than a part time job, even though we signed up for it and we're happy to do it because we feel it's a civic duty. It takes a lot out of your regular workday for a part time job. There are many days during the month that I spend all day having discussions with directors and other board members, and I think that there's probably a lot of other people that will say the same thing on the board. So if we are going to reduce the number, I'm sure it will be discussed about a salary increase depending on the number of committees that remain, and how many more we are each on.

Ms. Ciampoli: And then my other question is, as the county functions, you have multiple committees that people are on. Have you considered revamping that system and making it less committees or combining committees so that my elected officials are not going to 20 meetings in a month compared to 10? Because I think you're asking to much of an elected official to then put their time in to go to 20 different meetings instead of 10. Since you proposed this to drop to 20, how are you going to restructure the committee's and how will that affect?

Mr. Prenzler: Right off the top of my head, I think we talked about possibly combining Institutions and Grants, Tax Cycle and Finance, Special Service Area #1 and Facilities. There were two others that came up. Mr. Madison brought that up in the past, and so yes, we thought about consolidation.

Ms. Ciampoli: So how many committees do you have now?

Mr. Prenzler: I think it's 14 or 15.

Ms. Ciampoli: And what would you consolidate it to?

Mr. Prenzler: Well, I think we could eliminate four.

Ms. Ciampoli: That's still a lot to ask of my elected officials, to then manage that many meetings in a given amount of time.

Mr. Prenzler: Well we, as we all know, there are many counties in Illinois, counties larger than us, where some of them have more committees, some of them have fewer, and we can learn from that and we can do an adjustment of committees.

Ms. Ciampoli: As a concerned citizen, again, if you want to implement decreasing the county board members, then I would think this would all be thought out and then presented at that time.

Mr. Prenzler: Off the top of my head, there were four committees that we were looking at possibly combining with other committees and reducing it by four. We've also done benchmarking with other counties, I just don't have all of the results right now.

Mr. Madison: I'd like to answer part of that, you know, if we do consolidate the committee's, then those committee meetings will each be longer. Just so everybody's clear on that. And so everybody knows, there is probably more discussion that goes on behind the scenes after a meeting or before a meeting because there are still questions that maybe people didn't think of. And you can only have a conversation, because our committees are small enough, that you can only have a conversation with one other member of the committee due to the Open Meetings Act rules. You have to do that, you can't talk to the whole group, you have to talk to one individual at a time. It just takes a lot of time. I want to make sure that its not just the meeting time that people think of considering. I do have one more thing. I'd like to know how many meetings the chairman attends each month committee meetings.

Mr. Prenzler: I put in a lot of hours, but I often don't attend a lot of committee meetings, but I do a lot of other things and you'll find me in my office quite early in the mornings. Thank you.

Mr. Madison: The county board business happens in the committee meetings and we finalize it with a vote and the county board meeting. All of the work happens in the committee meetings before and after them.

Mr. Scheibel: One of the things that I know...

Mr. Prenzler: Former county board member from Fort Russell Township?

Mr. Scheibel: Fort Russell, Moro, and Edwardsville. Anyway, one of the things that I've noticed is that we still have some very large board districts. And I, being a former county board member, would try to make many of the zoning hearings and talk to the people and sometimes they would last a few minutes, sometimes they would go into hours. One time they wanted to redistrict St. Catherine's Golf Course with a couple 100 homes and one of the various problems and we had a crowd of 100 people there. And you know, you're there for these meetings. If you have a huge board district, you just ask for a lot of things because there's a lot of development going on in some of the rural places up here, as you can see on the map, and it's going to force that particular board member to try and be out there all the time going and answering questions. If you had the five more board people like we have, could we take a look at perhaps adjusting the board districts, so they're a little smaller in size. I know that would take some fooling around and whatnot. But then again, I looked at board district 11, that you have up here, and there's a sidewalk that goes between one glob of population to the larger one. Maybe you need to do something similar to this, and go ahead and break up some of these massive ones. You realize that we have a small one up here, and the large one will be 30 to 40 times the size and acreage and volume that a small one like that would be. Not only is it

impossible almost to campaign for something like this, but like I say, the elected person to get out and travel and go to the various meetings and the concerns are not the same. If you're 25 miles apart, you have totally different concerns.

Mr. Prenzler: Well, thank you, Mr. Schiebel. I recognize that, for example, a major district like yours with a lot of land, and Mr. Myers, for example; others, Bobby Ross's area. Particularly, Bobby Ross and Bill Meyer, Mick Madison, those are large areas but the state law requires that county board districts be as equal as possible in population.

Mr. Schiebel: Well, that's why I'm saying it might be hard. I looked at it and perhaps instead of an average number of about 10,000, to drop that down to 9000, that would give you that added population to go ahead and work with these districts here. And perhaps some of Wood River could become part of Fort Russell Township or expand it in there or something so that those districts could change a bit. I know that obviously, when you went up there, you couldn't ask for 30 different maps to go ahead and do that, I appreciate that, but if the salaries remained the same, reduction would be what, \$75,000 a year? I used to harp about us being over insured for things like earthquakes, I used to get on a little soapbox and scream earthquakes, because we would go ahead and insure everything, every last brick. If the earthquake came and took everything away and we were spending hundreds of thousands of dollars beyond what was reasonable. Not that I was against insurance, but whatever. I'm saying that you could cut back on some areas and look at that, and still afford to give people raises and afford the other board members.

Mr. Weaver: Whenever you talk about money and paying people more money, I always have to ask the question, is there a material change in the work? Now, I see the changes in the geography of the maps, there's going to be more work in the beginning talking about that, but that's a one time every 10 years issue. So, to me, that's not a raise type thing. So, was the objective on the 29 to 25, was that a money savings change or just to bring us more in line with others?

Mr. Prenzler: I haven't really addressed the money, I just see that there has been a trend. We did have a new constitution in Illinois 1970 and since 1970, we have seen a trend in many counties to reduce their county board size. Those counties also have committees, they also have roughly the same responsibilities. Some counties have nursing homes, we have Special Service Area #1, which is rather unique. That's what I've just noted in terms of benchmarking the state of Illinois.

Mr. Weaver: To me, raises come with material change in work, or inflation. Those are the two reasons why you give people more money or their skill level has dramatically changed and they're more skilled, so they get more money. That's just my point on money raises.

Ms. Mueller-Jones: I know that we've talked about this before when you were trying to put it on the actual ballot, and I just want to say the same similar thing that I said before. I think, while I am in favor of reducing the size of the size of government, it has to be done responsibly, and allow everyone who wants to be part of government to be able to do that. I'm afraid that if we make these districts bigger, it's going to be prohibitive for people like me and other people to run a campaign. They won't have the time nor the money. And to answer, I don't know who was the public commenter before, this is a lot of work, and if we have less of us, it will be more work, because we do not only go to county board meetings, some of us have 3,4, or 5 committees that we attend. By making less people with the same amount of governmental work, we all will have to do more work. In addition, people who have young children, people who may be single parents, like myself now, they will not want to be part of this because they will see that they have to go door to door to 10,000 people or whatever it is, or they can do one mailer, and there goes their campaign funds. It's going to make it to where only people who have a lot of money like, I think Ms. Ciampoli said previously, backing from a particular party or particular people can run and that's not how government should be. Government should be by the people, for the people and if we make it to where people can't be

involved or don't want to be involved because it's just too much money, too much work, then we're not doing service to Madison County.

Ms. Pace: Chairman, I have a question for you. My district is currently concerning one community and the new map that you're proposing would take my district, divide it by half and encompass three other communities. I'm just wondering, from your perspective, is this a good move? Because in my mind, it is not. I'm wanting to know why you think this is a good move, because maybe I'm not seeing something the way you do.

Mr. Prenzler: Well, the instructions given to the this map drawer was to after making sure that the populations are nearly equal, to make sure that the county board districts are compact, is to respect municipal in township lines. I think we see that. We saw that in some of the districts, but I think one district, I think, Ms. Harriss, her district was more or less Glen Carbon and now that's serving other districts; yours also has changed. Where there are other districts that are more tightly conforming to a township or a municipality so it just depends on the district, but that's a good point you make.

Mr. Walters: To say that this map isn't gerrymandered, I think is laughable. Where I am in Godfrey, we go from two representatives down to one. I talked to my mayor, he is vehemently opposed to it. He does not want to have one representative for Godfrey, and I happen to agree with him wholeheartedly. I've looked at the map, it is gerrymandered in certain places. I don't think it was drawn very well. I don't believe that the people that drew it did a very good job. I think we've spent \$4,500. I looked at a few other maps that have been presented that didn't cost us anything, but I think do a better job of representing not only republicans but democrats in this county, and I think that's what they want. Doc Holliday said it best about the representation for the people. I agree with you wholeheartedly. Heather Mueller Jones again, you're right, everybody that has spoke is right. I don't necessarily think this is the best map for the people and there will be a lot more work to be done by the county board members if we do go down to 25. We've been asking you for now six months to work on the number of committees, and we haven't seen a reduction, so that is something that should have been done last December.

Mr. Prenzler: The other reduction idea would be Public Safety and Judiciary so those are the four.

Mr. Walters: Well, Kurt, we've been talking about that for six months. I mean, to say we can do it, this is something we can do right now. Let's do this now and lower the number of committees. As Mick said, yeah, we're going to lower them, but it will be longer meetings, which is fine, but I know a couple county board members that have to take almost two weeks of vacation just so they can come to our meetings. So we do need to lower the number of committee meetings. If we can do that, if we want to talk about raises, we could do that after the map is approved. But, this map to me, in my area, does not do a very good job of representing Godfrey because we do lose a representative. I cannot support a map that takes away a county board member from the Village of Godfrey.

Mr. Prenzler: Well, I think I agree, Mr. Madison brought it up several meetings ago in terms of reducing the number of committees. I promise that we'll have three committee consolidation. I'm not sure, I don't know about Special Service Area #1, combining that with Facilities, but I do think that right now, I think Institutions and Grants. I think that Tax Cycle and Finance, and I think that Public Safety and Judiciary make sense. But there is another consideration too, and that is, I will say that having the addition of Mike Babcock and Heather Mueller-Jones on our Executive Committee with respect to litigation has really been a big plus. And so, that's been a little bit of my thinking on that point.

Ms. Harriss: I'm curious, you mentioned a few times that you were limited to drawing one map due to the budget. Who sets the budget?

Mr. Prenzler: In our office, without going to the Finance Committee, we're limited to \$5,000.

Ms. Harriss: So who sets the budget?

Mr. Prenzler: I believe the county board does. That's our purchasing policy, where the Finance Committee can authorize up to \$30,000, but certain other departments can spend up to \$5,000.

Mr. Weaver: I'd like to address Mr. Walters comment about gerrymandering on the new map. I was a geospatial analyst for National Geospatial Intelligence Agency for 32 years. When you give a geographer or a geospatial analyst a question to answer and lay out the parameters, gerrymandering or the old school definition of gerrymandering, the way I understand it, is politicians getting in a closed room with colored pencils and start drawing the maps the way they want the map to be, and then it gets passed, and that's what gerrymander is. When you tell a geographer or a geospatial analyst to create a map and say, hey, we want to hold to some precinct lines, the township lines, municipal lines, whatever they were told, especially when you go to an institution like U of I, you probably had grad students go in and they didn't give squat difference on anything politically or anything like that. They let the machine look at the data of the populations of the census blocks of trick precincts and those different parameters that were given, and they let the machine draw the map. To say that to gerrymandering, I find it offensive to the geospatial analysts at U of I that did the map. The fact that Godfrey lost a member, okay, I can see your issue with that. But that wasn't caused by somebody...

Mr. Walters: No, sir, that's not at all what I'm talking about.

Ms. Mueller-Jones: Who is even talking?

Mr. Prenzler: This is Mike Weaver.

Mr. Walters: He was talking about gerrymandering, saying he didn't agree with me.

Mr. Prenzler: That's right.

Mr. Walters: I don't agree with you. I know you abide I know some of the people that work there. It is a gerrymandered map. It does not follow a lot of the townships and the villages. That's what I have a problem with. And to say that I can't say gerrymandered, I certainly can. I've been following this stuff for 30 years. I've watched maps. You can tell anybody to do anything, but to say that people don't use their political views when they're drawing a map, you're naive.

inaudible

Mr. Walters: And to say that it's not political? I'm sorry, that's naive.

Mr. Weaver: Why would a grad student at U of I given a set of parameters, why would they do something that would end up being called gerrymandering? I mean, I'm hearing you.

Mr. Walters: Anybody that's involved in politics, sir, can do anything they want. It's very simple. Politics is a played in everything.

Mr. Goggin: There are a couple of alternate maps that have been drawn up. At least one of them was on the website briefly Friday and then taken down. When is that going to be put back up so we can consider these other alternatives to this map that really just isn't very popular?

Mr. Prenzler: I called Mr. Bethel this afternoon at about 4:00 and gave him permission to put up the other two. I didn't want to confuse the public with too many maps, but those are authorized to go up. Those are both drawn by county board member Chris Guy, one at 27 districts one at 29. Unfortunately, I told Mr. Bethel a little too late in the day, but I think he'll try to have those up tomorrow morning.

Ms. Ciampoli: One is, again, I'm not seeing any alternative to this map. We have a great GIS department here. I think they could adequately handle doing a mapping system since we have all the information within our county at little cost to the county. That's one. My next question. The other question to that is, what is the average salary that you have for the other counties that have decreased? What are their salary ranges for their county board members?

Mr. Prenzler: I don't have that. There is a very good study done by DuPage County in July of 2020. DuPage County, their board, they studied whether they wanted to reduce from 18. I think they decided not to and they did review. There's a very good chart on page 10. If anyone would like to google DuPage County, county board study 2020, you can find it. It's a lengthy study on page 10. They have a good chart of the counties, larger counties population, and the different salary levels of the what county board members are paid.

Ms. Ciampoli: I guess, as a citizen and a fellow county board member, to me, it is one of the biggest if you're presenting this, then I need to know what the average salaries of those counties that decreased their boards, what they increase it to, or did they maintain it the same? Again, I would call my county board members and complain one way or the other.

Mr. Prenzler: I don't have that data in front of me right now. I do know McHenry has been thinking of decreasing from 24. McHenry has a large population of about 330,000 people. Again, Rock Island has decided to reduce from 25 to 19. Montgomery has decided already to reduce from 21 to 14. Stephenson I understand, Stephenson County, it's a smaller county. I don't know of all the counties in the state but we do see a trend in that direction.

Mr. Guy: I would just add, Ms. Ciampoli, the comparable counties to Madison County that have less board members, their average salaries are anywhere from \$40,000 to \$80,000 a year. They actually have a reduced board. The taxpayers, it'd cost them anywhere from \$400,000 to \$600,000 more a year than Madison County currently does. So, it's not apples to apples, and we can't compare reduced boards with other counties. I would like to commend our GIS Department and I.T. They've been phenomenal working with them. In the beginning as Government Relations Chairman, I was speaking with Chairman Prenzler about hiring consultants who would work with the committee and the board on the map. I chose to end up saving the taxpayers money, and work with the board and leaders in the community to draft some proposals. And I say this, this county board has taken a serious, very serious hard look at reduction. We've had countless hours with members of the board and community leaders, and Government Relations tomorrow, we'll be discussing 27 seat map and a 29 seat map. But right now, we're just going to be having discussions, we're not going to ram this through. It's going to be transparent. We'll have more hearings on the mapmaking process. But it's not apples to apples comparing a reduction here versus the counties in the suburbs. I'll also add, I want to hear from the public on this. So far, I've only heard from two former Madison County employees and two of their friends, and then a few community leaders in the county. And I think it's unfortunate, the public, often, they're busy right now, they're at work, they have kids at home, kids have ball games, church, and school, and the public should pay attention to local government. All forms of local government are very important. It affects our daily lives. And again, I think most members haven't really heard from too many people about this. And so, it's good, all of you here today at the hearing that have spoke up. I appreciate all of you for your input today, and taking some time out of your day to provide input. Thank you, Chairman.

Mr. Madison: I wanted to answer Mr. Schiebel's earlier comment a little bit, because I can speak to him on this from experience after being on the Zoning Committee for over six years now. I understand where he's coming from completely, but when, as the chair of the Zoning Committee, and my area being almost entirely unincorporated area and not any towns, villages, or cities to speak of not of any size. It's much more helpful if you're on the Zoning Committee, and you're in unincorporated area, because we're dealing with unincorporated area issues at the Zoning Committees. If I had part of Bethalto or Alton or something like that in my district, they have their own zoning departments. So at that point, I end up covering less area where I might be less busy. But I'm involved in the Zoning Committee in all my meetings anyway. And any one of us can be. In fact, I'm going to request from the Zoning Department that a member that has something being applied for in their district for a special use permit or variance be notified so they know that issues on there if they decide they want to come and listen. On my other point, am I understanding that you were going to submit two maps to us, but you decided to bring one because you were afraid to come to the county board with the other one?

Mr. Prenzler: No, cost wise, they would not do two maps for less than \$5,000.

Mr. Madison: I've got to say, Chris Guy has to be majorly commended here. He's got a part time position as a county board member, and he's put in well over 100 hours, lots of discussion with individual members of the whole board, and he has brought forth not one, but two maps, to try to get votes to get everybody on the same page, which is very difficult to do. Oftentimes, even on zoning issues and other things like that. So, I commend Chris and all the time and effort that he's put into this for the county, board members, and for the taxpayers. I greatly appreciate it, Chris, thanks.

Mr. Prenzler: I would like to just interject why I went to University of Illinois, Springfield. I told you I spoke with a couple of different universities. My goal was to not introduce any of my own bias into this map. In fact, my goal was to, as I mentioned in the contract, the contract said several times, no bias, except for the minority districts not to dilute; and then to go directly to state law; and again, districts run as closely as possible in population; and then next compact; and then next, follow township and municipal lines; and then last precinct lines. Obviously, the county board can decide what to do with this map but it was my goal, to do the opposite of gerrymandering, to not interject any of my own bias, but as to adhere as close closely as possible to Illinois law.

Mr. Carruthers: Any others members on the phone?

Mr. Guy: I'd just like to add to earlier when we're talking about the subject of pay raises. I've always ran on no pay raises for elected officials. We, just last just last year, voted for no pay raises for the incoming board members that were just recently elected here in 2020. I had conversations with most board members on this map, and I don't think any of us want to give county board members a pay raise to those who are elected in 2022. And also, I will add, Mr. Chairman, I know this is tough work. I do believe you were trying to do what you feel is right and went to U of I to present us a map. You have started this discussion on reductions. I think if you didn't, if you did not bring up this map, we probably would not be talking about reduction at this time. Am I a fan of the way it's drawn? No, I'm not. But I also think your hands weren't on it. You're just trying to offer us another alternative to this discussion, and that's what I'm trying to do as Government Relations chairman too, is to get the board involved, get the public involved, and see where we want to go from here. So thank you.

Mr. Foster: With the added costs that have been brought up for this with the decreasing of the county board, and all, let's be honest, there's going to be added cost if you expect less people to do more work. That's only a realistic approach to looking at this. Having said that, you get into areas of is this going to involve pension costs? Is this going to involve health benefit costs? I see no cost savings in reducing this

board to this level. But, my question to you with having all this information at hand, can you vote for this map as of today?

Mr. Prenzler: First of all, I would not vote. I'm not voting on this map. I'm not a county board member so I would not be voting. But yes, I believe it's a good map.

Mr. Foster: So having said that you don't have a voting position in this, my suspicion is, this whole map situation, I understand that comes up every 10 years, alright, but my suspicion is still suspect. This all is about headlines. This is a very, very talented board, and this board has come together like I've never seen before. And every piece of mail I get concerning this map, there's fundraising attachments with that. My suspect is, this has nothing to do with the map. We have no interest in reducing the size of the board, as we should not have any interest in reducing the size of the board. I think this is a chase of a headline, and I cannot support this. That's all I have to say.

Mr. Prenzler: Mr. Foster, when I ran for reelection in 2020, I made a promise. I knew, and others knew, everyone knew that the new chairman would present a map and I promised a fair map and I'm keeping my promise.

Mr. Foster: I can very much appreciate you completing what you told people you were going to do, which reinforces my suspicion. This is nothing more than a campaign promises coming to fruition.

Mr. Madison: It's not just that. The chairman admitted to me that he hadn't even looked at it before he presented it to the board. It turns the district's on their heads. It completely turns it on their head and they'll never get enough votes because you're kicking out five people, who if they each get two or three supporters, we're done. That votes over, you're not going to get that vote. You probably knew that, but completely, you didn't look at it in terms of is it fair for the competition in each precinct? And that's a must, that you have to do when you draw a new map, and that wasn't even one of the parameters.

Ms. Harriss: It seems like if we step back in the big picture of this, it is also potentially a question of, I would pose this question to you, do you want to have more people with less power as a taxpayer or would you rather have less people with more power?

Mr. Prenzler: I think what I'd do is as I look at many different issues in the county, everyday, I tell this to the employees here, number one, obey the law, number two, benchmark. And as I benchmark around the state of Illinois, I respect the various opinions here because we do see some counties, we see Sangamon, we see LaSalle, we see St Clair at 29. We also see others, DuPage at 18. We see various other numbers so every county can see this differently. I don't think there's any one right answer, but as I have benchmarked the state of Illinois, I do see also a trend. I do respect Mr. Madison's ideas and Mr. Walters promptings that we could consolidate our committees, we do have some ideas. This is for the county board to consider. I did my best to take political bias out of this and to adhere as closely to Illinois State law as possible. We do see other counties of similar size with far less county board members, again, I don't have the compensation figures. I would refer everyone to the DuPage County study, because all that information is right there, I just don't have that at hand right now.

Ms. Harriss: I appreciate that, and actually, I have that study in front of me, just to circle back to that. Cook County, you're saying has 17 members, they're at a \$1.4 million dollar budget. DuPage, has 18 members, less than us, \$937,000 budget. Lake County, 21 members, less than us, \$903,000 budget. We are not requesting anywhere close to these, those are just the first few. Will County, which I think you referenced, 26 members, \$598,000 budget. We are talking apples to oranges here. So, that's why I think if we get away from all of that and take a look at the high level. The question here would be would you prefer more people with less power or less people with more power?

Mr. Prenzler: I think that if the county board decided to reduce the size from 29 to 25, 25 would still be on the high range of the counties in the state of Illinois.

Ms. Harriss: That's not what I asked.

Mr. Holliday: I still have not heard a legitimate reason as why you want to reduce the board.

Mr. Prenzler: I think that, again, I looked at benchmarking, and I think you can learn from other counties that are very well run in Illinois. And I think that's one reason by itself, we have many good counties in Illinois, and they do it with fewer county board members. As I've said before, we could look at consolidating our committees.

Mr. Holliday: Again, I think with our 29 members, we're doing an excellent job and a lot of counties would like to be where Madison County is right now.

Mr. Eaker: I just have one favor? That we don't go spending money on any more maps until we decide how many districts we're actually going to have. I mean, I'm just kind of looking at that like \$4500 just gone for no real reason right now. Let's figure out how many we're going to have first and then go from there.

Mr. Prenzler: I do want to say and I think most county board members know this is that there is precedent for a professor drawing a map. In 2001, the county board passed a map that was challenged in court for being gerrymandered. The federal court did agree that it was, and it went to an SIUE professor at that point. So there is precedent for that.

Mr. Babcock: First of all, thank you for presenting the map to us and appreciate *inaudible* we can all appreciate the fact that you did that. I wanted to piggyback on what Erica said, our 29 members are actually getting \$435,000 a year. If you measure that, among all the ones that she mentioned, even though they have less people, and representing maybe a lot more people in their districts, you're getting us at a much more efficient rate at 25 members that handle about 9400 individuals, which is the City of Bethalto quite frankly. So, no disrespect to the map, but unfortunately, the parameters that were set inside the map that you have at 25, I just don't understand them, quite frankly, because I looked at that map and I tried to make some sense of it. And quite frankly, I could see where it's possible that there is some gerrymandering going on that is bias towards maybe one way that we don't quite see. So my point is, is even though I can understand a reduction that you're talking about, Chairman, because I think essentially, in the long run a reduction sounds good to the public. And I understand why it would, but I did the math on the 60,000. The 60,000, quite frankly, is about 60 cents per household savings per year. So, if we're looking at it with four individuals removed from the county board, the people are getting a 60 cents per household savings. I'm not sure that that's as good as when the board came together and had a reduction in their spending of over a million dollars just two years ago. I think we need to see more creative ways on how we can reduce government spending. Maybe spending more time on that in the Finance Committee's and other committees that we can look at. Because it seems like the federal government spending is out of control, whereas ours, not so much. And so I saw this board come together, all 29 members vote on a budget that actually reduced the budget by about a million five, if I'm not mistaken, just a couple years ago, and I wasn't on the board at that time. But I appreciate what these individuals have done. So in all respect to what you've done, I appreciate it. I also appreciate Chris Guy doing what he did, above and beyond at this point. And the idea of gerrymandering, I'm having a hard time getting my head around it because it's always regardless of who draws up that map. To me, whatever the parameters that they put into the computer system to come up with a consensus of data on that gerrymandering. I think there is some gerrymandering going on, but it might be some that we can't even see but as I look at the map, I see some of that. I mean, maybe I'm just being biased.

I apologize if I'm being biased like I actually do see some gerrymandering. Again, I can't prove it, because somebody else came up with the data to put into the computer system that popped out this map. So anyway, that being said, no disrespect to you. I cannot in good conscience vote on your map, but I appreciate what you did.

Mr. Madison: Last one. I wanted to thank Mike Babcock for his comment. Because this is a public meeting, I don't know who's listening, but I want everybody to realize that this 29 member county board has saved millions and millions of dollars over the last several years, give or take. We just saved a lot of money on the energy contract two years ago; we just renewed that. We haven't raised the tax levy in four years, maybe more, I'd have to go back and look that far. We have also cut expenses so we didn't have to raise the levy every budget year. We have been very fiscally responsible and I think the board is working very well together and doing a good job.

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Mr. Holliday moved, seconded by Mr. Meyer to recess this session of the Madison County Board meeting until May 19, 2021. **MOTION CARRIED.**

ATTEST: Debbie Ming-Mendoza
County Clerk

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