



ALASKA REDISTRICTING BOARD

Alaska Redistricting Board Meeting
April 4, 2022 | 8:00 a.m.
Anchorage Legislative Information Office and Zoom Virtual Meeting
1500 West Benson Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99503

The Alaska Redistricting Board met on April 4, 2022. Present participants are below:

John Binkley
Melanie Bahnke
Bethany Marcum
Budd Simpson
Nicole Borromeo
Peter Torkelson
Matt Singer

Chair of the Board
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member
Board Member
Executive Director
Legal Counsel

Agenda

- Call to Order & Establish Quorum
- Adoption of Agenda
- Adoption of Minutes

Call to Order

Chairman Binkley called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. With all board members present, a quorum was established.

Adoption of Agenda

Member Borromeo moved to approve the agenda as presented. Member Simpson seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Public Testimony

There were no members of the public present to provide a testimony.

Discussion: Process

- Member Simpson informed the Board that the judge who now has control over the review process pertaining to the 2021 Redistricting Plan, has given the Alaska Redistricting Board until April 15th, 2022, to provide a status report. They are anticipating that the status report includes a new senate pairing. The goal is to finish the process before April 15th.
- Member Borromeo said that moving forward, she would like to see the Board dealing with Cantwell today, which she believes can be wrapped up in 15 minutes. Additionally, she would like to introduce alternative pairings for Anchorage today, have them sit out today and



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tomorrow, and then have the Board act on those final pairings on Wednesday, April 6, 2022.

- Member Borromeo added that the public has had five months to consider the Senate hearings to follow the redistricting litigation. There was a slew of public testimony that came in over the weekend and the message has been loud and clear that they'd like to get this done as soon as possible from the Board's position and not to delay the matters anymore.
- Member Simpson concurs with the suggestion to address Cantwell today. They have clear directive from the court on that. In response to Member Borromeo's timeline for this process, Member Simpson recommended that giving others a bit more time to weigh in on the matter before scheduling a vote. Member Borromeo responded that she is willing to push this out as far as Thursday, April 7, 2022. She respectfully requested that if there are going to be alternative pairings from this Board, that they put them on the record.
- Member Bahnke added that during the meeting on Saturday, April 2, the resounding message was to move quickly and not belabor this process further; most of the verbal and written testimony suggested adopting certain Senate pairings. She added that the courts have been very specific and instructed them to fix only two specific parts of their proclamation: the Cantwell House District and Senate District K. Member Bahnke is open to introducing the Senate pairings today to get them on the record but emphasized moving things along.
- Matt Singer, the Board's Legal Counsel, encouraged Board members follow the basic steps that are in Section 10 of the Constitution. Regarding Cantwell, Mr. Singer suggested that if a Board member has a proposal for what District 36 and District 30 should look like, after a correction, the Board could adopt that as a proposed solution today. From there, they can post it to the website to give the public an opportunity to comment on it, have a public hearing on that, and then at the next Board meeting adopt that solution as the final decision. He agrees with Member Bahnke's comments that it's likely to be uncontroversial, but every now and again there may be a small error and they would benefit from public testimony. Next steps include seeing if there's an agreement to adopt a revised District 36 and District 30, posting this information to the website, and inviting public comments. After hearing public testimony, the Board will adopt a final solution to District 36 and District 30. These are the same steps that he encourages for the Senate District K.

Member Borromeo moved to adopt version four (V4) of the proposed solution for the remand from the court system, which would return Cantwell to the Denali Borough, with a final decision made by Wednesday, April 6, 2022. Member Simpson seconded the motion for purposes of discussion. Peter Torkelson, Executive Director, shared screenshots showing the differences between districts and their boundaries using color-coded maps.

The following is a discussion on the motion:

- Member Bahnke asked Chairman Binkley how they should address the current motion on the table. Chairman Binkley said that there is a legitimate motion on the table and following discussion, they have two options: (1) the individual who made the motion can withdraw the motion, or (2) the individual who made the motion can ask to amend the motion. Additionally, there can be an amendment from another member, or they can move to table the motion. If moving to table the motion, there is no discussion that takes place, instead the Board would immediately vote on tabling the motion.
- The Board's Legal Counsel, Matt Singer, advised members to follow the process set forth in



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Section 10, which would involve today's motion being one that adopts the current revision as a proposed correction to the proclamation plan. Then the Board can adopt proposed corrections and publish for public review. Finally, the Board would come back to adopt the final proclamation plan. Rather than adopt the correction today or adopt the correction, but vote on it Wednesday, Mr. Singer recommends adopting a proposed plan, publishing for public review, and then adopted a final plan—which is the process laid out under Section 10.

- Member Marcum requested additional time to compare the solution she worked on to what is being proposed. Additionally, she is not prepared to vote on even adopting a proposed correction until she has had a chance to review everything. Member Marcum requested the Board go at ease for ten minutes before voting on the proposed motion for her to review the changes. Chairman Binkley confirmed her request.
- Matt Singer recommended the motion includes the words "proposed correction" per Section 10 guidelines. After confirming the verbiage, the Board should publish it to the website as a "proposed correction" for public review and testimony, and then adopt a final plan.

Member Borromeo withdrew the initial motion and entertained a new motion. Member Borromeo moved to propose a correction to Section 10 that would fix Districts 36, 30, and 29, with the stipulation that action to adopt the proposed correction take place on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. Member Simpson seconded the motion.

The following is a discussion on the motion:

- This correction would return Cantwell to the Denali Borough, where it would remain within the constitutionally permitted deviations, and then all three districts would be more compact.
- Before proceeding with a vote on the motion proposed by Member Borromeo, Chairman Binkley confirmed with the Board that they will stand *at ease* until 9:00 AM so that Member Marcum can cross-check the proposed changes.

The Board reconvened at 9:00 AM. Member Simpson suggested adopting the motion for publication as a proposed solution. This gives Member Marcum and the Executive Director, Peter Torkelson, time to review the changes together, and if there are any issues, they can be reported during the meeting on Wednesday, April 6.

The Board voted as follows:

- Member Bahnke – Yes
- Member Binkley – Yes
- Member Borromeo – Yes
- Member Marcum – Yes
- Member Simpson – Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Member Borromeo moved to propose a correction to Senate District K: move the commonly termed Bahnke pairings, which are Districts 22 & 24, 20 & 21, 18 & 19, 23 & 17, 16 & 14, 13 & 12, 15 & 10, 11 & 9, with the stipulation that action to adopt the proposed correction take place on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. Member Bahnke seconded the motion.



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The following is a discussion on the motion:

- Member Bahnke noted that they received a lot of public testimony in favor of these Senate pairings. While the Board does not have to apply the same criteria to Senate pairings as they do when determining house boundaries, Member Bahnke does feel like the pairings are socio-economically integrated, compact, and contiguous. The pairings meet all the constitutional criteria. The map has been out since November 2021 and has had a chance to undergo public scrutiny. Member Bahnke requested that they vote on this on Wednesday, April 6, to move things forward and ensure the state has some certainty regarding which maps they will be voting for and that the maps are constitutional and fair.
- Member Marcum requested clarification as to whether “Wednesday” is part of the motion or if that is just a suggestion. Member Marcum will not be prepared to vote on Wednesday, April 6, but is open to adopting this as a potential correction for the purpose of discussion. She added that she has heard from multiple members of the community asking about possible pairings and what can and can’t be done. Through those conversations, it appears others are also working on pairings as Member Marcum has been. That said, she would like to see what members of the community come up with. This pairing was introduced in fall 2021, but that was before the judiciary weighed in on several changes that they required. Now that the judiciary has weighed in and their attorney has gone on record interpreting what it means, Member Marcum noted that the public may not have had enough time to incorporate the feedback into the pairings.
- Member Borromeo said that they had roughly 30 Alaskans provide testimony before their Saturday meeting. Those that weighed in on this issue emphasized two things: (1) Adopt the Senate pairings proposed by member Bahnke; and (2) Get it done promptly. Member Borromeo requested that if other Board members have plans in mind, they should put it in writing so the Board can discuss in an open forum.
- Member Bahnke explained that only yesterday, their attorney gave the interpretation of the Supreme Court ruling, which has been out since March 25th. While they could have met earlier, they decided to abide by the publicly noticed meeting dates. The Supreme Court ruled a week earlier than they had to so that Alaskans could move along with an election and have some certainty about what maps are going to be voting under. Member Bahnke suggested that Member Marcum send the Board any other maps she would like considered for discussion.
- Chairman Binkley noted two things that he took away from the Superior Court’s instruction on remand back to the Board: (1) Do not act too quickly; and (2) When you do have a plan, allow the public to engage and review the plan. He recommends giving deference to the court, since they put a deadline of April 15th for the Board to provide a status update; however, they did not say to have a final decision by April 15th. Chairman Binkley added it is important to listen to the Supreme Court to ensure they don’t rush this.
- Member Simpson noted that in review of the proclamation map and cross-checking the pairings provided by Member Bahnke, it appears the content is different. Considering this, he said it may take more time to assimilate the information.
- Matt Singer commented that some members of the public seem to be advocating for the Board to adopt eight new senate districts in Anchorage, while other members of the public suggested specifically adopting four of the eight senate districts that Member Bahnke proposed in November 2021. All said, Mr. Singer encourages as much clarity with the motion on the table



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as to how many districts Member Bahnke is proposing to change. The second suggestion is to have the Board consider picking a day when both the Board and public can share any proposed plans they have, whether that be tomorrow or Wednesday; either way, he suggested the Board select a day so that all alternatives can be fully presented.

Member Borromeo restated the motion for clarity: *Member Borromeo moved to consider a proposed correction to Section 10 of the court order, the Bahnke pairings, which are Districts 22 and 24 (Eagle River), 20 and 21 (Muldoon), 18 and 19 (Mountain View and Russian Jack), 23 and 17 (JBER, Government Hill, and part of Downtown), 16 and 14 (Turnagain and Spenard), 13 and 12 (Midtown), 15 and 10 (Bluff), and 9 (Hillside).*

The Board voted as follows:

- Member Bahnke – Yes
- Member Binkley – Yes
- Member Borromeo – Yes
- Member Marcum – Yes
- Member Simpson – Yes

The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Binkley confirmed that by Wednesday of this week, third parties will have an opportunity to submit their ideas for Senate hearings to comply with the court order. Member Borromeo supports having a public hearing on Tuesday following today's meeting to provide an opportunity for public input. The Board concurred with this, and the meeting will continue Tuesday, April 5, 2022, for ongoing public testimony pertaining to the court ruling.

Public Testimony

- Suzanne Fuschetti agreed with Member Simpson that the Board should allow more time since the judge's decision was only a few weeks ago. Susan recalled that during the Saturday testimony period, one person urged to end the process quickly. As a resident of Eagle River Valley for 40 years and testified prior that the pairing of Eagle River with East Anchorage should be approved because it has been done before. Now that the judge has taken that option off the table to finalize a plan, Ms. Fuschetti strongly urged the Board to pair Eagle River Valley with South Hillside. These districts share several socio-economic profiles regarding local roads, service areas, wildfire and wildlife issues, avalanches, and public safety concerns.
- Jamie Allard, an Eagle River resident, does not think the Bahnke plan should be adopted. She expressed her opinion that the plan is partisan in its current form, is politically unbalanced and unfair, and does not accurately represent the people of Anchorage and Eagle River. Ms. Allard suggested the Board reevaluate the timeframe to incorporate enough time and public input to produce a plan that reflects nonpartisan efforts and incorporates what constituents want.
- Denny Wells, an Anchorage resident, pointed out that the suggestion for Eagle River to have two senators is not ideal, considering there is no other place in the state with similar community size that has two House seats; also, he added it is irrational to split up Eagle River.

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Adjournment

Member Borromeo moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Bahnke seconded the motion.

The board adjourned at 9:57 a.m.