

Minutes of the Meeting of the Government Relations Committee

Meeting Date: October 21, 2021

Meeting Time: 6:00 PM

Meeting Location: Westfield City Hall Room 315

- 1) Meeting Called to Order by Chair, Rick Sullivan.

- 2) Roll Call: Councilors and Committee members Sullivan, Harris and Mello were present. Also, present City Councilors Figy and Onyski as well as City Clerk Karen Fanion. Peter Cowles, Media Systems Specialist was in the room, recording and broadcasting the meeting. No other person or entity was recording the meeting.

- 3) Karen Fanion presented the “suggested redistricting map” as produced the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Ms. Fanion explained that this map was produced based off the existing 2020 Census data. The map still shows six wards with two precincts each. There are relatively few changes from the existing districting map. Councilor Sullivan asked if any elected official was districted out from the ward they currently represent. Ms. Fanion said there were no such impacts. All three members of the committee got reassurance from the Clerk that all impacted voters, as some will change voting locations from their existing location, will be properly notified of the correct location. Ms. Fanion assured the committee there would be significant outreach and proper notice. Councilor Sullivan did relay an original question from Councilor Matthews-Kane regarding the new configuration of ward3. Ms. Fanion explained that the concern was based off an early “anticipated map” produced by the Secretary of State which had been based on an assumption that Westfield’s population would increase in the 2020 Census. That map is not relevant as we now have the certified decrease in population. Councilor Matthews-Kane was aware of the new map and was satisfied that any concerns were addressed in the new proposed map. A discussion ensued about the appeals process to the census procedures, they are clearly outlined by the Biden administration and the Census Bureau.

Motion made by Councilor Mello, seconded by Councilor Harris to accept the 2020 redistricting map as prepared by the Secretary of State’s Office and further to request that the City of Westfield appeal the Census Findings of a population decline pursuant

to the guideline as promulgated by the Biden administration and the Census Bureau.
Motion passed 3-0

- 4) Motion made by Councilor Harris and seconded by Councilor Mello to leave the issue of requiring City of Westfield Boards, Commissions, Councils and Committees be recorded in such a way as to maximize the viewers' ability to see diagrams/maps/etc. and visually identify who is speaking, captioned and promptly post online for public viewing in Committee. Discussion ensued with concerns being raised by both the City Clerk and Mr. Cowles as to storage and retention of broadcast materials, responsibility as to who physically needed to record and/or broadcast the meeting and what, if legal consequences were being created by such policy. Mr. Cowles made it clear that the equipment already is available in the meeting rooms and would just need to be activated at the beginning of each meeting. Costs did not appear to be a factor. Councilors agreed a legal opinion should be sought. Everyone agreed that access links and call-in numbers were already on all posted agendas and therefore no further action needed to occur in regard to that concern. The Committee thanked both MS Fanion and Mr. Cowles for their good work. Motion passed 3-0.

- 5) There being no other business, Councilor Harris moved adjournment at 6:42, and Councilor Mello seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0. Chair Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 6:42 PM.