

SUBJECT: INFORMING THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PROCESS TO REAPPORTION ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS BASED ON 2020 CENSUS DATA.

AGENDA OF: February 16, 2021

Assembly Action:

*Presented to the Assembly. 2-16-21 KBJ*

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION: For information only.

APPROVED BY MICHAEL BROWN, BOROUGH MANAGER: *MB*

Route To:	Department/Individual	Initials	Remarks
	Originator - P. Graham	<i>PG</i>	
	Finance Director	<i>CF</i>	
	Borough Attorney	<i>NS</i>	
	Borough Clerk	<i>JAM 2/8/21</i>	<i>KBJ</i>

ATTACHMENT(S): Fiscal Note: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO X

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

AS 29.20.060(a) states that Assembly composition and apportionment shall be consistent with the equal representation standards of the Constitution of the United States.

AS 29.20.070(b) states that not later than the first regular election that occurs after adoption of a final state redistricting plan, the Assembly shall propose and submit to the voters of the Borough one or more forms of Assembly representation.

AS 29.20.080(a) states that not later than two months after adoption of a final state redistricting plan, the Assembly shall determine if the existing apportionment of assembly districts meets state and federal standards.

In December 2010, the Assembly outlined the process for the 2011 reapportionment. The process was:

"The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly shall act as the sole entity to reapportion Borough Assembly District for the 2010 census. The assembly shall hold work sessions, special meetings and/or work as a committee of the whole

as needed in cooperation with the Clerk and other staff to reapportion Assembly Districts."

The Assembly directed the Clerk to work with a staff member from Planning and GIS to develop a reapportionment plan for the existing form of composition. Staff developed the reapportionment plan and brought it back to the Assembly for review and discussion.

After a minor adjustment, the Assembly adopted Ordinance Serial No. 11-083 providing for the Composition, Form of Representation and Apportionment of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly, and placing the Question on the ballot.

## **2021 REAPPORTIONMENT PROCESS PROPOSAL**

The Borough Clerk and Administration proposes to follow the same process as was used in 2011. The benefits of such proposal are:

- Less expensive - less staff time, and with COVID, less costs associated with meetings
- Better results - as was proven in the 2011 process, the Borough Clerk and Staff followed the required standards without political influence
- Criteria developed during the 2011 process worked well and will work for the current reapportionment.
- Some of the staff that completed the work on the 2011 Reapportionment are still here, and that knowledge will be useful in the upcoming process;
- Technology has improved enough that an online public involvement process will allow more input in the process than previously allowed.

## **REAPPORTIONMENT CRITERIA**

The establishment of criteria, intended to guide how the districts are created, is vital to a smooth and transparent process. Staff will use the criteria below, which was the starting point for the 2011 process:

- 1) Form of Composition: Seven members each of whom will be elected from a district by the voters of the district;
- 2) Existing districts should be used as a foundation to create new districts;
- 3) Keep existing Assembly members within their current districts, if possible;
- 4) Districts should be designed to avoid future under-representation;
- 5) Preserve all municipal boundaries;
- 6) Preserve communities of common interest, where possible;
- 7) Create compact districts;
- 8) Follow natural features or major transportation links;

9) Districts should meet the state requirement to be within 5% plus or minus (total 10% deviation) of the target population.

Using the above criteria, staff will draft a reapportionment plan and bring to the Assembly for review.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

The public will have access to information on the reapportionment process with the launch of a website. Our citizens will find general information on what reapportionment is, along with some general information on state redistricting. The website will share the apportionment plan drafts, and when it is completed, will include the final plan that will placed on the ballot for the voters. This site will provide a timeline for the process along with links to the State Statutes and Borough code on redistricting and reapportionment along with links to other sources of information.