

AUGUSTA-RICHMOND COUNTY
RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AD HOC REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE MEETING

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PUBLIC HEARING

Before Julie M. Brackett, CVR-M, CCR

At Belair K-8 School
3925 Harper Franklin Avenue, Augusta, Georgia
On October 18, 2021, Commencing at 6:08 p.m.

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APPEARANCES

Board of Elections: Ms. Lynn Bailey

County Commissioners: Comm. Sean Frantom
Comm. Ben Hasan

School Board Members: Mr. Charlie Hannah
Ms. Venus Cain

Legislative Delegation: Rep. Wayne Howard
Rep. Brian Prince
Rep. Mark Newton
Sen. Harold Jones

Also Present: Mr. Pete Fletcher
Board of Education

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COURT REPORTER'S NOTES

An interruptions, trailing off, and incomplete sentences are represented by -- in the body of the transcript.

Brackets [] are for clarification in the body of the transcript.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 BELAIR K-8 SCHOOL

3 [Pursuant to O.C.G.A. 9-11-28(d), Julie M. Brackett
4 has no contract with any of the parties or their counsel.
5 The court reporter's charges are the usual and customary
6 charges for services within the industry and are available
7 upon request by either party, with no financial or
8 services discount being given to any party named in this
9 meeting.]

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11 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: If you would like to speak
12 tonight please sign up in the back, you will have two
13 minutes to speak, and if any of the Committee members have
14 any questions about what you said they might come back
15 with any clarifications on your statements. Also in the
16 back is a full packet here that you want to get, lots of
17 great information for you to take, kind of where we're
18 going, the website, that sort of thing. So make sure you
19 get the packet at the back of the meeting room as well.
20 Thank you. Also just to let you know we will have some
21 people calling in so there will be some phone calls
22 tonight that we will take if any one calls in and I will
23 answer it.

24 I am Commissioner Sean Frantom and I have the honor
25 of chairing the redistricting committee this year. I want

1 to take a moment to thank the School Board for all they
2 did to make this meeting happen today. Y'all give them a
3 round of applause, the School Board, please thank you.
4 All the IT departments of Augusta Richmond County, amazing
5 job to make sure that we are live streaming right now so
6 you can go back and watch this meeting if you would like.

7 We're here because every 10 years we do a Census, and
8 we have to make sure that the districts are as close as
9 possible in size and comply with the Voting Rights Act of
10 1965. As stated in your packet you will see the guiding
11 principles that this Committee will uphold to, and we'll
12 go through over the next two months as we set a goal of
13 December 15th to complete this process.

14 I am joined by 11 Committee members from the School
15 Board, the local delegation, and the Commissioners. They
16 will introduce their selves in just a second. Just so you
17 know, the map that you have seen in the media, online,
18 you'll see tonight when Ms. Bailey comes up and explains a
19 little bit more about it. It's a draft. It's a starting
20 point. It is not a done-deal. This draft was done by an
21 individual out of the redistricting office in Atlanta with
22 no local input or understanding of our community. This
23 Committee has agreed that over the next two weeks we'll go
24 to four different locations to hear from you, and that no
25 changes have been discussed or anything will happen until

1 after we hear from you. And with that I would like now to
2 introduce the Committee. I'll start to my left if they
3 would introduce themselves.

4 SENATOR JONES: State Senator Harold Jones out --
5 represents District 22 from Augusta. State Senator Harold
6 Jones represents District 22.

7 MR. MASON: Good afternoon, and welcome. My name is
8 Commissioner Alvin Mason I represent the Augusta Richmond
9 County Commission out of District 4.

10 MS. CAIN: I'm Venus Cain. I'm co-chair, and I am
11 District 9 in Richmond County School Board.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Commissioner Sean Frantom,
13 District 7.

14 MR. HANNAH: Trustee Charlie Hannah, Richmond County
15 School Board District 2.

16 MR. HASAN: Ben Hasan, Commissioner, District 6.

17 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: We're also not joined tonight.
18 We have Commissioner Francine Scott, not with us tonight,
19 yet. She's on the way. Ms. Helen Minchew from the School
20 Board. Mr. Jimmy Atkins from the School Board.

21 Representative Brian Prince, I think is coming tonight.
22 Representative Mark Newton, and Representative Wayne
23 Howard. So, again, that makes up the Committee. And
24 Wayne is coming in the door. I also want to thank Dr.
25 Bradshaw. He still here? Dr. Bradshaw, thank you for all

1 you do for our school and for being here. Also, Attorney
2 Wayne Brown, for being here. And Mr. Pete Fletcher
3 attorney for being here. All of these individuals have
4 met. This will be our fourth time that we've been
5 together, and really put in the work to make this best we
6 could be here tonight. Thank you, Representative Howard
7 for being here.

8 All right. I'm going to turn it over to the Director
9 of Board of Elections, Ms. Lynn Bailey, for a presentation
10 to give y'all some really good information.

11 MS. BAILEY: Hello, how's everybody doing? So good
12 turn out tonight, thank you guys for coming out.

13 My name is Lynn Bailey, and I am the elections
14 director here in Richmond County. And I think likely
15 because I have been doing this job since the age of
16 mankind I have been through a couple of redistricting
17 efforts before, and so I will find our office's name
18 associated with the redistricting effort for several
19 reasons. But the main one is because I have done this a
20 couple of times so we're glad to share whatever
21 information we have with you all.

22 So we're going to go through -- I think actually I
23 will walk over to this side. So I've done a little power
24 point and I'm going to do my best to give y'all the kind
25 of down and dirty about why we are here. What it is we're

1 doing. Why we're doing it, give you some insight into how
2 our area has changed, and the job that these guys --
3 ladies and gentlemen are charged with over the next couple
4 of months.

5 So just as an overview we've got several different
6 things going on. We had the Census, reapportionment and
7 redistricting. Well, we know that since -- we'll you may
8 not, I didn't. But since 1790 the US Constitution has
9 required that the Census be taken so that's mandated by
10 the US Constitution and we do that every 10 years, of
11 course.

12 One of the reasons that that's done is so that the
13 Congressional districts can be reapportioned. And so the
14 old civic's lesson for the day, we have 435 Congressional
15 Districts in our country. So after the Census is taken
16 the state's are looked at individually, what their
17 population is and the Congressional districts are assigned
18 accordingly. So we've all hear in this round of
19 redistricting, we've heard Georgia stayed the same, right,
20 we kept 14 Congressional people in the state of Georgia.
21 The state of Texas has added a few in, other state's like
22 in Pennsylvania and Michigan have lost Congressional
23 districts. And the reason is because of population shifts
24 have been such that some states have lost the average
25 number of citizens, while others have gained. And so we

1 have reapportioned the Congressional districts to
2 accommodate for that. Another thing we do, is what we're
3 doing here locally, which is redistricting. And so with
4 redistricting you'll take the new population figures lay
5 them or compare them to the districts that you have in
6 place right now, and look to see where your growth is and
7 where your areas of decline is. And you folks live in the
8 hot bed out here, right. I don't have to tell anybody in
9 this room the growth that you've seen in this area. And
10 we know when we look at the districts with the new
11 population numbers applied that District 3 has seen about
12 a 25% growth, as opposed to, areas like District 1 that's
13 seen a 1% growth or like District 2 that's seen a 2%
14 decline in population. So it's going to vary from
15 district to district, but this go around District 3, in
16 many ways, will be driving the whole redistricting process
17 because our goal is to make the districts of the same
18 size. And the only way to do that is to move voters from
19 District 3 into other districts. It's the only way to go
20 the size down because right now this area is 5,400 people
21 over populated so we have to make those adjustments.

22 Okay. So how do we even get started with the
23 redistricting? Well, we know that the district lines for
24 Congress, State Senate, and State House are all drawn by
25 members of the General Assembly. They will go into a

1 special session on November 3rd to start hammering away at
2 that process, likewise, the local jurisdictions will be
3 redistricting their areas as well. Going back 2000 our
4 local community here recognized the value of involving and
5 having at the same table members of the Commission, and
6 the School Board, and the Legislative delegation all
7 talking about redistricting together because we were
8 desirous of having out districts mirror each other. So
9 your School Board district is the same as your Commission
10 district. There are many, many counties in Georgia that
11 don't have that set up. There are many, many counties in
12 Georgia who have completely separate lines. But here in
13 Augusta-Richmond County we are fortunate that our
14 districts mirror each other and we want it to continue to
15 mirror each other. And so we have everyone involved in
16 the process, working together, and that's how we came
17 about with this Committee. This will be the third year
18 that it's been -- or the third go around that it's been
19 done this way and it's worked well. As our Chair Frantom
20 stated this Committee has 12 members, four from each of
21 the groups that we talked about; four Commissioners, four
22 members of the Board of Education, and four from the
23 Legislative delegation. Together the Committee first
24 started first started its work by developing guiding
25 principles. And what those guiding principles do are

1 outline the process, and specify the things that are
2 important to the Committee as it goes about its work. For
3 instance, one of the guiding principles is to not split
4 neighborhoods where you can help it, or to not split
5 voting precincts where you can help it, and keeping
6 communities of interest together where you can. All those
7 things were important to this group and important enough
8 that they set it out in the guiding principles. Now, in
9 addition to that we have the legal requirements that you
10 can't do anything about. You've got to get the districts
11 to the same size. And so it is a tricky -- it's a tricky
12 thing. You know, if you move 5,000 people from here, and
13 they go to here, then this one is going to be over
14 populated, and you're going to have to shift further, and
15 move things around until you can get them of the same
16 size.

17 The new plan that's developed this Committee is a
18 recommending body. They will come up with a plan that
19 they believe is good for our community. They will
20 recommend that plan to the full body of the Augusta
21 Commission and the Board of Education for their approval.
22 Once it's adopted by those groups it will then go to the
23 General Assembly for it to be written into law. The plan
24 that they come up with is what we will have for the next
25 10 years until we redistrict again.

1 These are the members of the Committee. Chair
2 Frantom has introduced everyone, but these are the members
3 there. And by the way, let me just say that we're going
4 to talk about the website in just a minute, but all this
5 -- this presentation will be on our website along with a
6 lot of other information that you will find helpful if you
7 are interested in this process.

8 I'm going to continue with the guiding principles for
9 just another minute because they are the backbone kind of
10 the group's work. The guiding principles combine legal
11 requirements and also other criteria that this Committee
12 felt was best for the -- our overall community. Again,
13 it's set high as a priority in their guiding principles is
14 their desire to keep neighborhoods together, keep
15 subdivisions together, keep communities of interest
16 together, and to the extent that those can be accomplished
17 we -- the Committee hopes to have that happen. There will
18 be circumstances under which it won't be possible though
19 because the real guiding principles or the mandate is to
20 get those districts to be approximately the same size.

21 These are the guiding principles. I won't read them
22 all to you. I hope everyone picked up a handout on the
23 back of the table. It list all the guiding principles
24 that were adopted by this Committee. They should be --
25 maybe it's the second sheet in your handout. So be sure

1 and look at those and it gives you a sense of what this
2 Committee's all about, and what their goals and hopes are
3 for these redrawn districts. You know, we want to -- the
4 Committee wants to protect the core of the district. And
5 they want to keep neighborhoods together, and do the
6 things that they've stated in their guiding principles to
7 the extent that they can. This continues on talking about
8 the guiding principles, you want to keep the districts
9 contiguous, meaning that there -- that a district isn't
10 chopped up so you have half of a district over here
11 separated by another district. They need to be
12 continuous. The Committee wants to make sure that the
13 districts are compact so they're not just these sprawling,
14 weird-looking things on the map. We want to try and keep
15 them compact as much as we can. And, again, keeping in
16 mind communities of interest, and neighborhoods, and
17 voting precincts as we go.

18 Okay. The Ad Hoc Committee: so how does this
19 process work? Well, we have a plan right now -- excuse
20 me. We have a draft right now. And as the Chair said the
21 draft district map is the jumping off point for this
22 Committee. What that draft district map does, and it is
23 around the room here. I hope you'll take a look at it.
24 If you want a closer look please go to the website and
25 check it out. The draft district maps have the -- you can

1 see -- when you look at the -- there are areas that have
2 hash marks on them and those show the differences between
3 existing districts and the -- and this district draft.
4 The Committee's job now is to take input, like we're doing
5 tonight, and through our citizens portal and to use their
6 expertise and those of map-drawing experts to help them
7 achieve that goal of getting the districts to the same
8 size.

9 The public hearings -- this is the first one tonight.
10 There will be three more following in different parts of
11 the city. Ultimately this Committee will make a
12 recommendation to the Commission and to the Board of
13 Education, just as we've talked about a moment ago.
14 Here's your schedule of the public hearings, again, that's
15 all in the handout. The public hearings they're all set
16 to begin at 6:00. There will be a sign up for those who
17 want to speak in person. There's also for those who want
18 to speak virtually there's a call-in number for that. We
19 are going to limit the comments tonight, and at other
20 public hearings to two minutes. Anyone who has something
21 that they would like to say about this process now would
22 be your time to do it.

23 I talked a couple of times tonight about the
24 redistricting website so the information is in that packet
25 in the back about the website. At that website, you can

1 look at this map and you can enlarge it, and enlarge it,
2 and enlarge it until you get down to your particular house
3 if you want to to see how you're effected by
4 redistricting. You can put in a particular address if you
5 want to and it will take you immediately kind of like
6 Google maps would do. It will take you immediately to
7 that place so you can see how it was effected. There are
8 different layers in there that you can put down if you
9 wanted to see is my neighborhood set to be split according
10 to this draft district. You can go down and you can lay
11 down all the neighborhoods in the city and look at them.
12 And there is a list of neighborhoods that are currently
13 split from the last redistricting, and other redistricting
14 efforts before that. And -- neighborhoods that were split
15 with this new draft plan. Also out there are the
16 transcripts and recordings from previous meetings if
17 you're interested in looking at that. So lots of
18 information out on the website. The next full Committee
19 meeting is set for November the 10th, that will be
20 following the public hearings. And we're going to take a
21 little pause to have an election on November 2nd, and then
22 we're going to pick right up on November 10th with some
23 more redistricting meetings. And, Mr. Chair, that's all I
24 have, thank you very much.

25 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Can we give a round of

1 applause for Ms. Bailey. Thank you for all you've done.
2 Ms. Bailey will be retiring at the end of the year. She's
3 been with us many years, and just been amazing, amazing
4 for this community, and the entire state to be quite frank
5 with you. All right.

6 This is the participation point of the meeting
7 tonight. If you have not had a chance to sign up at the
8 back of the room we're going to give you one last
9 opportunity, and you're going to get two minutes to kind
10 of state what you'd like us to know as a Committee. If
11 any one on the Committee feels that they want come clarity
12 they might come back and ask you clarity or question on
13 your comments. Again, two minutes, we also have the
14 ability for people that are watching virtually to sign up
15 via phone number. Is the phone number -- is the phone
16 number -- the phone number is on the handout. I'd like to
17 state it for the record. All right. If you are watching
18 it on YouTube 706-826-1304, 706-826-1304, if you'd like to
19 call in and give us a statement here to the Committee.
20 All right.

21 We're going to go ahead and get started with our
22 first speaker. When you come -- you're going to this
23 podium in front of me. You're going to state your name
24 and address for the record, and you will have two minutes
25 to speak. There will be a clock above me. At two minutes

1 it will start and we'll stick to those strict two-minute
2 guidelines as well.

3 Our first speaker will a Leatrice Choeley, Leatrice
4 Choeley, okay. We'll go on. Our next speaker Marian
5 Reddick. Our next one is Paul Timmons, Paul Timmons,
6 okay. Edward Boyd. Would you like to come to the podium,
7 sir, for two minutes and say -- okay. Thank you for being
8 here. Mark Hardy.

9 MR. HARDY: I'm good. I signed up just in case I had
10 any questions. But I am still trying to figure this whole
11 thing out because this is my first time attending any of
12 these meetings.

13 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Absolutely.

14 MR. HARDY: I'm a resident --

15 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Why don't you just come
16 forward and state just so people can hear you. We
17 appreciate you being here. Please state your name and
18 address for the record.

19 MR. HARDY: Yes, my name is Mark Hardy. And I am a
20 resident here on Harper Franklin. And I was -- it was
21 brought to my attention that we were doing some stuff in
22 here that may effect our neighborhood. So this is my
23 first time attending a meeting so I put my name on the
24 list just in case I had any questions. But I don't know
25 how all this -- this -- your meeting is set. But right

1 now I don't have any questions.

2 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Okay. Well, thank you for
3 being here, sir.

4 MR. HARDY: Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: If you have questions again,
6 all of the information is on the website, and you also can
7 email anybody on the Committee members our emails are also
8 on the website as well. As well, we do have that portal
9 that Ms. Bailey mentioned to get any form of information.
10 Is there anyone in attendance that would like to say any
11 form of statement that did not sign up that would like to
12 come up forward to the podium? Yes, ma'am, please come to
13 the podium, state your name, and address for the record.
14 Your name and address please.

15 MS. IRWIN: Yes, I am Laura Irwin [phonetic]. I live
16 on Millege Road in the Summerville neighborhood. We're a
17 historic district and a part of District 3 for some time.
18 From some of the previous redistricting our neighborhood
19 has already started to be divided, which has not
20 benefitted our neighborhood. The current proposal will
21 further chop up Summerville. As a neighborhood we share
22 common issues and desires for the place we live. We feel
23 it is in the best interest of our neighborhood to remain
24 intact in District 3. Therefore, we strongly oppose
25 further division of the Summerville neighborhood in

1 keeping with the guiding principles of this Committee.
2 Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Thank you, ma'am. Is there
4 anyone else that would like to speak here tonight that did
5 not sign up or we accidentally missed you. Please state
6 your name and address for the record, ma'am.

7 MS. GETTER: Patricia Getter and I am at 4102 Elders
8 Drive.

9 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: A little bit closer to the
10 mic, ma'am.

11 MS. GETTER: Patricia Getter and I am at 4102 Elders
12 Drive. My question -- I just have a question. Why do we
13 have to split up -- why do you have to split up our
14 district? I mean it -- to me -- to my understanding, I've
15 been hearing different rumors about the purpose that we
16 would be in a disadvantage for the school system, for some
17 of our children. They would have to be going to another
18 district. Is that true or what is the purpose? Is it
19 going to benefit us or are we going to be at a
20 disadvantage if we start messing with our district.

21 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Well, first, again, it's a
22 draft. We're just starting. Understand that the numbers
23 the way we try make the districts, as we stated in the
24 past, like as balanced as possible based on numbers that
25 -- based on the Census numbers. As far as effected

1 schools -- would you like to speak --

2 MS. CAIN: As far as I know it will not effect the
3 schools. No, again, it's to redraw your districts but not
4 to effect the schools. If one districts grows so much
5 it's out of balance so you have to balance. It's kind of
6 like you do with your checkbook basically. You've got so
7 much money and you subtract each time. So since District
8 3 the growth is right here, in this area, which has made
9 the surrounding areas -- basically, it's kind of like out
10 of balance. District 1 and District 2 has lost so we keep
11 everybody equal and on the same footage you have to adjust
12 and move people. Many of us that are sitting here already
13 are in split districts. My district was split the last 10
14 years ago. And I mean I have two Commissioners, two
15 School Board members, two State representatives. It's not
16 a good place to be in, but we have to abide by the law,
17 and we have to balance it out. No one is going in to make
18 anyone's life miserable or to try to change common goals.
19 I think we all sitting here have the same goals. We want
20 clean neighborhoods, good schools, law-abiding folks. We
21 all want that so we are doing our best to balance it
22 according to the law. But your school district will
23 remain the same. That won't -- I shouldn't say that won't
24 change. It won't change under this plan. We may have to
25 redistrict because this area grows but not because of

1 this.

2 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Okay.

3 MS. GETTER: Because we do live in a premier area
4 with the growth of Fort Gordon expanding, the intelligence
5 community, so this a hot area. It would be remiss to
6 ignore the fact that this area is going to continue to be
7 ridiculous. I mean it's to the point where I can't even
8 get out of my driveway. Any strip of land they're trying
9 to put something there. In my opinion, it is a
10 disadvantage to us. We don't want our community -- we
11 don't want the value of our property to go down. We love
12 where we live. However, if you -- if it does come to
13 fruition that you're going to have to redistrict us
14 because like I said it's just no way around it eventually
15 it's going to have to be considered because everyone's
16 trying to move right here outside of Gate 1, get to Fort
17 Gordon real fast. What my concerns is is the
18 redistricting causing a disadvantage to where we're going
19 to be District 2. I mean you split us up -- I mean I
20 don't have a problem -- my mother lives in south Augusta.
21 I have family that live all over Augusta, but do I want to
22 be redistrict to south Augusta? No, I don't, that's why I
23 moved over to this area. Nothing wrong with south Augusta
24 because they're expanding as well. So would this
25 Committee be considering our concerns as part -- the fact

1 that we purchased these properties, where we live, in this
2 specific area because we like the area. But it looks like
3 we're going to eventually have to consider being
4 redistrict to another area that we might not want to be
5 in. I mean is this Committee prepared to consider our
6 concerns?

7 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Well, I mean that's why we are
8 here tonight. I mean we want to hear the feedback from
9 the community not just on this side District 3. There are
10 District 4 concerns, side zones -- in the Summerville area
11 we've already heard from someone, you know. So we're
12 going to do our best, but as we stated 10 years ago not
13 all neighborhoods were together. Do we think that all
14 neighborhoods are going to be able to be back together,
15 probably not. It's just the way the numbers work. We are
16 going to do our best and that's why it's so important to
17 hear feedback, like yourself. Does the Committee have any
18 other comments or -- do you have any comments, Ms. Bailey?

19 MS. BAILEY: I just want to clarify one thing. If
20 I'm hearing -- when you started your discussion, and it
21 sounded to me like you were talking about worrying about
22 how your school zones were going to work out, and those
23 kinds of things. Valid concerns, absolutely.

24 MS. GETTER: Everything --

25 MS. BAILEY: But just to clarify what this group is

1 doing is not rezoning schools that's a totally separate
2 thing. This is rezoning for your elected officials. So
3 totally different districts there in case there was some
4 misunderstanding. But, again, the fact remains as I say
5 anyone who lives out here you know how it's grown. And
6 District 3 as a whole -- and there are other parts of
7 District 3 that's grown, but not like this area. It's
8 unprecedented really. It's the hot spot. And so, you
9 know, again, it goes back to the Constitution and the goal
10 of this Committee is have the districts of equal size.
11 And the reason that it is important is because, frankly,
12 it's not fair to you all to live in a district that's 25%
13 over populated. Your representative, your Commissioner
14 who's in the back there, Ms. McKnight, she has more people
15 to represent than do the Commissioners that are here on
16 the Committee members. And so we need to find a balance
17 there so it's equal, so that you have fair representation
18 in your area. Now, we can do these things -- you don't go
19 to the middle of a district and carve out you kind of go
20 around the edges to move and shift so you have as least
21 disruption as you can. And that's certainly -- I'm not
22 sure what this Committee would be looking in doing, but
23 this exact kind of feedback is exactly what this group is
24 looking for.

25 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Thank you.

1 MS. GETTER: Well, again, I just want to make sure --
2 my concern, like I said, you have to do what you have to
3 do as far as keeping us from being over capacitated
4 because of the popularity of District 3. But as the same
5 token we do not want -- just to be redistrict for
6 anything. I don't want my property going down. In
7 Columbia County and other counties they put -- they made
8 sure that they take under consideration the residents in
9 those counties. I know that has nothing -- no place in
10 this meeting. But I pay high taxes and I want to make
11 sure that my property values stay up. And I understand
12 that you don't want us to be over capacitated, but I don't
13 want us to just be shifted anywhere. If you want to shift
14 us in a district that's equally comparable to our property
15 values then, hey, so be it. If it's going to let our
16 property go up instead on go down I'm all for it. But the
17 problem I have is if you want to shift us to ghetto, and
18 then our properties going to the toilet that's a problem,
19 that's my concern.

20 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: And we appreciate your
21 comments, thank you.

22 Is there anyone else that would like to -- come on
23 forward, sir. And if yo would state your name and address
24 for the record please.

25 MS. HOPPER: Yes, good evening. My name is Porschia

1 Hopper [phonetic], 4143 Elders Drive. And I was looking
2 back over my notes and I saw where you stated that
3 District 3 has 25% growth that's driving this process, and
4 that we have 5,400 people over populated. Well, my
5 question is: when did this process start of having a 25%
6 growth, and then why is our district over populated? Why
7 was this even allowed if you know that you have to have so
8 many people in the district to maintain that district?

9 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yeah. So the Census is every
10 10 years. And so when we got the Census data back this
11 was the data that was come forward that, you know, it was
12 25% growth, 54% [sic], you know, more people. Other
13 districts are up other districts down and, frankly, that's
14 the reason we do what we do every 10 years. We keep it
15 the same for 10 years, the Census comes out and then we
16 redistrict everybody.

17 MS. HOPPER: Okay. Is it up to our government to
18 make sure that we have what is required for a district to
19 maintain that district?

20 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Absolutely. As a Commissioner
21 I can state that, you know, we're looking to -- a new fire
22 station is going to be built out here because we see the
23 growth that, you know, it's -- it's on SPLOST. It's in
24 the works now. It's continual growth infrastructure wise
25 as well. So we are committed to everybody out here to

1 make sure that you get your services.

2 MS. HOPPER: Okay. So 2021 if this district
3 continues to grow then we will be redistricting again --

4 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: In 10 years. There is a
5 chance that this Committee could make the number a little
6 bit less in this district because we know that the
7 population growth is just going to continue. But that
8 will be discussions that we will have, you know, after we
9 have the four public hearings.

10 MS. HOPPER: Well, I'll have to agree with Ms.
11 Getter. I want our district to stay like it is.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yeah. You shouldn't worry
13 about your district, the services, the people -- I mean
14 people are going to continue to want to live here. The
15 services are going to be there, the property values are
16 going to continue to stay high. Frankly, we're having so
17 much growth there's a new school that's, you know, going
18 to have to be built out here because of the population
19 growth. So the services and what all we do to help you
20 it's going to continue.

21 MS. HOPPER: You know, I agree with that, but in the
22 book of Proverbs it says a false balance is an abomination
23 to the Lord, and this is a false balance. However, we
24 want all the districts to be maintained --

25 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Absolutely.

1 MS. HOPPER: -- and to held in account for the people
2 to be able to live successfully, happily, like District 3
3 and all the others.

4 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yes, ma'am. Thank you for
5 coming forward.

6 MR. JONES: Good evening, everyone. My name is
7 Richard Jones. I live 2316 Tudor Drive.

8 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: If you can talk a little bit
9 closer to the mic, sir, where I can hear you, sir.
10 Perfect.

11 MR. JONES: I have a question: will pre-clearance
12 that was eliminated by the US Supreme Court be in effect
13 if -- by the state when you guys -- once you finish
14 redrawing of the map will it take pre-clearance from the
15 state to approve it? And also, will the state legislative
16 districts be changed any to effect those who represent us
17 from a legislative prospective?

18 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Ms. Bailey?

19 MS. BAILEY: Good evening, Mr. Jones.

20 MR. JONES: Good evening.

21 MS. BAILEY: Good to see you again.

22 MR. JONES: You know it.

23 MS. BAILEY: So you ask about pre-clearance. We know
24 that pre-clearance was a part of the Voting Rights Act
25 that was provider for in section 5 that was done away with

1 I guess in 2013 with a case out of Alabama. So prior to
2 that time anything we did in the state of Georgia and all
3 other covered states whether it was a voter registration
4 drive on any given Saturday or anything that happened
5 involved elections or register to vote had to be pre-
6 cleared -- given permission by the Department of Justice
7 before we could move forward with it. So pre-clearance in
8 that sense is no longer a part of the process. But as we
9 go through this process when we finish our map here the
10 next step for it -- before it gets to the General Assembly
11 and some of you all from the General Assembly may want to
12 jump in with this too. But before it goes to the General
13 Assembly it has to go through the redistricting office in
14 Atlanta to make sure that it meets all the legal
15 requirements including insuring that it doesn't
16 discriminate against any ethnic group or have any other
17 impact like that with the plan. So that's part of the
18 normal process. So it will go through this recommending
19 body to the local governing authorities, that being the
20 whole Commission, and the whole School Board to vote it up
21 or down. From there it goes to the redistricting office
22 in Atlanta to go through their checks and balances to make
23 sure that it is legal, meets the requirements of the law.
24 And from there it goes to the General Assembly for final
25 enactment so that's the process. And I hope that answers

1 your question.

2 MR. JONES: Thank you. One other comment I would
3 like to make to everyone that's here. Call those folks up
4 in Washington, reference the John Lewis Voting Rights
5 bill. Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: All right. Is there anyone
7 else that would like to come forward? And please state
8 your name and address for the record and speak into the
9 mic, thank you.

10 MS. BRYANT [phonetic]: Hi, my name is Carissa
11 Bryant. I'm a residence of Belair Hill Estates. This is
12 my first time attending a meeting like this so if I am
13 interpreting this right this is basically trying to
14 balance out the votes throughout the districts and then I
15 need -- I'm trying to understand these numbers with the
16 deviation? Is that like the people that did not report to
17 the Census or we -- are we counting the people that did
18 not report to the Census as far as this --

19 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: No. You had to have filled
20 out the Census to be a part of those and those are just
21 numbers based on the Census count. Now, there's a
22 deviation that we try to stick to. I think -- again, I'm
23 speaking four to five percent try to get as low as two
24 that we try to stick to on there as well.

25 MS. BRYANT: Okay. So basically the percentage we're

1 working on is what we know, and we don't know -- and we're
2 not sure what we haven't been reporting.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: We only know what the Census
4 when people -- that's why the Census is so important for
5 two reasons. Number one, this, but also federal funding.
6 Like if you didn't fill out the Census you're not part of
7 that count, and that's why it's so important that people
8 do it.

9 MS. BRYANT: All right. I understand.

10 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Did you have comment, Ms.
11 Bailey?

12 MS. BAILEY: I did. Just one about the deviation.
13 So we know that the total population of Richmond County
14 was reported in right at 206,000, that was the total. We
15 know we have eight different commission and school board
16 districts in Richmond County. So we take that 206,000,
17 which is out total population, and divide it by eight, and
18 that gives us an ideal size for each district. This is
19 how many people need to be in this district. What the
20 deviation shows is from the ideal district size how much
21 over or under populated the districts are compared to the
22 ideal district size. Does that clear it up just a little
23 bit -- okay.

24 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Thank you. Thank you for
25 being here tonight. Please state your name and address

1 for the record.

2 MR. HARDY: Mark Hardy, 4084 Harper Franklin Avenue.
3 With the information that you gave the young lady from
4 what I'm understanding my question to you all are is there
5 any kind of pre-planning done as far as redistricting
6 concern other than the information that you gave out about
7 the 10-year Census? So in other words, if I want to put
8 up a 500 person apartment building right down the street
9 that's going to determine what happens in the district,
10 right, because --

11 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Ten years later.

12 MR. HARDY: Right. So with that stuff happening
13 throughout the year there's no kind of pre-planning being
14 done as far as how things are handled in the district.

15 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: No. As I stated this
16 Committee could agree to make the number a little bit less
17 than the other districts just because we anticipate
18 growth. Now, we have to still stick to the guiding
19 principles and the percentage and things, but that is one
20 thing that this Committee could agree to do because we
21 obviously know that District 3 is going to continue to
22 grow.

23 MR. HARDY: All right.

24 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Is there anyone else that has
25 any -- would like to come forward? All right, sir. Last

1 one. Please state your name and address for the record.

2 MR. ASH [phonetic]: William Ash. Elsberry Drive
3 [phonetic]. Just a question in reference to -- the
4 redistricting is done based upon numbers. How does that
5 equate to resources provided to the districts? Because if
6 you got 25,000 people in District 2 and you got 25,000
7 people -- 25,000 what 700 or something in District 3,
8 District 3 has no market and other services like they do
9 in those other districts. But you're dividing us based on
10 numbers. I'm curious about how that plays into resources
11 that there's a equality across Augusta.

12 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Well, from a Commission
13 standpoint we don't sit here and say, you know, each
14 districts gets X amount unless there's some kind of
15 funding that was a specific person where we divide which
16 hasn't really happened. But that's why it's important
17 that your representation, you know, leads the charge to
18 bring resources and bring things where it is needed. As I
19 stated before, the fire department has been pushed by the
20 Commissioner and, frankly, we're all on board to make sure
21 that a fire department gets here quicker -- as quick as
22 possible. But as far as resources go, you know, I mean
23 from the engineering side, as we see things that we need
24 to fix or increase, I mean, we do it as a Commission. We
25 don't sit there and say each district gets X amount

1 because might get more one year, some might -- you don't
2 really know that.

3 MR. ASH: But -- I'm sorry. But you know in funding
4 because this is a part of funding, comes into the numbers.
5 So you know in funding directing and you know what the
6 resources are. So from the funding and directing
7 resources it doesn't have to do with redistricting, but it
8 has to happening more -- other --

9 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Again, I mean if any of the
10 Commissioners want to speak. I mean it's basically based
11 on the needs of the community, you know. Like District 2
12 where population is down we're spending money to -- on --
13 to destroy homes and revitalize that area. So I mean we
14 don't sit there and really look at like each district and
15 say they're going to get this, they're going to this,
16 that's just not the way it works on the Commission. It's
17 six votes to get anything done, and we look at the needs
18 of the community. Frankly, when the community is talking
19 and there's things that we know that we need improve upon
20 we do. With the TF funding, you know, some of the traffic
21 issues we're trying to, you know, do some of that. And
22 major corridor areas where we see that there's a increase
23 happening.

24 MR. ASH: Okay, that's fine. But I'll just leave
25 this little nugget. There are \$500 leaving this district

1 going to Columbia County because this district doesn't
2 have the things.

3 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: All right. Anyone else before
4 we wrap it up? State your name again.

5 MS. GETTER: Patricia Getter, 4102 Elders Drive. My
6 question is what do you do when you have the Census, the
7 different addresses in Richmond County that fill out the
8 Census and some people don't fill out the Census. As a
9 matter of fact, I was delayed in filling out the Census.
10 And they came back at me again and, hey, we need to turn
11 this information in. So if you all are looking at the
12 population growth in District 3 and you're --

13 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Just -- I'll restate it if you
14 want to save it and I'll restate it.

15 MS. GETTER: I noticed that we have a lot of growth
16 over here because we were honest enough to complete the
17 Census so that you can get a determination on the
18 population in our district. Maybe some of those districts
19 such as your district maybe they didn't fill out the
20 Census, all the people in that district. What you do when
21 individuals in the district don't fill out the Census, the
22 information that they need to fill out for you all to get
23 an accurate count of how many people are in the district
24 so that you have to redistrict. What do you do to recoup
25 those that are missing because you know from these

1 addresses that there's some people living at these
2 different addresses, but you didn't get a Census from that
3 particular address. What can you do when you're missing
4 accurate numbers do make an accurate assessment in
5 redistricting the counties or the district? What do you
6 do to make sure it's fair and balanced? You're talking
7 about fair and balance numbers in different districts, but
8 just because District 3 participates in their -- and they
9 are accurate enough to fill out the Census so y'all could
10 get accurate account.

11 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: The numbers are the numbers.
12 There's nothing we can do to recoup numbers. We have to
13 go based on the numbers that were provided through the
14 Census. I mean that's -- that's the way it is
15 unfortunately.

16 MS. GETTER: So in other words, it may not be an
17 accurate -- an accurate assessment. In other words, it
18 may be not be an accurate assessment to redistrict -- it
19 may not be an accurate assessment to say this particular
20 district needs to be split up because you're seeing the
21 numbers higher in this district but it -- in this district
22 is actually ten thousand people didn't fill out the
23 Census, that makes their numbers lower and then there's no
24 need for you all to split that district up. So it just
25 looks like we're the one that's the largest --

1 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yes, sir. We actually have
2 someone here from the Census who's going to speak.

3 MR. PAGE: My name is Oliver Page. And I was a
4 Census numerator. Went knocking from door to door to
5 door. There were some house that I could hear the people
6 inside. I could see them, and they would not come to the
7 door. I held my hand up, Census. I held my badge up
8 Census. And I went to go away, leave a note, a week later
9 go back to the same house. They were inside the house.
10 Their car was parked outside. I went to some house and
11 people coming out of the house and I asked do you live
12 here, and said, no, but they do live there. So if they
13 chose not to be counted how can we then -- and now want to
14 count them for the sake of redistricting. It was on the
15 news. We gave out pieces of paper. You have to be
16 counted. I'm not asking trivial questions. Everything
17 was taken down on devices. We didn't see the information,
18 we went away. And sometimes we went back four or five
19 times to the same house. It was an occupied house. So
20 why then are people saying that the numbers are wrong.
21 People chose not to be counted. It was TV. It was on the
22 radio. And I will say that certain parts of town -- there
23 were more people that chose not to be counted than other
24 parts of town because I was able to numerate that in some
25 affluent parts of Augusta, and I went to their ring

1 doorbell. They weren't in the house. I rang the
2 doorbell, but they were far away. But in other parts of
3 town there were in the house. I saw the curtains move,
4 and I was standing outside with my bag and they would not
5 come to the door so what do I do?

6 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: We appreciate that. Thank
7 you.

8 MR. BOYD: Edward Boyd, 4604 Crested Butte Road. I
9 get -- this question may be in the wrong forum for this
10 question. My major concern with the rezoning I know it's
11 going to happen regardless. My major question is I've
12 been living in this district for going on 11 years now,
13 since I moved here. And the -- all the really growth that
14 I see is the school, the Circle K that was built. But
15 like the gentleman stated earlier there's plenty of
16 revenue that leaves this district that goes to Columbia
17 County. I was one of them to go shop. My major concern
18 is with the rezoning what is -- is this going to effect
19 the projected economic growth of this area? And two, is
20 the second part of the question is -- and I was aware of
21 the lobby -- for fire department, but is something else
22 being done as far as some type of police substation? I
23 know crime isn't as high as in certain areas in Augusta,
24 but over the course of the time I've been living here they
25 has been a signs there's needs to be more policing in this

1 district.

2 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yeah. I can't speak to the
3 substation. Does any Commissioner -- I can't speak to
4 that? As far as -- I mean the growth is private
5 development. I know there are things that are being --
6 but it's not -- you know, it's private development. I
7 heard restaurants looking at the area, but nothing that we
8 -- as far as I know anything that's coming. But the
9 redistricting doesn't effect that is my point. People --
10 when people put up grocery stores they're looking at
11 population size. They're looking -- you know, the income
12 to where they go in and invest in those communities. So I
13 would imagine that there would be lots of more things
14 looking to invest in this community because of the
15 population growth, that's the way economic development
16 works.

17 MR. BOYD: And that's why I asked that question.
18 With the economic growth say I want to open a business and
19 I'm looking at the area and I see yeah, the Census came
20 out and they had a tremendous growth, but it was
21 redistrict and then I look at the means of what -- the
22 median of the economic growth now because it's been
23 redistricted. I would say I don't want to do business
24 there.

25 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Yeah. Then redistricting

1 won't have any effect on that, sir. All right. Thank you
2 so much, sir.

3 MS. MATHIS: Good evening, my name is Carla Mathis,
4 and my address is 5374 Bull Street. We live along the
5 last addition of our community of Elderberry. And I -- my
6 husband and I -- we don't have children that attend this
7 school. However, I just paid my taxes and it was quite
8 high. So I just want to -- I have just a few concerns. I
9 live on the very -- Gordon Highway is my main -- I don't
10 have anyone behind me. And I heard the Frantom, right?
11 Is that your name?

12 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Sean.

13 MS. MATHIS: I'm sorry. So I was trying to make a
14 statement I heard you say about services. We see a lot of
15 accidents back here, especially off of Gordon Highway
16 because I live -- I don't have any neighbors behind me.
17 And I timed it two accidents it took 20 minutes for any
18 type of rescue, police or fire department, to come and
19 there was a very serious accident behind me where the guy
20 was in the ditch, and I had to basically yell to him to
21 see if he was okay. My husband and I had to call 911 at
22 least three times because of the accidents that we have
23 back here, and I timed it every time. Now, I'm originally
24 from Florida, and we moved here -- we've been here since
25 2015. I've never had to go to many places to buy -- get

1 my groceries. Thank God, when we moved here I can just go
2 to the Base, but sometimes I don't want to go to the Base.
3 So I have to go all the way to Columbia County to spend my
4 money in another county that I pay taxes in Richmond
5 County for. So what I'm saying -- my concern is I know
6 that the rezoning has to take place. I don't have a
7 problem with that. I just want to make sure that you
8 guys, whoever is going take over or work side by side with
9 our -- with the person that we have now is that you fight
10 for us because I don't know because this is my first
11 meeting. But I'm almost -- I think almost we pay more
12 money in taxes because I don't have a kid here at the
13 school so my taxes is higher than it's ever been in my
14 whole Naval career. So I'm just saying please understand
15 our concerns. We do love our neighborhood. Like I said
16 the kids don't have a place to play, don't have a park.
17 We don't have sidewalks. We're active in our community,
18 but we can't even walk on the sidewalk in our neighborhood
19 because they're saying, well, because of the zone or
20 whatever you can't do this so a lot of things that I'm
21 used to in a different state is like well, I pay the same
22 amount of money why can't I get those services so. Just
23 asking to just to please be as active and considering as
24 possible whomever is going to assist with the rezoning
25 that you take everything into consideration because I

1 don't want to have to drive -- I mean when I lived in
2 Florida I could walk to my Publix and I don't -- I have to
3 drive to another county to get my groceries if I don't
4 want to go to the Base. Sometimes they just don't have
5 the stuff that I need, but I still have to drive at least
6 20 minutes to go get my groceries.

7 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Okay.

8 MS. MATHIS: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER FRANTOM: Thank you for your comments.
10 All right.

11 I want to thank everyone for coming out. Again, if
12 you have any other public comments you can go to the
13 portal. You'll also see some frequently asked questions,
14 information will be guided -- that will be on there pretty
15 soon. I want to take this moment one last time to thank
16 the School Board in hosting us, the IT department for
17 making this all happen as well. And our next meeting,
18 again, will be on Wednesday at Diamond Lakes Elementary,
19 and just want to thank everybody for coming out, and we
20 will see you soon. Thank you.

21 [The hearing concluded at 7:00 p.m.]

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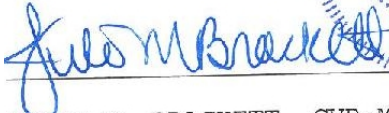
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I further certify that I am not kin or counsel to the parties in the case, am not in the regular employ of counsel or said parties, nor am I otherwise interested in the result of said case.

This the 15th day of November, 2021.




JULIE M. BRACKETT, CVR-M, CCR

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