



Virginia Redistricting Commission

Budget and Finance Subcommittee

May 19, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

Electronic Meeting

<https://virginiaredistricting.org>

The Budget and Finance Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) of the Virginia Redistricting Commission (the Commission) met virtually with Mr. Sean Kumar, co-chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with opening remarks from Mr. Kumar. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#).

Discussion about Expenditure Categories

Sean Kumar, Co-chair, Budget and Finance Subcommittee, Virginia Redistricting Commission

Mr. Kumar led a discussion among the Subcommittee members regarding a proposed work plan developed by staff. The work plan lists various expenditure categories for the Subcommittee to address or make additions to.

- Ms. Mackenzie Babichenko asked for clarity regarding the purpose of the different consultants identified in the work plan. Mr. Amigo Wade and Mr. Brooks Braun provided additional information concerning the different responsibilities of each consultant. They noted that the consultants included in the work plan were derived from a review of the approaches other independent redistricting commissions were taking. Mr. Wade indicated that the budget worksheet was intended for discussion purposes only.
- Senator George Barker emphasized the importance of hiring a Racial Bloc Analyst, noting that all redistricting plan maps created by the Commission should be defensible in court.
- Delegate Marcus Simon added that the Subcommittee should consider how other citizen commissions have organized their budgets.
- Senator Stephen Newman noted that the Subcommittee needs to understand the capabilities of the Division of Legislative Services (DLS) staff. Mr. Braun explained that DLS staff can provide guidance based on historical information while also providing administrative support.

The Subcommittee then discussed whether it should consider recommending the hiring of two attorneys or law firms to provide legal counsel to the Commission.

- Senator Newman suggested contacting the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to determine the extent of legal counsel that the OAG can provide to the Commission.

¹ **Subcommittee Members Present:** Marvin Gilliam, co-chair, Sean Kumar, co-chair, Mackenzie Babichenko, Greta Harris, Senator George L. Barker, Senator Stephen D. Newman, Delegate Margaret B. Ransone, Delegate Marcus B. Simon

Subcommittee Members Absent: None

Other Commission Members Present: James Abrenio, Rick Harrell

- Senator Barker indicated that in a previous informal conversation with the Attorney General it was relayed to him that it would be highly inappropriate for the OAG to assist the Commission in the capacity of general legal counsel.
- Ms. Babichenko asked staff to research the estimated costs for hiring a single attorney or law firm as well as the costs for hiring one counsel versus two sets of counsel. In addition, staff was requested to research the costs spent on legal services by the Democratic and Republican caucuses during the 2011 redistricting cycle. Senator Barker offered to obtain the information for the Senate Democratic Caucus while Senator Newman indicated that he would seek out the costs for the Republican Caucus.
- Senator Newman requested staff to develop a draft Request for Proposals for the Subcommittee to review at its next meeting.

The Subcommittee proceeded to discuss generally the pros and cons of the Commission drawing its own redistricting lines versus hiring a consultant. The Subcommittee, however, did not reach final resolution on this point.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Commission will take place on May 24, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting of the Subcommittee will be on May 25, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

For more information, see the [Commission's website](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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