

District Realignment Meeting, 1/7/21

Minutes

Attendees: Barrett Mohrmann, Chris Sherman, Dale Simpson, Ryan Thompson, Lisa Murray, Carla Mings, Ken Heintz, Roger Hottinger, Jeff Moe, Chris Miller, Deanna Biros, Lois Griffin, Jeff Gill, Ron Lime, Chip Herr, Phillip Freeman, Scott Sampson,

- Chris Sherman opened the meeting.
- Chris Sherman: “As a reminder, we have seven more scheduled if we need them. I’ve called this meeting to order.”
- Dale Simpson led the Pledge of Allegiance, the Scout Oath, and Scout Law.
- “Ron took on the role of mapping all of the units on a council map.”
- “We asked each group to provide a presentation on their work to date. We’ll use that to establish a list of actionable items for our next meeting. Most of the work that we’ve done over the past several weeks would have been over the holidays.
- “I’m still waiting on information. I’ve sent out a survey of sorts to all of the district commissioners and am waiting on information back from them.”
- “Still working through my list of contacts with the district chairs. Primarily, open discussions on four primary areas. Where they’re finding their strengths and weaknesses. How they view their interactions with professional staff. Basically, that’s how those calls are going along. To no surprise, the volunteers that fill out those committees and membership are challenges. That’s what I have for the moment.”
- “Is there anything I can do from the commissioner side to help you get feedback.”
- “I need to give the commissioners times to share that with their staff. If I do feel I need help, I’ll reach out to you.”
- “As we go through these, keep in mind that looking at each set of metrics will be the opportunity and expectation to compliment some of these as we align the districts differently from what they are now. If we’re looking at a particular geography, if one has a set of strengths in a certain set of metrics and one doesn’t, we might possibly look at that as a good combination.”
- “So, what I have here is a bunch of numbers. It’s a little mind-boggling. How I got this set of data was going to the state of Ohio’s website, pulled out enrollment count by building, and then aligned them to our districts. District volunteers, I was just able to send out a message to membership chairs. I had them send me a training report because I don’t want to include merit badge counselors. Total available youth at the cub scout age, K-5 grades, actuals and summed those numbers there. I tried to put those numbers on graph. Honestly, I eliminated the exploring area. We have 112 Scouts and 10 units. I combined Scoutreach. That’s just some of the information. Interesting to me, how some of these districts are very unbalanced. Arrowhead has a lot of opportunity in the younger grades. Darby Creek has a much bigger opportunity with the older youth. The number of units

don't diverge that much. You can see the registered Scouts. Venturers are another value we might want to eliminate from our reporting. I think what we're really going to be looking at is youth at the Cub Scout and Scouts BSA age. I did go to the department of education and pull the school district maps with our council. And, you'd be surprised, how many schools there are called Heritage Elementary. I went to Kentucky and tried to pull comparable information. I was a little challenged in picking out what school districts in Lawrence Ohio made up this piece of the pie."

- "There are some conventions with the adjacent council. It's a squirrely thing."
- "That's what I've been able to pull together. We might want to better represent this on a map. Do we want to combine Buckeye? Would you like to eliminate Scoutreach?"
- "Scoutreach probably isn't going to be a contributing factor to this conversation. I think we'll mostly be looking at traditional Scouting."
- "Several different Scout districts have Columbus City Schools. That we really need to look at by building."
- "Are there any volunteer healthy units within Columbus schools or are they all Scoutreach?"
- "I think it might be helpful just to leave that data on the sheet, just to be inclusive."
- "We're just going to staff it differently, so I would agree."
- "Lois, I know we have the information on total available youth and membership. Does anyone see any value in looking at percentage market served?"
- "Ultimately that's one of the metrics we work on. They used to push for an 11% penetration in each of the available markets. The most recent data I looked at put us under 3%. Our market density numbers are...we had 15 months to recruit young ladies before we were kicked back out of schools. That's something that's analyzed on a pretty consistent basis."
- "Any value in looking at some of those numbers split by gender?"
- "We could never find any info on gender in the school data. I don't think it will become material for what we're trying to do."
- "On the state of Ohio report, I have students with disabilities, student's econ dis, black, white, Latino, Native American, there are other values. I just summed up enrollment. I do have a male/female split."
- "One of the things we had said was looking at gender, ethnic, social economic diversity. Is there value in trying to look at that in any more detail? Is that going to drive decisions we're making right now?"
- "I thought I'll just keep all of these. I found them for Ohio. There might be a couple we want to pull out. I don't know if evaluating every single one will get us far."
- "Any other questions or comments for membership?"
- "I just want to throw in that exhaustive analysis will be exhausting. I don't think trends are going to help us, but if there's a district that was three time as big..."
- "Are you going to put that information on the google drive? Can you just dump it into a file under membership?"
- "Yes, I can do that?"

- “Let’s move on to geography and infrastructure.”
- “I came up with three categories: rural districts...”
- “I kind of grouped are counties like that and what are the issues for those issues. We came up with long drive times obviously effect people’s abilities and interests in different things. If it’s a once a year camporee and they have to drive one hour, that’s one thing. Throughout the council, we have generally good roads. In the winter, obviously winter can come in. There is some high-speed internet in rural areas. Another one that Carla wrote down was that we need to be conscious of when long drives happen. It may not be bad on a Saturday morning, but not a Thursday night. Currently, those areas are experiencing a higher level of employment. In the metro, we can have traffic issues in the city. Everywhere in our council, we can have people who need financial assistance. I think we covered all of that stuff.”
- “Let’s move on to fundraising production, history, and potential.”
- “We are still pulling ourselves together organizationally. ___ and I have a lot of stuff in our stockings. ____, if you can put your contact info in the chat. I went ahead once I got to the bottom of the stocking and asked Susan Emerson for some figures. I think color is helpful. Susan and I aren’t on the technology part but the spreadsheet on the left side is 2019, 2020 FOS. Interestingly, popcorn trends to track with FOS. The color code red is the area we get the highest FOS out of. If you don’t have a color, it’s under \$7,500 a year in FOS. This shows us where the fuel is. Buckeye, Delaware, Licking is the brightest red. You can see we have some serious concentration in a couple of zones of FOS production. There’s 2019 FOS and you can just look down the chart. We’ve taken some hits. Some of that was better than I feared it might be but definitely a decrease. We don’t want to lose what we have.”
- “The numbers you have right now are gross values, totals. Is there some value in looking at the average fundraising production per member?”
- “I think if we’re starting to carve out counties different than we are, we might. I think it’s a pretty solid visualization of where our opportunities have been and currently are.”
- “So, we went through and came up with categories that follow the pillars of how districts operate. I’m just going to walk through those. We also did a quick glance at geographical issues. The district is making sure Cub recruiting is happening. We have a good inventory of what’s going on with Cub recruiting. This is a phone call or an email but driving things out and the logistics. Doing Cub talks in school, who is going to be available during the day. In a lesser function, helping Webelos identify troop information. We put registration issues in here. We also came up with an IT one. Finance, we just talked about friends of scouting and popcorn. Popcorn can kind of go both ways. Training, getting units to come to trainings and get trained. It’s evolved quite a bit in ten years. We’re trying to let new leaders what training is and where it’s available. There’s a function where we’re publicizing our advanced training. They may never go to a training until they decide to go to Greenbar. We often especially in relation to journey to excellence, the advancement team is making sure units are logging their advancements. Camping, obviously encouraged units to go camping, summer camps, especially council camps. In terms of activities, some of the districts are putting out merit badge days and events. Camporees

and day camps are the core things in this group. Here in unit service, obviously, chartering is fresh in our minds. The unit health assessment is core function that will need to continue, especially as we come out of Covid. We really need to become that first line of assistance. At some point, there needs to be a first line of assistance that units call. It's a very important function, having someone so familiar to the unit. Charter organization issues...parent or leader issues...going to a high venture base. We came up with some stuff outside the pyramid. Materials, things supplied by the Scout shop. We also have stuff that we get from the council. The last thing is the roundtable function. It's an outward communication effort. The secondary but almost as important function is that you can share best practices. Those were the columns that we came up with. One thing in general across all markets is we fight with overscheduled kids and overscheduled parents. Thanks again to _____ and _____. We worked on this a couple days before Christmas. Down the road, if you guys think of something, shoot me an email."

- "Are you going to put this spreadsheet on the drive? It's very useful, thank you."
- "From the unit level, I think we're looking at Ron's group to answer that. A conversation that I have all the time is the best use of a DE's time. Allowing them better, more organized time to focus on membership. That has been consistent so far."
- "This was us in a vacuum. I think getting unit leaders to vote on such a thing would be useful. We're looking at it from our side of the customer service window."
- "Now, maybe there are two reasons to do a unit survey. I also understand the survey fatigue too. I think where we'd probably like to go now, before we go there, I'll ask RT to talk about any staff availabilities or staffing trends that we want to pull into our evaluations."
- "We have consistently been dumping as much data as possible into the google drive. We're trying to make that our one-stop shop. Those of you on the call can see I just shared a list. These are the available staffing we can put to our structures. We have nine with two managers to help oversee this. We could keep things static, but I'm not sure that's the change we're talking about here. We did get a notice of resignation on this list. One of those staff members won't be here when we kick off in April. We've had several suggestions, from keeping things where they are to be going down to one district. Keep in mind, this is a finite number of professional resources we must distribute across our new structure. There may be one vacancy as well that we're addressing. I think this is the baseline we want to keep it to."
- "I know each of the subgroups have some work they'd like to go back and continue. We'll refine those studies and presentations for next week. We need to begin some discussion around some initial thoughts of how many districts we want to support. Take some of the refined data and lay that over our discussions on number of districts and how those districts might look, coming up with the optimum groupings for the resources we have. I think it'd be good to begin that conversation this evening. Where do you think we might want to head?"
- "Have they brought forth any concerns or ideas on if we could clear the map, what we should consider?"

- “Looking at other councils around the country, there has been conversations on the number of districts and functional assignments. James and I both came from the Denver council. We didn’t know a single person district until we came here to Columbus. When you look at staff retention, you have a higher memory for relationships with two people. The support system like what we developed in Buckeye is something that appeals to them.”
- “given the staff restriction we have, if we go to a two-person model, we could do five districts. No matter what, there’s going to be less.”
- “What’s going to play into that is the density of that area. We’re going to have to weigh that back and forth.”
- “Thinking in terms of four districts but asking what the practical implications are. Is there a charter or definitive issue where a district is larger for FOS, but has two roundtables or different boards of review?”
- “I think we have the flexibility to create it.”
- “Right now, the district chair sits on the council board. If we only have four, does that only allow for four seats. I could see that being a huge issue.”
- “We’ve had differing levels of involvement from different districts. Sometimes we have people that we struggle with getting to come to the board meetings. It’s a point we need to discuss. Historically, we’ve had issues with engaging the eleven we have today.”
- “One of the things that’s potentially attractive in reducing the number of districts, we have strong volunteer leadership in each of our districts. If we have fewer districts, does that allow us to fill the key positions with effective volunteers. To _____’ point, we have stronger district committees and stronger commissioner staffs. One came from Chief Logan; the general comment was that district is already very large and covers multiple counties. The volunteers have bought into they feel they’re well-functioning. Their comment was not to change Chief Logan at all. The other comment is from a couple district volunteers is that there are big differences in the needs of heavily rural areas and those that are more suburban and urban.”
- “Do we know what the service needs are from the commissioner perspective across the three categories.”
- “I’m not sure that the answers are very much different from what ____ presented a few minutes ago. There are probably some finance differences. There are probably some travel concerns. I suspect there are some family expectations, loading issues as far as committing time to activities. I think those are probably some of the things we see. I expect Buckeye expects a very high level of district programming. I expect some of our other areas just providing a camporee...”
- “I don’t think we can underestimate the challenge of serving a rural district. It’s two to three times more effort to serve a unit down here. It’s obvious that we’re going to reduce the number of districts. We have to do that yet increase service to southern Ohio. It means getting creative with how we do it. I don’t know if we need to solve this issue to completion. To a certain extent, we might allow southern Ohio to invent how they want to be serviced. Why not just let that staff cohort decide the best way to serve that area.

It's going to be a different problem than serving Worthington. I think to that extent, creativity is number one. I know that there are poor people all over the council. These are some of the most impoverished counties in the entire country. The fundraising expectations need to be nothing compared to that of metro Columbus. Very little of it is coming from the family FOS side. We're tackling lots of problems."

- "That is one of the concerns that I have. That we don't make a decision that hurts our ability to offer the Scouting program in the more rural areas. They deserve the same Scouting opportunities as everyone else."
- "In support of some of _____ analysis. A reduction of the number of districts is going to correlate in a reduction to a number of district activities that are offered. Bringing together bigger areas down there is going to elevate the quality of programs for the units down in the south. It will increase the number of volunteers, the quality of volunteers. We won't be fighting for Klondike space."
- "I like the idea of two executives serving a district."
- "They found other opportunities in a similar nature of work for more dollars. That's an uphill climb. This is coming from somebody who worked for Scouts. That's a tough one. There are a lot of challenges to all of this."
- "I think we're going to see it play out across all three. There's a fundamental difference in program approach between urban and rural. One being more advancement driven. One being more outdoor driven."
- "There are some units that do their own thing. They do a board of review, and that's all they do with the district. I think maybe with this restructuring, is there an opportunity to bring them into the fold."
- "What is successful? What does that mean to a unit? I've really been wrestling with this for the past six months. Here's what I think. We're going to have less members. But what I'd like to do, through all of our efforts here, is take the members we have...I'd like to find a way that every kid in the program gets to have the experiences that I did. We have a lot of folks we're carrying. They're going but they're not engaged. These girls want to be engaged. Almost all of them really want to do it. We've seen that in their advancements. I want to try to be mindful in regard to the fact that we're changing. Our membership is changing too. I don't have any answers. That's some of the stuff that's in the back of my mind. I'm just hopeful we can all navigate to a solution that serves everyone best."
- "I do not see with the current status and the likely projections; I don't see us functioning well with more than four district structures. If we do two-person teams, and lower expectations, I think there's some robustness that this conversation alludes to. I'm really concerned that anything above four districts, we'll be having this conversation 12-18 months from now. I don't love it at all, but I see a four-district council. I appreciate the stuff that _____ said. I really resonate with a lot of that."
- "I think it would be helpful for us to scenarios and evaluate that. The idea of one council and some of the divisiveness we have...we're getting some of the best practices and leadership we haven't had before. We can't stick southern Ohio over here and leave them on their own."

- “Our final report had four options fully flushed out. I think that was important if we present just one thing, they’ll come back and say we didn’t think of this. To _____ point, I’m intrigued by this idea, but we can’t just come up with one or two things. We need to look at it with the lens of what units need and it will begin to take shape for us.”
- “I’d like to lose this assumption that every district functions the same and offers the same services. What do we push up at the program level, the training level, the FOS level, and say that we’re doing this at the council level? We kind of already did it with Woodbadge. You’re drawing volunteers throughout the entire council, rather than just one district. Membership needs a lot more hands at the table. Every single school district needs a membership drive. That we can’t do. There are ways to look at different services. Maybe we think about regional roundtables, and these two are virtual. Do we need a roundtable per district?”
- “We ought to have a technology component. We need to advance that and be a part of the design.”
- “Trying to do virtual and in-person simultaneous is very challenging. Maybe we do a mix and match. Maybe instead of reimbursing the miles driven by the DE, we get a Zoom account or mail chimp.”
- “What if we start off looking at two scenarios. Maybe it’s four and six and put together what the council would look like. If we get into that, then overlay the professionals, the volunteers, the fundraising, we may find the alignment should be tweaked. To _____ point, maybe we don’t want to look at four variants, something may pop to us. Does that make sense to start working on that now? Maybe we do a four, five, and a six right now.”
- “I think the membership stuff that _____ did becomes your driver at this point. What if we try slicing it four or six ways?”
- “Four and six kind of stood out as well. I agree its membership driven. Does it make sense to have the subgroups continue to refine their presentations? Lois would you want to look at a four-district model and see what we come up with?”
- Lisa, Lois, David, Phil, Roger—Team 1
- Scott, Dale, Chip, Carla—Team 2
- Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.