

District Realignment Meeting, 12/17/20

Minutes

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

- Chris Sherman opened the meeting
- Chip Herr led the pledge of allegiance, scout oath and law.
- “It’s extremely important that we get through this in the March timeframe. We’re trying to be sensitive to the other things that are going on. We really think, that combined with membership numbers, we need to have some conclusions on how we operate as a council. We’ve had some suggestions that we expand this group to have representation from all districts. In the process of getting some additional folks to be on the team. This is a bigger group than we had last time. Ultimately, it’s vetted through me and I believe it’s your right to be on this group. I reserve the right to remove people or bring people onto the team. This has to be an exercise where we pull in the right direction. I’m expecting we’re all going to behave in a way that’s conducive to our Scouting ideals. I know that sounds a little heavy at the outset, but the reality is we have a very short timeframe. You guys have an exceedingly important role in this. We cannot allow any individual district, person, or focus to derail how we get to an end product or result. I appreciate all of you being here. Chris (Sherman) is going to lead this thing and has my full faith. We appreciate him doing this on top of being the council commissioner. Thanks in advance for all of your work on this.
- “We’d like to welcome Carla and Ken who have joined us since our meeting last week. We have a lot that we’d like to accomplish this evening. We may have to at certain points stop the discussion and just move on. We’d like to make it through these discussion topics without going too late into the night.”
- Barrett gave a summary of the 12/10 meeting.
- “I think what we’d like to get into this evening is a general discussion of establish three to five metrics. If we fall a little short of three to five, choose five to seven, that’s okay. These are the metrics we’ll use with district alignment. There’s several sources of this information we should go to. In a couple of these documents are posted in the google drive now. Metrics from the last boundary study. I think RT has loaded that into the Google drive. I may ask Ron (Lime) to confirm those metrics from the boundary study.”
- “What are the current successes and challenges that we’re having. I haven’t put some bullet points together for that. I think that’s a discussion we need to have. That helps drive where we are now and where we need to go.”

- “I pulled out from the third page of the discussion list this evening some key points from the Churchill project. It may not drive everything we do, but it may impact what we do in the future. Ron, would you be willing to fill in some gaps from the last boundary study?”
- “Back then, we weren’t really put up against questions of what a district was. The things we were trying to solve was balancing youth and units in districts. That was really the main driver. The secondary was staffing the functions of the district committee and the commissioner staff. We spent a lot of time and took data from our existing units. When we went into it, we had districts with 120 units and some with less than 40 units. We had a district at the time that was only 22 units. At one point, the professional allotment to those districts was way out of whack. We tried to see if we could build consistently sized districts. The other thing was the geographical aspect. Chief Logan is two hours drive from east to west. Arrowhead or Buckeye it’s 17 minutes. We built out Darby Creek looking at 161-31, similarly 33 going out toward Lancaster.”
- “I know regarding political boundaries that group decided on school districts that drove decision making more than any other.”
- “The school districts are generally of a good size. The other thing we looked at was how successful units were at achieving their density. Density has changed since we accepted girls. We have twice as much opportunity as we did last time.”
- “Adding to that, what national lists as some factors to consider: population, leadership potential, trade patterns...The availability of high speed internet, distance and travel habits, roads and their directions, school districts with the exception of Columbus city schools and tradition. Let’s take a few minutes and discuss what we think what our successes and challenges are right now and if they should drive the metrics that we should consider.”
- “One of the obvious ones sitting out there is the declining membership.”
- “That’s part of the Churchill plan (diversity). Unit density is as high a priority as membership density. More is always better when it comes to these things.
- “It’d be nice as well to have socio-economic diversity.”
- “I would generalize that into volunteer engagement. Keeping the mind open that we’re in a momentary blip and we’re facing tough membership right now, but once the covid situation is over, how do we plan for the future?”
- “I know in Simon Kenton we’ve had some really steady years. Our data has not suggested that.”
- “I think the bankruptcy will also impact this next year. I think we expect to come back some, but it’d be overly optimistic to think we’ll go back to 2019 in just one year.”
- “There’s some overlap and maybe we can combine some of these metrics and factors. It’s fair to say that we want to relaunch Scouting in the most effective way when we come out of the lawsuits, the bankruptcy, and the pandemic...”
- “I would caution us about being overly optimistic.”
- “That’s why we’re here in the first place. I think Covid was just a huge tipping point.”
- “There’s a cost to our districts. We have a responsibility to our council and we only have so many finances to go around.”

- “Chris, I looked at the metrics on the last report, I think we would want to evaluate committee strengths and commissioner staff strengths, and that’s not a metric I saw on the last report.”
- “I have one of my associates at the council office working to reassemble that report. That is in process, our target is prior to Christmas. I’ll communicate to Chris so we can get the group up to date.”
- “There is some historical data you want to use. Each school district has projections for growth. I think we need to look at what is the right data set.”
- “When I’m working with Stacy on these things, the state of OH published enrollment data. We use that as our baseline for total available youth. That’s a big part of Stacy and I are working on.”
- “Any district that has multiple counties, those districts are going to have to operate a little differently. Ideally, one roundtable would be great. Those larger districts with more landmass will have to operate differently. We’ve kind of evolved to county operated roundtable. That’s something we’ve had to do down here.”
- “That becomes a challenge for the professional staff. They have a week of roundtable. I think we need to look at the roundtable process. Can we look at a different way to deliver it. At a holistic level, how do we operate the district to meet those needs.”
- “How much has Chief Logan or some of those districts utilized virtual roundtables over this year?”
- “We have Zoom and face to face. Highland County has had virtual from the beginning. I’m told the internet is spotty down in Jackson. We use it whenever we can. We have mixed meetings.”
- “There’s no reason why we have to have a district chair and a district executive that need to be at every roundtable.”
- “We talked last week about traditional and non-traditional district organizations. We touched on the possibility of having a structure with two professionals per district. We certainly can’t do that with the current financial resources and the number of districts we have. There are some district where we may provide two staff people, and that may help with staff coverage in those southern districts.”
- “I’d add one minor observation. Roundtables, part of the big value from those volunteer to volunteer meetings is familiarity with the council staff. As we look to embrace digital technology, it may be a way to build relationships over what we’ve experienced in recent times.”
- “Are there successes that we’re having that we don’t lose in these recommendations we make?”
- “Every district in our council has a strength and something they excel at. As a council, I would compartmentalize those successes. The bread and butter Scouters we have a very positive culture of training in the council. That’s something I hope we could expand on.”
- “You look at it compared to other councils, we’re running two wood badge courses a year. We’re in the process of adding a fourth NYLT program. Training was mentioned as

a function of the district. The training promotes that networking and enhances the program. I think that's something we've done very well."

- "I've staffed several baloo trainings. There are things that have to be face to face. We've oversaturated the market on baloo trainings. We were already advocating that we don't need two of these a year."
- "In some cases, we've seen districts reach across lines to host combined events, camporees and such."
- "Where our combined camporees, if we're at a camporee level and we're doing two a year, our district level volunteers are trying to run 20. That's too many. The district resources weren't available. I think if we look at programming, we can build some of it to a bigger level. I know an area where Tri-Creek is struggling is unit commissioners. Those Cub leaders really need some face to face mentors, and the way you met those people, was through their cub den leader training."
- "We're not in a room together, but we're engaged with each other. There's a dynamic available to have discussions about training. There's so much more benefit to doing something as a live event."
- "It sounds like training and program are some of our strengths that we want to build on. At the national level, the key points are is streamlining volunteer and staff structure. Better serve and support local councils to increase success. I think we'll see coming out of national the need to improve the sharing of council best practices. Areas and regions will likely be eliminated and replaced with smaller territories. The idea of total available youth and what local growth trends look like. What is our existing membership and what do membership staff ratios look like? What are leading indicators of successful councils? Some of those leading indicators will be membership, finance, board governance, a strategic plan. The priority has to be supporting the unit through the council. We have to respect our culture and heritage. As we make changes, let's not forget where we came from."
- "I'd like to spend a few minutes and distill down some of these points that we discussed into a handful of metrics. We'll then divide the committee into groups how can look at those metrics. We can then fold that into the process in determine district boundaries. I think there are a number of these that we can consolidate into one major bullet point."
- "One of the things that we've tried to promote is for units to contact their commissioner first and not their professional. We've done that by having better information resources through shared drives which also goes to the relevance of roundtable. Dissemination of information is a lot easier than it used to be. I just think in doing that, promoting the commissioner staff, it will make units more efficient so they can work with youth more rather than searching for information they might need."
- "Does that play into the district leadership, the ability to build strong district committees and strong commissioner teams?"
- "Would it be worth our time as a committee to talk with Key 3's and professional staff to see what activity is happening to give us a better scope and understanding of what is currently happening."

- “Would it be fair to say we might want to have a group to go out and look volunteer engagement and where it fits with district alignment.”
- “In a nutshell, you’re looking at district committee effectiveness?”
- “One of the main points we discussed last week was the allotment of volunteer resources. All of us have a general concept of district operations. If we look at what’s actually happening, boots on the ground, I think that’s a good way to aid our conversation. I think we should also include professional staff in that as well.”
- “How can we help units spend less time looking for applications and working with youth.”
- “How about the idea of looking at existing and potential membership.”
- “That goes back to the demographic study right?”
- “Yes.”
- “One of the things we talked about last time, driving distances and taking into account that it’s not as the crow flies in many cases. There are geographic boundaries.”
- “For purposes of this, we may want to look at the market analysis of 2020 and use that as a baseline.”
- “We might be able to borrow some of that information from the properties committee and the study they recently did.”
- “So I have the volunteer and professional staff, existing/potential membership, geography and infrastructure, what else?”
- “I think we would be remiss if we didn’t look at fundraising and fundraising potential at some point.”
- “It should really be all facets of potential and history. What else? Maybe we have that three to five right now.”
- “One thing I would say that it entirely possible that we stumble across things we haven’t considered. We have a good baseline. We may need to continue to engage in dialogue over the coming weeks regarding things we hadn’t thought of?”
- “We have budgeted 11 field staff professionals for 2021, that’s down from 17 at the top of the year. That’s direct unit serving professionals. If we based it on all professionals, that’s another four.”
- “I’m getting back to one of the potential models that we’re looking at is two DE’s to a district. What are the available DE’s at this point?”
- “As we engage in this conversation, our north star should always be the Scout and the Scouting unit. If that fits the staffing model, we’ve accomplished the best thing in the world.”
- “What if we were just one great big district. What roles and responsibilities do we have? How do we look at the big picture and decide exactly what we need? The pillars of membership, finance, and program will hold. But I think the rest of the district committee that was built 25 years ago can go out the window. I think we really need to challenge how we do things. The next 25 years is not going to look like the last 25 years.”
- “As we start looking at boundaries and the raw data that we need to collect, we need to challenge the norms. We need to challenge whether based on the data we have if we

change our expectations. We have those four main bullet points. There is a fifth one we want to hit and that's communications and outreach. In some ways, we have five potential breakouts."

- "I'll do communications."
- "I'll take membership."
- "I'm saying volunteer/staff professional strengths and distribution, existing and potential membership,
- "I'll take volunteer and staff along with Dale."
- David Stowe and Phillip Freeman are working membership with Lois.
- Carla Mings, Jim Bratton will work on geography.
- "Is some of that financial information in the market analysis. Is that where that data is pulled from?"
- "I'm not a fan of fundraising but I could help lay the groundwork."
- "As we're looking at volunteer professional strengths, I think we can also look at program strengths."
- "Initially, I can work with Carla. I think we'll get the routes and an inventory of some of the geographical issues. I'm not sure we're ready to start drawing maps. Maybe, looking up from a unit, what do they really expect for service from the council."
- Scott Sampson will work with Ron Lime on unit expectations for the council.
- "I think it would complement Roger's skillset to work on that. I know if I asked Jeff Gill to get involved in fundraising analysis he would do it..."
- "Lois, I appreciate your input as to where we have existing data."
- "I think what Lois said about what we do traditionally and what we need in these times is a great point."
- "You might want to add the camping documentation to the google drive as well."
- "Is the proposed territory map on your list. I think that explains it really well to people."
- "I appreciate sticking with the call and involvement. My wish is that everyone has a happy holiday though the celebrations may be different this year. Stay healthy and stay safe."