

**MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE  
MINUTES  
November 30, 2020**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Robinson – Chair, Craig McEwen - Vice Chair, Tim Buttke, Sandi Cihlar, Rick Seefeldt, Arnold Schlei, Deb Hager

**MEMBERS EXCUSSED:** Jacob Langenhahn, Dave Eckmann,

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Kurt Gibbs, Jean Maszk, Dave Mack, Amanda Ley, Jamie Alberti, Valerie Carrillo, Meg Ellefson

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

1. CALL TO ORDER

In the presence of a quorum, with the agenda being properly signed and posted, the meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinson at 3:00 p.m. via WebEx.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Robinson welcomed all that were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Valerie Carrillo commented that she has attended or listened in to all of the Task Force meeting and believed the Task Force has done a good job reviewing all the available information regarding Board Size changes from other Counties. She also thought Task force was thoughtful in their recommendation process with regards to the size of the Board. She then expressed the desire to have the County Board remain at the current 38 members.

**POLICY DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:**

1. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 22, 2020 AND NOVEMBER 12, 2020 MEETINGS;

Action: **MOTION / SECOND BY BUTTKE / MCEWEN TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 22, 2020 AND NOVEMBER 12, 2020 MEETING MINUTES. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE, NO DISSENT.**

2. REVIEW COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION AND COMMENT PERIOD;

Mack provided a summary of the 118 total comments submitted as part of the public information gathering efforts of the Task Force. Comments were received by letter, email, phone message, on the County website, and at the Public Listening Session. Of the 118 responses, 78% desired the board to keep its current 38 membership, 19% identified the desired for a 27 member board and 3% desired a 32 member board. All of the comments will be compiled and placed in the final report from the Task Force.

Action: NO ACTION TAKEN, FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

3. DISCUSS EVALUATION CRITERIA WITH THE 3 BOARD SIZE OPTIONS;

Mack began the discussion by providing the staff perspective regarding the evaluation of the 3 different board size options the Task Force identified for public comment. His rationale for the 32 member option and the 27 member option scored the same because they were both less than the current membership option of 38 members. The Task Force discussed the rationale for the scores given with the 38 members criteria scoring the highest. Hager offered her scoring using the form and even though her numbers differed, the outcome of the 38 member options ranked highest.

Action: NO ACTION TAKEN, FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

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### 4. CREATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE;

With the public comments and the evaluation criteria scoring, Robinson ask the Task Force for their thoughts on a recommendation for the County Executive Committee.

Schlei commented that the Farm Bureau Letter and Town's Letters all represent more than just one comment they represent all of their constituents. He is in favor of keeping the membership of the board at 38.

Cihlar agreed with Schlei and even though the public input was more difficult then desired, a good response was obtained. She commented that the County's Comprehensive Plan calls for good relationships with local Governments and this would be keeping those relationships in good order. She would like the board membership to remain at 38.

Buttke commented that he was on the fence in the beginning and now has moved toward keeping the board size the same. He believes there is no political appetite for making a change and a larger board can have more diverse groups represented. He would like to keep the board size at 38 members.

McEwen commented that he had no opinion in the beginning but after talking to other counties he doesn't think there is a need for a change. He believes the committees are working well and is leaning towards keeping the membership at 38.

Seefelt commented that he has talked to a lot of people lately and everyone has indicated they should leave the board size at 38. He believes the supervisors should be attending their town board meetings more and would like the board size to stay at 38.

Hager recommends the board stay at 38 members. She again asked "what are we trying to solve, what isn't working with the 38 member board?" She indicated that there is strong local government support for 38 members and that the towns are engaged with the county actions. The political will to change is not worth the political cost of doing so.

Robinson expressed his supporting the status quo. He like the fresh ideas and opinions of all those that commented. The idea of diversity was the most compelling. Having different opinions make the board better. There is not a sense of community acceptance for change and that a change will not be received well by the public. He also mentioned that with all the committees, commissions and boards we are one of the most representative boards in the country.

Gibbs commented that all of the comments are good and that downsizing doesn't improve the ability to attract new people to the board. Currently the lack of political will and the desire for more diversity on the board are opportunities and someday things may push the other way.

Maszk was able to comment and added that county and town boards are questioned at times and right now we are unique and diverse and we should keep the board at 38 members.

**Action: MOTION / SECOND BY CIHLAR / SCHLEI TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE RECOMMENDATION TO KEEP THE BOARD SIZE AT 38 MEMBERS AND PREPARE A REPORT TO PRESENT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COUNTY BOARD. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE, NO DISSENT.**

### 5. DISCUSS TASK FORCE REPORT FOR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND COUNTY BOARD;

Robinson presented a timeline for bringing a report to the Executive Committee in December and to the County Board in January. The County Board will be asked to take action on the board size at the February meeting with the rest of the year being devoted to the redistricting efforts to conclude by November 2021.

**Action: NO ACTION TAKEN, FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY**

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6. ADJOURN

Action: There being no further business to come before the members, **ROBINSON TO ADJOURNED THE MEETING OF THE MARATHON COUNTY BOARD SIZE TASK FORCE. MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE, NO DISSENT, MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 4:30 PM.**

Submitted by:  
Dave Mack, Program Manager  
Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning  
DM:  
December 9, 2020