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MICRC

04/16/21 11:00 am Meeting

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>> Good morning, everyone.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning.

>> Good morning. As the Vice Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 11:00 a.m.

This Zoom Webinar is being live streamed to YouTube at WWW.YouTube.com/MICHSOSoffice/videos.

For anyone in the public watching, who would prefer to watch via a different platform than they are currently using, please visit our social media at [redistricting MI](http://redistrictingMI) to find the link for viewing on YouTube.

Our live stream today includes closed captioning.

We have ASL interpretation available for this meeting. If you are a member of the public watching, who would like easier viewing options for ASL interpreter on your screen, please e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will provide you with additional viewing options.

Similarly, members of the public who would like to access translation services during the webinar can e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov for details on how to access language translation services available for this meeting.

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People with disabilities needing other specific accommodations should contact redistricting@Michigan.gov.

This meeting is being recorded and will be available at RedistrictingMichigan.org for viewing at a later date.

This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on the RedistrictingMichigan.org along with written public comment submissions.

And members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct the questions to Edwards III, Communications and Outreach Director for the Commission, at WoodsE3@Michigan.gov or 517-331-6309. Members of the media should have his contact information.

For purposes of the public watching and for the public record I will turn to the Department of State staff to take notes of the Commissioners present.

>> Sally: Good morning, Commissioners.

When I call your name, please unmute yourself and indicate where you are attending the meeting remotely from.

Doug Clark.

>> Doug: Present; and I'm remotely attending the meeting from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> Sally: Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita: Present; and I'm remotely attending the meeting from Detroit, Michigan.

>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

>> Anthony: Present; virtually attending from Wayne County, Michigan.

>> Sally: Brittini Kellom?

Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: Present; attending remotely from Reed City, Michigan.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Present. I'm attending from Lee County, Florida.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton?

MC Rothorn?

>> MC: Present; attending from Lansing, Michigan.

>> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.

>> Rebecca: Present; attending remotely from Wayne County, Michigan.

>> Sally: Janice Vallette.

>> Janice: Present; attending from Highland Michigan remotely.

>> Sally: Erin Wagner.

>> Erin: Present; attending remotely from Eaton County Michigan.

>> Sally: Richard Weiss.

>> Richard: Present; attending remotely from Saginaw, Michigan.

>> Sally: Dustin Witjes.

>> Dustin: Present; attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

>> Sally: There are 11 of 13 Commissioners present and a quorum.

>> Rebecca: Thank you very much, Sally.

As a reminder to the public watching, you can see the agenda at [Redistricting Michigan.org](http://RedistrictingMichigan.org).

I will now entertain a motion to approve the meeting agenda.

>> Anthony: I'll move to approve the agenda.

>> Rebecca: We have a motion. Who was the second?

>> Steve.

>> Rebecca: Steve. So motion by Commissioner Eid, seconded by Commissioner Lett.

All right. If it is all in favor, please raise your hand to so indicate.

All opposed same sign.

The motion carries.

The agenda is adopted.

We will now review and approve the meeting minutes from the last meeting. Are there any edits to the meeting minutes?

Seeing, yes.

>> Julianne: The minutes from yesterday's meeting will be provided next week for your review.

Both yesterday's meeting and today's meeting.

>> Rebecca: Okay, all right, so, whoops, I'm sorry, I'm trying to get back to where I was.

All right, we will now move on to public comments. A few notes for the public comment for those of you who are joining us for the first time. Because this is a virtual meeting, members of the public had to sign up in advance to address the Commission. Staff at the Department of State will unmute each member of the public for up to two minutes on a first come, first serve basis.

This means members of the public will be called on in the order in which they signed up to address the Commission.

To members of the public participating in public comment, please note you will have no more than two minutes to address the Commission.

You may also submit your thoughts to the Commission and the public by e-mailing Redistricting@Michigan.gov. The Department of State will provide your written thoughts to the Commission. By indicating in the e-mail that you would like to submit your comment as public comment, it will be included in the online meeting archive for the Commission.

Public comment sign-in links are also posted on Redistricting Michigan social media pages at Facebook and Twitter at RedistrictingMI.

Now, I would like to recognize Sally Marsh, Michigan Department of State, Director of Special Projects, who will call on members of the public to address the Commission.

>> Sally: Thank you, Madam Vice Chair. There are no live comment participants today.

>> Rebecca: Thank you very much.

All right. Do we have any correspondence to address either?

>> Sue: No. We do not have correspondence today.

>> Rebecca: So we will move to the next item on our agenda. We do not have any unfinished business, so we will move on to new business, which is recommendations for the promotional consultants.

Edward Woods.

>> Edward: Good morning and thank you members of the Commission.

I'm going to share my screen.

So just give me a second.

If you can see it nod your head.

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Okay, great.

All right. As you know, just a little background the Commission approved soliciting three informal bids to provide public relations consulting for the Southeast Michigan media market and the media markets in Michigan excluding Southeast Michigan media market.

This process provides a cost range of 5,000 to 49,999.99.

These were posted on the MICRC website and the state Sigma site bids were sent to PRSA public relations society of America of Mid-Michigan and the PRSA of Detroit chapter.

Outreach was also done to public relations firms in Lansing as well as in Detroit.

The process was used for the following purposes.

To recognize the population density in Southeast Michigan compared to the rest of the state.

Ensure effective and efficient grass roots outreach for the communities of interest in southeast Michigan. Acknowledge that the strategy in reaching rural are different than urban areas. Then address the cost concerns with utilizing preexisting requests for proposals.

If you remember before we were looking at two contractors that were previously on the State's list. And when the costs came back there was a concern with regards to costs. And so now we are using there is three informal bid process to ensure that we are getting exactly what we need at an affordable rate.

For Southeast Michigan we received three informal bids from M3 Group, McConnell Communications and VanDyke Horn.

Bids were evaluated by MICRC and MDOS staff according to policy based on the following, campaign plan, methods, hourly rate, public budget allocation, timelines, expertise, experience and outreach.

Staff is recommending negotiating with McConnell Communications based on the plans for grass roots outreach and reaching diverse populations in Michigan, experience and success in doing similar work and media relationships.

At this time, Madam Chair, we are asking to the Commission to authorize MICRC staff to enter contract negotiations with McConnell Communications not to exceed \$49,999.99 for the southeast PR consulting project.

>> Rebecca: Okay, thank you very much.

Any comments or questions for Edward?

I see Rhonda and then Anthony and then Doug.

>> Rhonda: Thank you. I'm just curious did we get any information about the companies themselves?

Do we see the bids?

Or is this just kind of blind for the Commission?

Are we just going to be voting blindly?

I think because I'm asking because every other thing RFP, we always had information on them that is why I asked.

>> Edward: No, with three informal bid process I was just following the guidelines where we would solicit the bids and then it says that we the staff needs to review the bids and then they need to come before the Commission.

So this is different than the RFP process which has more than 50,000.

This is less than 50,000.

So I was just following the process as outlined.

>> Rhonda: Okay.

>> Steve: I guess following up on that, excuse me, I'm sorry, Doug, go ahead.

>> Rebecca: I think Anthony was next so why don't we Steve if you want to follow-up on Rhonda's question if that makes sense go ahead then we will go to Anthony and then Doug.

>> Steve: I was just wondering I assume the staff has looked at these three and would like to know what their evaluation was, what they base it on, how we made the decision, et cetera, et cetera.

>> Edward: I can go back and share the screen.

Staff is recommending negotiating with McConnell Communications based on their plan for grass roots outreach and reaching the diverse populations of community interest in Southeast Michigan.

Experience and success in doing similar work.

They have worked with the office of the Michigan department of insurance and financial services with regards to the no fault campaign.

They have also done previous work with Flint and so they have done work in terms of grass roots community outreach what we looked at then they have the media relationships of formal journalists and news reporters in the Southeast Michigan market with regards to their staff that they presented.

So this is basically a summary of what we identified and noticed.

The people that also reviewed the bids are here on the line.

Which included our Executive Director Suann Hammersmith and also our general counsel Julianne Pastula and MDOS staff would include Sally Marsh and Sally Reinhardt and this is just a summary of what we looked at in terms of why we felt they would be the best fit for the Southeast Michigan market based upon the evaluation criteria that you see in the second bullet.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Edward.

Anthony I'm sorry, Sue did you want to add to Edward's comments since you reviewed the proposals?

>> Sue: Yes, I just wanted to mention that middle paragraph so what we did was do a rubric and looked at their campaign plans, their methods of communication, their hourly rate, their budget allocation, their timelines, expertise and experience.

So each one of the staff members did rate based on that grid.

And then came together to gather our thoughts together to determine which would be the best bid and the one thing that we really liked about this particular bid is their grass roots outreach because we feel in that market especially there is going to be lots of communities of interest.

And they seem best equipped to do that.

>> Rebecca: Okay, thank you.

Anthony?

>> Anthony: Edward, could you tell us a little bit about the methods that McConnell Communications are going to use as far as executing you know this grass roots approach?

Are they going to be like going door to door?

Are they going to be using technology?

Just give us a little information about that?

>> Edward: Sure.

They plan to work with churches, they are planning to work with organized labor. Social justice organizations.

Precinct delegates is what they outline, business leaders and organizations, block club meetings in terms of neighborhood association meetings and also working with the police community precinct meetings in the southeast area.

>> Rebecca: All right Commissioner Clark go ahead.

>> Doug: This is directed to Edward.

Have you used any of these three companies before?

Or and do you know or have had any experience with them?

>> Edward: I've had experience working with M3 as well as McConnell.

Not very much with Van Dyke.

With regards to the plan.

But definitely familiar with the other two.

>> Doug: We will talk about that later once we get the proposals back.

Okay, thanks.

>> Rebecca: Erin is that your hand up?

Okay, any other comments, questions?

Steve.

>> Steve: I take it these are hourly rate contracts; is that correct?

>> Edward: Yes, for the most part.

>> Steve: What is McConnell's hourly rate.

>> Edward: \$175.

>> Steve: Plus expenses?

>> Edward: Correct.

>> Steve: How does that compare with MC group or and Van Dyke?

>> Edward: Van Dyke is based upon they did a time allocation, so when you look at it, you're looking at them by principle so their CEO is \$285.

Their senior account executive is \$165.

Their account executive is \$135 and the junior account executive is \$95.

But having said that they provided a 10% discount with regards to the rates.

So that's how they did theirs.

And then with M3 Group, I believe it was, hold on.

>> Sue: I think that was.

>> Edward: \$150.

>> Steve: \$170 you said.

>> Edward: \$150.

>> Steve: \$150.

>> Rebecca: Okay Commissioner Clark.

>> Doug: Yeah, to follow-up on that is there an estimate on how many hours that they are going to need to do the work?

>> Edward: Well, sure.

Well the estimate really with regards to the negotiations what we were trying to do was identify the price and what they are able to do.

So that they would not exceed what we need in the threshold.

Initially what McConnell was suggesting to do was 20-25 hours.

But we think we need a little bit more.

And then with the Van Dyke they were looking at a total of they had it divided up in six.

So let me just add it up for you because they did it by phases.

And they estimated 65 hours in phase one.

70 hours in phase two.

60 hours in phase three.

65 hours in phase four.

110 hours for media relations.

And 65 hours phase six for community partnerships.

For M3.

>> Rebecca: Go ahead.

>> Edward: For M3, 245 hours from M3.

>> Rebecca: Dustin, go ahead.

>> Dustin: What was the hourly rate for the one in the middle?

>> Edward: Van Dyke had four hourly rates Dustin because it depends on, they are using four people.

They don't have a standard flat rate like McConnell was doing and like M3 was doing.

>> Dustin: I did the \$175 and figured that the maximum amount of hours for 49,999 will be 285.

>> Edward: Right and so I mean you know, yeah, the cap.

What we were looking at was the expertise and the infrastructure they already had of doing it.

>> Dustin: Right.

>> Edward: With them it would not take as much because the infrastructure are already in place.

>> Dustin: Got it, okay.

>> Rebecca: Go ahead Steve and then Anthony.

>> Steve: I'm sure somebody is going to question whatever we do since they always do.

Are one of these groups as we are looking at McConnell are they primarily on one side of the aisle or the other or do they work both Sides?

>> Edward: They all work both Sides.

>> Rebecca: Anthony go ahead.

>> Anthony: I guess Edward, in your professional communications experience, are these offers specifically the one from McConnell Communications are they in line with what you usually get for this type of work?

>> Edward: If you look at it, they are all pretty much the same in terms of the principles, in terms of what they were using the 150-175 range.

It's pretty much the same.

So I mean I don't see them as different.

The issue is who can hit the ground running and has the infrastructure in place. And we found that McConnell Communications had that better than the other two organizations specifically as relates to grass roots as Sue mentioned and our communities of interest that we really want to address throughout the Southeast Michigan area.

>> Rebecca: Any additional comments?

All right, so do we want to entertain a motion at this time to adopt -- Steve, go ahead.

>> Steve: I would move that we approve the hiring of the McConnell Communications at 175 an hour.

>> Dustin: I will second that Dustin.

>> Rebecca: A motion by Commissioner Lett seconded by Dustin Witjes to approve the hiring of McConnell at the rate of 175 an hour all in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

>> Anthony: To clarify I think this would be with contract negotiations, right Edward?

>> Edward: Correct.

>> Rebecca: Thank you for that clarification Commissioner Eid so motion to enter into contract negotiations with McConnell all in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

All opposed same sign.

I'm seeing ten in favor, one opposed, the motion carries.

Thank you, everybody.

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>> Edward: Now we need to go to the other markets outside of southeast.

>> Rebecca: Okay.

>> Edward: Let me share my screen.

Okay can everyone still see my screen, can you see my screen?

>> Rebecca: Yes.

>> Edward: All right, then we have Michigan except Southeast Michigan and we received two informal groups one from M3 and the VanDyke Horn, two declined because one because of having too much work, another one was COVID-19.

Then the other firm that we worked with basically had an Exodus of staff so we were unable to reach out and get a bid from them.

Bids were evaluated using the same method.

Staff is recommending negotiating with VanDyke Horn because of their knowledge of redistricting.

As evidence in their proposal.

The expectation experience was similar statewide awareness campaigns.

And a tailored approach to reach diverse audiences we thought this would be helpful as relates to Native Americans and rural areas outside of Southeast Michigan where they have had some success with state awareness campaigns.

Usually with the Alice campaign, which is with the united way, they also worked with the Michigan nonprofit association, so with that they have done some work with the Alzheimer's association as well so we just thought that they would be our best bet working on the campaign on a statewide basis, outside of Southeast Michigan.

And so the recommendation is to authorize MICRC staff in consideration of the two bids received to enter contract negotiations with VanDyke Horn public relations not to exceed 49,999.99.

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>> Rebecca: Dustin go ahead.

>> Dustin: Based on the same information from last, I put forth a motion to approve going into correct negotiations.

>> Rebecca: Okay thank you can I get a second?

And then I see your hand Rhonda so I will call on you, Juanita are you seconding?

Second, okay so we have a motion from Commissioner Witjes seconded by Commissioner Curry to enter staff into negotiations with I'm going to kill this name and got to look at it, van horn dyke; is that correct?

>> Edward: VanDyke Horn.

>> Rebecca: VanDyke Horn I don't have it in front of me before we vote Rhonda had her hand up with discussion so I will call on Commissioner Lange.

>> Rhonda: I have the same questions about details and want to know if either one of the two were located outside of Southeast Michigan if they are going to be communicating with the entire state, was there anybody that lived in a different part of the state that might be familiar with areas outside of Southeast Michigan?

>> Edward: Yes, Maureen lives right here in Lansing and she will be the principal person.

Here she staffs their Lansing office and she will be the principal person here in Lansing. She has had experience of more than 20 years of experience.

She has worked with the Michigan nonprofit association.

The alliance of Michigan energy consumers.

ACLU of Michigan.

Alzheimer's association of Michigan.

American task force for Lebanon and the State of Michigan unemployment insurance agency.

She has done public policy integrated media campaign and stakeholder communications for more than two decades.

She is based right here.

She has experience working with state Government.

And internally and with aligned organizations.

And her primary clients included coalitions and associations for stakeholder engagement and targeted outreach to a broad spectrum of current and potential stakeholders.

>> Rhonda: Where was the other applicant from.

>> Edward: M3 is Lansing.

>> Rhonda: M3 Lansing and the other is Detroit, correct, with there any from UP, northern Michigan or west side of the state those were the only ones.

>> Edward: Those were the only two that came in, correct.

>> Rebecca: Commissioner Lett.

>> Steve: The person you just went over that's the principal for.

>> Edward: VanDyke Horn.

>> Steve: Who is the principal for McConnell?

>> Edward: Darcy McConnell and M3 would be Tiffany Dolling.

>> Rebecca: Okay any other comments?

Go ahead Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Sorry what was the pay for each?

>> Edward: Still the same.

In terms of for Tiffany Dolling 150 and member of VanDyke Horn they had a hybrid model with regards to if we use the CEO or senior account executive, the senior account executive of the bulk of the person and her rate is \$165.

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But that's discounted 10% by their proposal so if you are looking for apples to apples comparison because the CEO was 285.

The senior account executive would be the principal.

It's 165.

The account executive is 135 the junior account executive is 95 but the bulk will be done at the senior account executive at the 165 rate.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Edward.

Commissioner Clark.

>> Doug: Yeah, Edward, I mean we are talking about different geography here and assuming the hours are going to be different?

>> Edward: Right but they won't exceed the 49,999.99.

On the way we did that was with regards to the public hearings they would not -- we are not trying to get them to drive or choose hourly rate and go to Gaylord and Marquette it's we as a staff would do.

But just want to be clear that this is just the rate excluding expenses but we got to stay within our budget.

This is the budget that the Commission has approved.

The Commission as you know decided not to go with the RFP process because of the cost concerns.

And so we made it very clear that we cannot exceed 49,999 and these are our perimeters.

>> Doug: So the hours are not really defined.

Just the hourly rate is defined and it's capped at 49,000.

>> Edward: Correct no matter who they use in the process.

>> Doug: Okay, all right, thank you.

>> Rebecca: All right any additional comments?

Or questions?

Okay seeing none, let's move forward with our vote on the motion.

Again the motion to clarify is to authorize MDOS staff to negotiate with VanDyke Horn with respect to a contract with respect to the areas of Michigan outside of Southeast Michigan if you are in favor of the motion.

>> Edward: It's MICRC staff.

>> Rebecca: MICRC staff to negotiate with VanDyke Horn with respect to the marketing contract outside of Southeast Michigan; is that correct?

>> Edward: I will say it clearly authorize the MICRC staff in consideration of the two bids received to enter contract negotiations with VanDyke Horn public relations not to exceed 49,999.99.

>> Rebecca: Okay, thank you.

All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

Okay all opposed please raise your hand, same sign.

Okay I'm seeing that the motion carries nine to two.

So motion is adopted.

All right Edward, do you have any more requests from us?

>> Edward: Later on the agenda so if you want me to go now, I can go or wait, whatever is best for you all.

>> Rebecca: Why don't we follow the order of the agenda thank you very much.

>> Edward: Thank you I appreciate it.

>> Rebecca: Moving on we have public hearings and town hall forums Executive Director Hammersmith.

>> Sue: Good morning Commissioners.

I just thought it would be helpful to put together a chart that describes the public hearings and the town hall forums and the differences.

This can be then a resource for our Commissioners.

And also any public any members of the public who are watching can have a very clear understanding of how public hearings and town hall forums may be different.

So I know you can all read but I'm going to give a little bit of commentary on this.

First and foremost public hearings are official meetings of the MICRC.

They are hosted by the MICRC.

A town hall forum is hosted by an outside group or organization in collaboration.

So we may have somebody attend another organization's town hall forum but town hall forums are not sponsored by the Commission.

Public hearings are required by the Constitution.

You know that.

And the Constitution it's mandatory.

We are required to have a minimum of ten meetings in the first round of public hearings and a minimum of five in the second round.

Town hall forums are permitted on the other hand and are allowed in the Constitution and there is no required number or amount we can do as many as we can attend as many as we wish.

For public hearing we know a quorum is required of the Commission.

For a town hall forum if a quorum shows up and it could become an official meeting of the Commission.

So we would prefer a lesser number to attend town hall forums to represent the Commission.

Our meetings are publicly recorded.

So we have minutes.

We have videos.

We have transcripts.

And they are live streamed.

For a town hall forum there is no public record required.

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And they are typically not live streamed or recorded.

We as a Commission certainly would not live stream or record them.

If the sponsoring group chose to, they could.

Our public hearings require formal public notice like all of our meetings.

So you have seen the notices posted on the website.

Those are required for all meetings of the Commission according to the Open Meetings Act.

For a town hall forum it does require public notice also, it must be open to the general public.

There should be advanced notice, they should try to utilize various means to inform people of a public meeting.

It should be easy to find.

And for example, it could be posted on Facebook page of the organization as long as it's an open page and then you know other people could share.

But just one single person putting it up on their Facebook page probably wouldn't qualify as public notification.

As you know, all our meetings are open meetings per the Open Meetings Act.

We follow that very closely.

But the town hall forums again they just must be open to the general public.

They do not have to follow an Open Meetings Act per se.

We have our three purposes defined in the Constitution that is to inform about redistricting, share the purpose and responsibilities of the Commission and then we solicit verbal or written comments, public comment about potential redistricting plans.

A town hall forum typically will also inform, that is to create awareness and engagement.

But it's to create engagement in sharing public comments and as you know by the Constitution, the public comments at a town hall can only be given to the Commission in writing.

So or in an open meeting so this would not be a specific Commission specific meeting.

Therefore any public comments would have to be provided in writing or through for example the public comment tool or any one of the other means of public comment that is available.

Lastly, we must follow state and local mandates regarding health orders.

And hold all our meetings either in person or virtually according to the Open Meetings Act.

However a town hall forum can be held virtually or in person.

It's only subject to the state health mandates.

So, for example, the league of women voters right now is hosting many town hall forums.

Those are all on Zoom.

And they are allowed to do that whether or not -- they don't have to comply with the same guidelines that we have to comply with regarding open meetings.

So and holding them in person or whether we can hold them virtually.

So we general counsel Pastula just provided that information in a meeting recently so I don't think you have questions there.

But if this raises any questions or you have any questions about what I've shared, please feel free to ask.

>> Rebecca: Thank you.

In terms of so say we are at a town hall meeting and someone starts offering public comment to us I'm assuming we should sort of redistrict them to submit it in writing or use our public comment tool or direct them to one of the other ways they can submit comments to us rather than allowing that to continue?

>> Sue: Correct that is correct, you would just direct them regarding how they can engage in public comment or they would need to provide that in writing but that is not really the preferred way for them to write something on a piece of paper and give it to individual Commissioners.

Really using the public comment tool would be the ideal or any means of public comment through the e-mail submissions, survey monkey, all the vehicles that we currently have, yes.

>> Rebecca: Okay, any questions for Executive Director Hammersmith?

Steve Lett go ahead.

>> Steve: It raises an interesting conundrum I guess because at all of these I participated in there is an open question-and-answer period after live talk about the Commission.

Is that to mean that I'm not to answer the questions?

>> Sue: Well I think you can certainly talk about the Commission and the work of the Commission.

When people start asking about mapping, that's where we can only talk about mapping in open meetings and through the public comment tool.

So maybe general counsel Pastula can better clarify.

>> Rebecca: Please go ahead Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you.

So the distinction I think that is important is that we are moving into a different type of public engagement.

In this next phase.

So we will have the public hearings which are official Commission meetings and we are all very clear on that.

The quorum will be present.

The two way communication and the contemporaneous viewing gave a couple details on that for the public.

Benefit to make sure we are on the same page.

The local presentations that the Commission was doing, those presentations were done at local units of Governments, legislative bodies or public body meetings.

So all of those requirements met the Open Meetings Act and would qualify so providing that information about what the Commission is doing and where we have been in all of that would be appropriate.

So the function of the town hall forums we are speaking of now the secretary won't be present to receive the public comment, to log things in.

So, again, providing the information and directing people the residents to submit their comments through the public comment tool or at one of the public hearings so that way all of the Commission not only has the benefit of hearing it but the rest of the residents of the State of Michigan do as well.

I hope that was helpful.

>> Rebecca: Commissioner Lett do you have another question?

>> Steve: Well, I guess, and maybe I know Doug has been to a few of these, Doug, you're getting I assume you're getting questions when you go to these.

How do you handle them?

>> Doug: Well, the way I have handled them is I answer them.

If it's something that we have already discussed and up to current history.

Anything after that, I generally respond particularly with mapping, I generally respond that we have not engaged yet with the mapping consultant because we don't have a currently don't have a purchase order with them and we are working on that.

Which has been discussed in the open meetings.

So I tend not to talk about any of the future types of things or how we are going to do things because we have not defined some of those things yet.

I just stick with the historical part of what we have done in the Commission.

That's how I've handled it, Steve.

>> Steve: I usually get a question about the census and what are we supposed to do since we are not going to have any numbers on a timely basis.

And I typically go into some type of explanation of how our plans are to handle those.

So I think that is providing information without saying what our decision is going to be.

I don't want to I certainly don't want to come off as being aloof.

We are there to provide information.

>> Doug: Correct and I handle the census questions the same way.

And the information I provide them is the information we discussed in our open meetings such as our plan to move a motion into the Supreme Court and the reason why we are doing that.

And we have also gone into discussion that of the importance that we get our work done on a timely basis because they have got a lot of work after us.

So we get into discussion of that too and how much work they have and what they got to do.

You know because they have to reevaluate all their precincts.

And as far as the city does or the township does.

So I get into those, but I tend to keep it towards things that we have discussed in previous meetings and not the future because we have not really decided the futures yet.

I haven't had any controversial subjects come up, Steve.

You know, such as why we hired this person or that person or that sort of thing.

That has not surfaced at all.

>> Steve: I haven't had that.

But generally speaking it's something off of what I've talked about or something that they have seen on the news or in the paper, something like that.

>> Doug: Generally they are not into a lot of detail of what goes on in the Commission.

And they are more curious about what we are doing and how we are proceeding along.

>> Steve: Okay thanks.

>> Rebecca: Julianne go ahead.

>> Julianne: I think this is a great time again to highlight the reminder not only for the benefit of the public but the benefit of the Commission.

Again, what we are really talking about with all of this is subsection 11 of the constitution which prohibits Commissioners and staff from discussing redistricting matters with members of the public outside of an open meeting.

Again the focus of the Constitution is transparency and fairness and they set the Constitution sets out the process for the Commission's meetings.

Subsection 11 also has an important exception to that prohibition that the Commissioners may discuss redistricting matters with members of the public to gain information relevant to the performance of their duties if the communication occurs, A, in writing.

So that feeds back into the remote meeting policy we discussed recently where Commissioners excuse me members of the public would like to communicate with a Commissioner that is going to be absent or attending remotely, pardon me, attending remotely an in person meeting they will have the e-mail to be able to do that and be in line with subsection 11.

The second exception is that it may occur at a previously publicly noticed forum or town hall that is open to the general public.

So again, the exception is very important but we always have to be sensitive to the Constitution and the work of the Commission should be occurring and must occur at the open either regular meetings of the Commission or public hearings.

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But again I think that the manner in which we are approaching the town hall forums, making sure that, again, that the notice is accessible, the event is accessible to the general public, are critical pieces to make sure that the Commission's work is in alignment with the Constitution.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: All right, any other comments about town halls versus our public meetings?

Okay, seeing none I think we can move on to our next item on the agenda which is the draft meeting agenda for public hearings.

>> Sue: Yes, it will be a very compressed timeframe if you think about how our meetings are currently held so it takes 15 minutes really to get to unfinished business and any typical agenda.

So that leaves 45 minutes for a meeting and recognize that there will likely be a lot of commotion and people coming in, et cetera, to the meeting venue at that point in time.

I also wanted to make sure that you got your calendars updated, so the resolution that was passed was that the Commission would meet on Thursdays during public hearing weeks from 5-6 p.m.

And those meetings will be at the venue where the public hearings are held.

So if we do not need a meeting and you want a meeting, we would cancel it then.

So also you then should take all those regular meetings the 9-12 and 1-4 off your calendars during the weeks we will be traveling so I just wanted to give you that update. And let you know that's how that one hour agenda would go.

>> Rebecca: Thank you.

Any questions or comments?

All right seeing none let's move on to our next agenda item which is the option to hold September meetings on college campuses.

Communications and Outreach Director Woods, please proceed.

>> Edward: Thank you, very much.

Let me get my screen up for you.

Are you able to see?

Okay wonderful.

University outreach campus election engagement project and campus vote project are two organizations that work with Michigan college and University students in civic engagement.

They seek to partner with us to increase awareness and solicit input from students regarding redistricting.

They desire for Commissioners to interact and hear directly from students on campus. By working with them directly it can provide us an opportunity for the Commission to engage and hear directly from students about redistricting.

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And we need to remember that students are not just local to that community.

But come from across the state.

We get to connect with the community where these campuses are located that are distinct from where we are hosting public hearings.

And we get an opportunity to take advantage of the back to school vibe and use it to educate the public about redistricting especially where we are in the process at that time.

In looking at that what we would do is we would like to move our weekly meetings in the month of September.

This is a tentative schedule.

To Ferris state University on the 2nd.

On the 9th eastern Michigan University.

On the 16th, Grand Valley.

On the 23rd central Michigan University and on the 30th Oakland university.

And this we would be on campus so they would want Commissioners if you are able to do presentations, interact with students, we would have our full meeting there as well.

In terms of taking our meeting on the road.

And doing that with regards to this project across the state.

It gives us broader exposure.

Around that time we will have the legacy data.

And going through the mapping process.

So it's just another way to show our transparency.

Our engagement.

Across the state in these areas where we are not hosting public hearings.

Ferris state as you all know where that is located in Big Rapids. Eastern Michigan, Ypsilanti. Grand Valley would be Allendale. And Central Michigan, Mt. Pleasant. And Oakland University in Rochester Hills.

The reason why we need to go ahead and get this recommendation approved is because the students are changing leadership as relates to student Government. So we would need to start working with the student leaders for about the last month before they go away for summer break.

We have to coordinate with the universities in terms of making this happen and the protocols.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done before the end of the school year.

So that we can kickoff fall semester if the Commission is willing to go to this format of having our meetings at these universities so that is why this is coming to you now.

So that we have time to plan.

Acknowledge the transition in leadership at these campuses and also work with the administration to make this possible in terms of coordinating our weekly meeting with all of our requirements with regards to making sure the technology and the set up.

This would be similar to the set up that we are doing for the public hearings that we are doing now.

Starting off in May.

Making sure we have those processes and procedures available to make it work at these different sites.

So the recommendations approved will be in the weekly meetings in September to these University sites.

>> Rebecca: Anthony go ahead, please.

>> Anthony: Wonderful.

I think this is a great idea you know it's just another chance to get out there and to engage with the public especially since most of those universities except for Oakland University are commuter campuses which means there are students from all parts of the state, you know, that attend.

I do have a question though.

Edward, are you coordinating with just the student leaders on campus?

Or are they also connecting you with their actual University facilities people to try to get, you know, a space arranged and get the technology set up and everything like that?

>> Edward: I'm working with the faculty sponsors in terms of doing that.

So in addition to the students the faculty sponsors are the ones getting this approved by administration.

It's a process they have to go through to get the approval.

>> Right.

>> Edward: So if the Commission is not willing then obviously, they don't need to go any further.

But, no, the faculty sponsors would be the lead and you know putting this through the University process for approval and then we would be working with the student leaders in terms of identifying opportunities for Commissioners to engage on campus.

>> Anthony: I assume that the university's student org funds or whatever would be used to foot the bill for this?

>> Edward: Well, the how can I say our requirements with regards to live streaming would be something that we would work on.

We would not be paying to rent the University facility to host a meeting.

That is correct.

>> Anthony: Wonderful.

>> Rebecca: Doug, go ahead.

>> Doug: I've got a couple comments.

Relative to this.

Actually I support the idea.

I think it's excellent as Anthony had indicated.

I think the timing may be wrong though.

I see September as a month where we are going to be buried in doing redistricting mapping with the consultants.

And my fear would be that we take these meetings and take the time and then we are going to get inundated with public comments.

And we are going to either be working 24 hours a day literally because that eats into -- I mean that could easily go five or six hours just with public comments then we got to do the mapping as well.

So it's the timing that bothers me.

And from a financial perspective as long as it fits within the budget, we approved I'm okay with that as well.

But I'd like to get some other people's comments about the timing.

>> Rebecca: Commissioner Lange.

>> Rhonda: I agree about the timing too.

And then there would be the concerns about COVID.

I know that they are testing the students regularly for COVID so what guidelines are there for COVID?

The cost?

And then my other concern would be we had such an outpouring of people that wanted us to have hearings, meetings in their areas and I appreciate that some of these colleges are actually in rural areas.

But I can't help but feel that people are going to look at that and be like well why could we not have a hearing in their area and now they are going to do meetings in this area? I just see it being blowing up in our faces honestly.

I can see it already.

But I would be concerned about the timing too because once that and Julianne can remind me the name of it, the other data that comes out prior to the census, once that data comes out then we could technically be using that to draw lines until the full census data comes out.

So I kind of got to agree with Doug that we are probably going to be swamped during that time trying to get all of our ducks in a row with the maps, waiting on the official census data.

>> Rebecca: Edward, go ahead.

>> Edward: I want to remind the Commission that you know wherever we meet we are still going to have to receive public comments.

This is just -- this is not redoing a public hearing.

It's just saying if we are meeting in person, that we would be at these sites but whether people come in person or come virtual we still have to receive public comment.

And so it's just a way to market our fairness, our awareness, our transparency and our engagement and instead of us being designated in Lansing, if that is where we would normally meet in person we would just meet at these different locations.

So the work of the Commission that would take place at a weekly meeting would still happen.

The public comment that the Commission would receive whether it's in person or virtual would also still happen.

So just want to make sure I'm clear with regards to that.

>> Rebecca: Go ahead, MC.

>> MC: I'm going to make sure my audio here is not weird.

>> It's not.

>> MC: I love this idea and I'm thinking in particular about the way we had this presentation yesterday where we recognize that we need to have a broad net to make sure that we cast awareness.

And what I heard Edward say is that this is a meeting, not a public hearing so the public comment piece I think it's what we will have to deal with.

I agree with Doug and Rhonda, I have the same fear but I guess that is kind of what I signed up for so to speak.

What I mean is there is a lot of uncertainty and hard to manage frankly but feels if this is a meeting we will be meeting anyway and feels like if we can be meeting sort of onsite it feels like a two-for and we are adding exposure.

And creating more awareness and to acknowledge what I think you are right Rhonda that we should acknowledge, I'm thinking in particular about Livingston county those folks in particular said hey we want public comment, we want to be in Livingston county and what I'm hearing in this proposal here is I don't think that Livingston county is ruled out there is an organized group with many campuses who reached out and said hey let's organize this and we have to do it now because of the timing related to their schedule.

Right, that the student schedule.

And so it feels like I wouldn't say that we are ruling out other people.

It's just that we are being more inclusive with this and there will be others.

And again there is going to be that challenge of negotiating all of the public comment but I think that is what we are signed up for so to speak as a citizens redistricting Commission.

>> Rebecca: Yeah, I would add to that.

My only comment I think this is a great idea.

We are going to be having meetings any way and by September we may be having them in Lansing so to me having them at different facilities is a good idea because it's good for outreach.

I my only other thought is I would like to see some adjustment on the time for these meetings if we do end up doing this because right now, we have this alternating schedule of 9-Noon and 1-4 and I feel like during a 9 a.m. meeting on a college campus everyone is going to be asleep.

So I don't think that is a great choice.

And plus people are going to have to drive possibly longer than we would for Lansing so I'd like to see some sort of more midday like maybe 10-11 or 11-12 so that we are we can accommodate for drive time and then also have people be there.

Go ahead, Edward I saw your hand go up about that.

>> Edward: I want to know obviously there is a COVID concern or a surge it's not going to happen so let me alleviate those fears.

As far as timing that is negotiable because I did not know what time the Commission wanted to meet.

And so that is negotiable based upon what the Commission wants to do and then they would build activities, you know, around those timeframes for Commissioners that are available.

They really want to do a community outreach.

Their outreach plan is not just for the students but also for the surrounding community to you know be a part of it.

And it's right there in the area.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Commissioner Lange.

>> Rhonda: Just for verification Edward on what you just said, as all of our meetings they have to be open to the public.

So it would be open to everybody in the public not just the students, correct?

>> Edward: Absolutely correct.

>> Anthony: Usually in my experience with meetings like this back when I was in student Government, they usually rent out a big ballroom and have the doors open for anybody who wants to come in whether it be students, faculty, members of the public usually pretty accommodating.

>> Rebecca: I agree.

All right any other comments?

All right do we have a motion to approve this option to hold September meetings on college campuses?

>> Steve: So moved.

>> Rhonda: Some Rebecca real quick Edward can I get those potential dates up on the screen just so I can write those down?

>> Edward: Sure, just give me a second.

>> Rhonda: I apologize Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Steve I acknowledge your motion.

>> Can you see it?

>> Rhonda: Yes, I can.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Could I get a second on Steve's motion?

I see Dustin, so motion by Commissioner Lett, seconded by Commissioner Witjes to approve the option to hold September meetings on college campuses as presented by our Communications and Outreach Director Woods.

All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

I see nine.

All opposed same sign.

The motion carries.

All right.

Moving on to our next agenda item, we have future meetings and agenda items, anything you want to add on that one Executive Director Hammersmith?

>> Sue: .

>> Rebecca: Steve I'm sorry did you have your hand up about something?

>> Steve: I do.

Edward, could you send everybody a copy of that -- those dates and places then we have got them, thank you.

>> Edward: Sure.

>> Rebecca: All right go ahead.

>> Sue: I have nothing new on future meetings and agenda items since yesterday we are good.

>> Rebecca: Moving on to the next agenda item any announcements comments, concerns anyone wants to share go ahead whether Clark.

>> Doug: Can we go back to the future meetings discussion?

>> Rebecca: Sure.

>> Doug: A number of meetings ago sometime in March I believe, mid-March, I brought up four subjected I wanted to get on the agenda dealing with mostly dealing with process.

And I think MC brought up some comments about process yesterday.

Can I get some conversation going relative particularly relative to these public hearings?

One of the process issues that I had talked about at that point in time was what's the detail on how these public hearings are going to be conducted?

And so that we come across as organized and we all understand, you know, how this goes and moves forward.

For example, let me give you an example.

An example would be there is going to be a certain set of people that are going to want to speak and a certain set that aren't.

How do you identify those?

How do you and what sequential order are they brought up?

How does the individual -- who is the individual that is going to call them up there?

Is it going to be our chairperson?

If so, how do they get the list and so forth?

Down to the very detail on how all this is going to work.

And we got three meetings left before we have our first public hearing.

So that is one subject and I'll get to the other one after you answer that, Sue.

>> Sue: Yes, this is definitely planned.

I mentioned yesterday that we are going to talk about the public comment process next week and on the 29th we will have a dry run for public hearings and there will be scripts for the Chair and Vice Chair, for the Commissioners, the details will be shared.

So everybody will feel prepared and ready and, Doug, I have your list.

I have it on a note and we I mean we are going down your list that you provided a few weeks ago and working on all those topics that you are talking about, yes.

>> Doug: Okay, yeah, one of the other topics was I believe on coordinating communities of interest.

How are we going to capture that data?

I'm assuming that is part of this, this process on the whole meeting.

It's going to be there.

I mean I would recommend that when we do that, that we have a form that somebody would check off, you know, or we would check out relative to like how big is the community of interest specifically where it's located?

You know, that type of thing.

A validation, some type of validation process that we are not getting a bunch of BS coming to us in a community of interest and somebody has to certify where they are getting the data from and that sort of thing.

So I would expect that to be part of it as well.

>> Sue: And I think you will find that the public comment tool that's being built out by MDOS will address all of those issues, so if people will use the public comment tool, we will capture then the communities of interest and where they are on the map and there will be systems to look for, the same e-mail address several times or the same name or you know things that appear to be askew.

So, yes, that is all being worked on.

>> Doug: Okay, yeah, I mean, not everybody is going to put it in the public comment tool particularly the people out in the rural areas who don't have the Internet access, they will just bring it up to the meetings.

As long as we have a way to capture that as well.

>> Sue: Yes, absolutely.

Yeah, these are all conversations that are happening especially with MDOS staff with being secretary to the Commission, they have a lot of these moving parts that they will work with.

>> Doug: Okay.

>> Sue: Your staff and MDOS staff have spent hours and hours and hours making sure every detail will be in place for the public hearings.

>> Doug: So in other words stay tuned until it becomes the agenda item next week.

>> Sue: Yeah.

>> Doug: Perfect, thanks.

>> Rebecca: Any other comments or discussion on future meetings?

Seeing none, again, we go back to the agenda item of announcements, are there any announcements?

Go ahead general counsel Pastula.

>> Julianne: I notice we are getting public comments on HR1 and on March 18th I did provide a presentation on that piece of Federal legislation.

Which I won't replicate the whole -- all of the information here.

I just wanted to highlight that under the current version of HR1 we the people's bill that was adopted but I the house and sent to the Senate.

That section 2401C exempts states with independent redistricting Commissions that meet certain requirements which based on the current language the MICRC does meet those requirements.

So that they would in effect be in compliance with that legislation if it was adopted.

I just again wanted to highlight that because I've seen it repeatedly in the public comments and haven't touched in depth on it since March 18th so thank you.

And the other question that I have for clarification is the PR contracts, I noticed that the motion language and the resolution language was slightly different.

So I wanted to make sure that we had that guidance as staff and that clarification.

>> Rebecca: So I think the question is are we did we authorize Edward to negotiate and enter into contracts with the PR agencies or are we expecting him and staff to negotiate and then come back to us with the final contract?

>> Julianne: And the reason, thank you Madam Chair, and the reason is that I pulled up the resolutions and the language in the resolution is approves offering the contract to for the promotional consultant services for the Southeast Michigan media market.

And then companion you know the contract for the Michigan media market.

So I just think because of the timing issue I just wanted that clarification and that guidance.

And Edward, I was hoping that you would weigh in as well on that.

>> Edward: I'm going to defer to legal counsel you know.

My understanding was that we were authorized to negotiate and enter into an agreement with these groups because our stuff is starting May 11th.

So we are trying to get ahead of schedule simply because of you know with regards to the timing.

So if I have the wrong impression, then I'm glad we are having the discussion now because that is where I was headed.

>> Julianne: Exactly.

And I think, again, to be clear that the resolution 2021.04.13 is to offer the contracts to the promotional consultants and the concern or the clarification that I have is that the motion language was regarding negotiating contracts so I think there could be a distinction there.

And I just wanted to make sure we were all on the same page moving forward.

>> Rebecca: Can I get a motion to just so we have clarification can I get a motion to adopt the resolution that was presented to the Commission with respect to VanDyke Horn?

Can I get a motion from someone?

Go ahead Erin.

So moves can I get a second?

>> Steve: Second.

>> Rebecca: Dustin you seconded, sorry Steve, Dustin was a little faster on the draw so we have a motion from Erin Wagner.

Seconded by Commissioner Witjes to approve the resolution with respect to VanDyke Horn for their PR contract, all in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

And I also note for the record that MC Rothhorn has verbally indicated or raised his hand electronically so he has voted in favor.

All opposed same sign.

That resolution carries.

Can I get a resolution with respect to McConnell Consulting, Edward?

>> Edward: McConnell Consulting.

>> Rebecca: McConnell Consulting. Same resolution that was submitted to us but instead of VanDyke Horn, McConnell Consulting for the PR contract for Southeast Michigan. Can I get a motion to approve that?

Erin, I have you moving.

Can I get a second? Steve, I have you seconding, so Commissioner Wagner has moved. Commissioner Lett has seconded. A motion to approve the resolution with respect to McConnell Consulting for PR. If you are in favor of adopting that resolution, please raise your hand to so indicate.

And I will note for the record that MC Rothhorn has his hand raised to indicate.

All opposed, please, same sign.

Okay, the motion carries. The resolution is adopted.

All right. Now we should have that all cleaned up for the record.

All right. Having -- any additional comments or concerns before we entertain a motion to adjourn?

All right. Can I get a motion to adjourn our meeting?

>> Steve: So moved.

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>> Rebecca: So Commissioner Lett has moved to adjourn. Erin Wagner has seconded. All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

I note that MC Rothhorn has his hand raised.

All opposed same sign.

The meeting is adjourned at 12:14.

Thank you everybody.

Have a great day.