



Metro Council

Special Meeting

Resolutions

[RS2023-2062](#)

A resolution directing the Metropolitan Planning Department to prepare a Council redistricting plan consisting of 17 district councilmembers and 3 councilmembers at-large to comply with state law; requesting the Metropolitan Planning Commission to hold the necessary meeting(s) to approve the redistricting plan; and requesting the Vice Mayor to call any special Council meeting(s) that may be required to effectuate the redistricting plan.

Analysis

This resolution, in direct response to the new state law requirements to reduce the size of the Metro Council, directs the Planning Department to prepare a councilmanic redistricting plan consisting of 17 districts and 3 at-large positions; directs the Planning Commission to hold the necessary meetings to approve the redistricting plan; and requests the Vice Mayor to call special meetings as necessary to effectuate the redistricting plan.

On March 9, 2023, the Tennessee General Assembly enacted House Bill No. 48/Senate Bill No. 87, which was then signed into law by Governor Bill Lee that same day and has now become Public Chapter 21. Public Chapter 21 (the "Act") provides that the membership of a metropolitan council must not exceed 20 voting members. The Act further provides broad authority for the legislative action necessary to alter the membership of the metropolitan council. The Act requires the reduction of the Metropolitan Council of the Metropolitan Government to no more than 20 members be effective as of the next metropolitan general election. The next metropolitan general election will occur on August 3, 2023. The Act authorizes the Metropolitan Council to take any legislative action necessary to effectuate the requirements of the Act by resolution receiving an affirmative majority vote of those present and voting.

The Act requires the Metropolitan Council to approve the new council district boundaries by resolution on or before May 1, 2023. If the Metropolitan Council fails to take action by the qualifying date of the next metropolitan general election, which is May 18, 2023, the terms of the current members of the Metropolitan Council will be extended by one year and a special general metropolitan election will be held on the first Thursday in August 2024 to elect councilmembers for a term of three years, beginning September 1, 2024. After that election,

future councilmembers would serve four year terms.

The process to reduce the Metropolitan Council provided for in the Act differs from the process in the Metropolitan Charter. Absent the Act, the Metropolitan Council would be required to pursue a charter amendment, as outlined in Article 19 of the Metropolitan Charter, in order to make changes to the makeup of the Metropolitan Council. The Charter process, which was amended by a referendum vote in the August 4, 2022 election, requires, at a minimum, review by the charter revision commission and approval by voters at a referendum election. As stated above, the Act allows the Council to act by resolution receiving an affirmative majority vote of those present and voting.

This resolution would direct the Planning Department to prepare a councilmanic redistricting plan consisting of 17 districts and 3 at-large positions using the most recent census to ensure that the reapportionment maintains substantially equal representation and complies with state and federal laws. The number of districts and at-large members were chosen in an effort to be as consistent with the Metropolitan Charter as practicable under the circumstances while maintaining substantial equal representation and compliance with state and federal laws. The resolution would direct the Planning Commission to hold the necessary meetings to approve the redistricting plan. The resolution would request the Vice Mayor to call special meetings as necessary to effectuate the redistricting plan so that the next metropolitan general election for council members can occur on August 3, 2023. The resolution further provides that if a court issues an injunction, stay, or otherwise rules that the Act is not legally binding, the existing membership shall be maintained.

Note that this resolution does not approve new council district boundaries. This resolution will provide guidance to the Planning Department, who will then prepare district boundaries in accordance with the number of districts and at-large positions determined by the Metropolitan Council. The Act requires the Planning Commission to establish new council boundaries by April 8, 2023. The Council would be required to approve the new council district boundaries in a separate action before May 1, 2023.

Sponsors: Johnston, VanReece, Vercher, Nash, Swope, Hagar and Druffel