

Hi-Desert Memorial Health Care District dba  
**Morongo Basin Healthcare District**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES**  
**April 6, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.**

*Convened on the La Content campus. The public is invited to attend on campus,  
or by Microsoft Teams, an electronic, remote-site platform.*

- **Mission Statement:** *To improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.*
- **Vision:** *A healthy Morongo Basin.*
- **Core Values:** *Commitment, Collaboration, Accountability, Dignity, Integrity.*

Board of Directors:

- Director Cooper
- Director Evans
- Director Markle-Greenhouse
- Director Savitt
- Director Stiemsma

Administrative Staff:

- Cindy Schmall, CEO
- Karen Graley, Board Clerk (*remote*)
- Debbie Anderson, CFO
- Joe Ruddon, Chief Community Programs
- Tele Thornett, Administrative Assistant

Guests:

- Ken Chawkins, NDC Consultant (*remote*)

- Reporter, Hi-Desert Star

### CALL TO ORDER

Director Greenhouse called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was convened on the La Contenta campus and by electronic platform using Microsoft Teams.

### ROLL CALL

Karen Graley, Board Clerk, conducted roll call and declared a quorum.

### OBSERVANCES

Director Stiemsma read the mission, vision and values statements.

Director Evans led the assembly in the pledge to the American flag.

### PRESENTATION

Ken Chawkins, Consultant to National Demographics Corporation gave a PowerPoint presentation as an overview of the transition in election formats and to present the drafted maps.

This is the third of five scheduled public hearings (February, March, April and May). The purpose of the first two public hearings was to educate the board and public, and explain the transition process. The purpose of this April meeting is to present the drafted maps for review and discussion. Based on the required timeframe, the board will vote to proceed or decline the proposed transition at the fifth public hearing.

As background to the map design, Federal law specifies that the five election zones (represented by five elected seats) contain equal distribution of the population (within a 10% range of each other) among the five zones. The Federal Voting Rights Act states that districting cannot disadvantage a class of people or dilute their right to vote. It also states no racial gerrymandering is allowed, meaning the zones cannot “cut through” a population group. The targeted result is a balanced population among the zones without disadvantaging any group of people. The law addresses redistricting by people groups, not by how many in the group vote, or how many are



residents. Additionally, every ten years after a census population shift, the maps must be reevaluated and redrawn if needed to serve communities of interest.

The total Basin population is 68,233. When the population is divided equally based on five elected seats, a zone is required to have 13,647 people with an allowed variable of ten percent. He reviewed the population distribution, calling out the traditional people groups and concentrations. Mr. Chawkins noted that an ethnic group may be represented on the population map by a large colored field, but that does not mean that the residents of this ethnic designation are large in numbers. It simply represents the concentration of the specific group in that geographic location.

The four proposed maps (green, yellow, purple and orange) presented at this hearing were drawn based upon certain populations as requested by the board at the March public hearing, (renters of apartments, condos and single dwellings; senior population; youth population; and household income). The senior population was difficult to extrapolate because that population is not concentrated in any area but is spread throughout the District service area. The one requested designation was the renter group which is concentrated along the traffic corridor of Hwy 62. There was a discussion about defining a youth group but again, that group could not be defined for map purposes.

Mr. Chawkins explained that “election by district” or zone, means the Director representing that zone lives within that zone. In the beginning of this process, sometimes two directors live within the same zone. Pairing or a Vacant Zone on the maps indicates two directors live within the same proposed zone. At the 2024 election one director will be elected to represent that zone, and the second member would float until the 2026 election when election-by-district (zone) is fully implemented.

Each map was discussed. It was noted that the maps and the corresponding statistical data pages were posted on the District’s website for public review.

- GREEN MAP: Zone 5 has the highest concentration of rental properties (25%). Across all four maps, the City of 29 Palms has a significant rental population.
- ORANGE MAP: There was discussion about incorporating military personnel into the maps, the assumption being they have no influence in District elections and should not be tabulated into the calculations. It is true that historically military personnel register to vote in their home state and therefore do not vote for District seats. Mr. Chawkins explained that the law requires the map statistics (13,647) be based on population, not registered voters. To discount the base population from the map would distort the other zones.
- PURPLE MAP: This map shows some of the zones stretching and curving around each other. Mr. Chawkins explained this configuration was necessary to achieve the population balance of 13,647.

After reviewing and discussing the maps, Cindy Schmall, CEO, commented that the green and yellow maps mix disparate populations, splitting up the City of 29 Palms to incorporate part of the city into the Joshua Tree zone; and Yucca Valley’s Western Hills with Landers. People living in these communities have very different interests. She proposed that the orange and purple maps were more representative of our community groupings. It also provides distinct zones for each Director with no vacancies or pairings.

The goal is to refine the process down to two maps for final consideration. Orange and purple maps got the most attention tonight. Consensus was to move forward with the orange and purple



maps. Mr. Chawkins encouraged board members to go to the interactive map on the District website, zoom into street level to see the zone lines. Adjustment can be made to fine-tune the placement of zone boundaries. The two final maps must be posted to the public a minimum of 72 hours prior to the hearing. We will need map adjustments by April 21.

**CALL FOR PUBLIC INPUT**

Board Clerk, Karen Graley, stated that no email or printed correspondence had been received from the public to present to the Board of Directors for consideration.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

*Board meeting minutes recorded by K. Graley, Board Clerk.*



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Heidi Stiemsma, Secretary