

THE STATE OF ARIZONA  
INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEOCONFERENCE PUBLIC MEETING

Via GoogleMeets

March 16, 2021

9:05 a.m.

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1 PUBLIC MEETING, BEFORE THE INDEPENDENT  
2 REDISTRICTING COMMISSION, convened at 9:05 a.m. on  
3 March 16, 2021, via GoogleMeets, Arizona, in the  
4 presence of the following Commissioners:

5 Ms. Erika Neuberg, Chairperson  
6 Mr. Derrick Watchman, Vice Chairman  
7 Mr. David Mehle  
8 Ms. Shereen Lerner  
9 Mr. Douglas York

10 OTHERS PRESENT:

11 Ms. Yasmin Ramos, Administrative Assistant  
12 Ms. Pamela Peiser, Assistant Attorney General  
13 Ms. Caroline Guerrero, Assistant Attorney  
14 General  
15 Mr. Kyle Cummings, Assistant Attorney  
16 General

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CANDIDATES:

18 Mr. Tom Augherton  
19 Ms. Keely Varvel Hartsell  
20 Ms. Kristina Gomez  
21 Mr. Brian Schmitt  
22 Mr. Trevor Arbarzua  
23  
24  
25

P R O C E E D I N G

1  
2  
3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Item No. I, we call the  
4 meeting to order.

5 And we'll do roll call. I(A), call for quorum. It  
6 is 9:05 a.m. on Tuesday, March 16th, 2021. I call this  
7 meeting of the Independent Redistricting Commission to  
8 order.

9 For the record, the administrative assistant will  
10 be taking roll. When your name is called, please indicate  
11 you are present; if you're unable to respond verbally, we  
12 ask that you please type your name.

13 Yasmin.

14 MS. RAMOS: Thank you, Chairwoman Neuberg.

15 Commissioner -- Commissioner Watchman.

16 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Present.

17 MS. RAMOS: Commissioner Lerner.

18 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Present.

19 MS. RAMOS: Commissioner York.

20 COMMISSIONER YORK: Present.

21 MS. RAMOS: Commissioner Mehl.

22 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Present.

23 MS. RAMOS: Chair Neuberg.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Present.

25 MS. RAMOS: And then I want to note for the record

1 that Pamela Peiser, Kyle Cummings, and Caroline Guerrero are  
2 present from the Attorney General's Office; and Angela  
3 Miller is transcribing.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

5 MS. RAMOS: Back to you, Commissioner.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes. Thank you very much,  
7 Yasmin. Please note for the minutes that a quorum is  
8 present.

9 With that, we'll move to Item I(B), call for  
10 notice.

11 Yasmin, was the notice and agenda for this morning  
12 Commission meeting properly posted 48 hours in advance of  
13 the meeting?

14 MS. RAMOS: Yes, it was.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

16 With that, we'll move on to Agenda Item No. II.

17 II(A), which is approval of the minutes from  
18 March 9th, last week, the general session public meeting.

19 As a reminder, video recording fulfills statutory  
20 requirements. Is there any discussion on the public session  
21 minutes?

22 With that, do I have a motion to move forward the  
23 minutes of last week?

24 COMMISSIONER YORK: This is Commissioner York. I  
25 motion to approve the minutes from the last week's meeting.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Do I have a second to approve  
2 the public session meeting minutes from last week?

3 COMMISSIONER MEHL: I'll second. Commissioner  
4 Mehl.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Any further discussion?

6 With that, we'll move to a vote.

7 Commissioner Watchman.

8 COMMISSIONER WATCHMAN: Aye.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

10 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Aye.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

12 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Aye.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner York.

14 COMMISSIONER YORK: Aye.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Neuberg is an  
16 aye.

17 And with that, the general session public minutes  
18 have been approved.

19 Item No. II(B), approval of the minutes from the  
20 March 9th executive session minutes.

21 Again, the recorded transcription fulfills all  
22 statutory requirements. Is there any discussion on this?

23 Do I have a motion to approve the executive session  
24 minutes from last Tuesday, March 9th?

25 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Commissioner Watchman motions

1 to approve the minutes for the executive session.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Executive session March 9th.

3 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: March 9th, yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Do we have a second?

5 COMMISSIONER YORK: Commissioner York seconds.

6 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Any discussion?

7 With that, a vote.

8 Commissioner Watchman.

9 COMMISSIONER WATCHMAN: Aye.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

11 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Aye.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

13 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Aye.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner York.

15 COMMISSIONER YORK: Aye.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Neuberg is an  
17 aye.

18 And with that, the minutes from the executive  
19 session of March 9th of last week have been approved.

20 With that, we'll move to Item No. III, opportunity  
21 for public comments.

22 Public comment will open for a minimum of  
23 30 minutes and remain open until the adjournment of this  
24 morning meeting. Comments will only be accepted  
25 electronically in writing on the link provided in the notice

1 and agenda for this public meeting, and will be limited to  
2 3,000 characters.

3 Please note members of the Commission may not  
4 discuss items that are not specifically identified on the  
5 agenda. Therefore, pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.01, action  
6 taken as a result of public comment will be limited to  
7 directing staff to study the matter, responding to any  
8 criticism, or scheduling the matter for further  
9 consideration and decision at a later date.

10 With that, we'll move to Item No. IV, which will be  
11 our executive director interviews.

12 For the public, again, those interviews will begin  
13 at 9:30. All applicants have been asked to please not watch  
14 the other interviews for the sake of providing as equal of a  
15 playing field as we possibly can.

16 Please note, the Commission may vote to go into  
17 executive session which will not be open to the public for  
18 purpose of discussion or consideration of personnel matters,  
19 including the interviewing of executive director candidates,  
20 A.R.S. 38-431.03(A)(1), for discussion or consideration of  
21 records exempt by law from public inspection, including the  
22 receipt and discussion of information or testimony that is  
23 specifically required to be maintained as confidential by  
24 state or federal law pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431-03(A)(2), as  
25 well as to obtain legal advice specifically related to

1 executive director candidates A.R.S. 38-431.03(A) -- (A)(3).

2 We are a bit early with our first applicant, and so  
3 with, you know, consent amongst the other Commissioners, we  
4 can really move forward with some other agenda items.

5 Before moving on to No. V, although this is related  
6 to No. V, which is discussion and possible action on the  
7 executive director interviews, including selection of  
8 candidates to interview in our afternoon meeting, we will  
9 need to discuss our method of evaluating the candidates  
10 today or this morning.

11 With that, both the process of which we will, you  
12 know, share our views and also our sentiments with regard to  
13 what we discuss in -- in public session and then we are, as  
14 we mentioned, we have the prerogative to go into executive  
15 session to discuss material, you know, that's sensitive and  
16 -- and out of an abundance of caution, to go and above and  
17 beyond to protect our remarkable applicants.

18 Any conversation on that front in terms of  
19 preferences with process?

20 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Commissioner Neuberg, this is  
21 our time to decide whether or not we are moving into  
22 executive session for the interview or staying in public  
23 session?

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: No.

25 COMMISSIONER LERNER: No.

1                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: So -- so, we have already  
2                   decided that we would prefer for the interviews to take  
3                   place in public. The candidates -- you know, the applicants  
4                   have all received the option to do their interviews in  
5                   executive session, but none have selected that option.  
6                   Those interviews will take place in public.

7                   We have also made the decision that we would like  
8                   to deliberate as much as possible in public; however, we  
9                   also have that prerogative to go into executive session to  
10                  discuss the more sensitive issues. The reason being, and we  
11                  have collectively, I think, you know, and I stand by this,  
12                  we would like our process to be as transparent and  
13                  accessible as possible, and I believe that includes us  
14                  discussing the criteria with which we, you know, are  
15                  selecting our -- our, you know, candidates and having open  
16                  conversation.

17                  Having said that, as we deliberate on each  
18                  candidate, it is our responsibility to protect these  
19                  applicants; and if there's anything that we want to discuss  
20                  that in any way may harm them or -- or if there's a slight  
21                  concern about protecting these people, I believe it's  
22                  important to exercise the authority we have to go into  
23                  executive session and do our due diligence.

24                  So -- so I think that it makes sense to potentially  
25                  do a combination, but I don't want to lead too much, I would

1 like to solicit the opinions of my peers.

2 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Okay. Thank you for  
3 clarifying, I wasn't sure exactly what you were asking with  
4 that.

5 And I -- I would like to keep the flexibility, but  
6 I agree that we want to do as much as we can in public; but  
7 if we need it, I think we can express that -- suggest -- say  
8 that we have something that will be better in executive  
9 session if needed.

10 COMMISSIONER YORK: Commissioner Neuberg, this is  
11 Commissioner York. My opinion is that in -- in open  
12 meeting, we should perhaps evaluate the interview, and then  
13 in an executive session we maybe should discuss the merits  
14 of the candidates.

15 So you can give the public a feedback to how the  
16 interview -- how we felt the interview went from the  
17 Commissioners' viewpoints.

18 If you look at the job application that was online  
19 for quite a few weeks, it's a pretty in depth description of  
20 the -- of the requirements for the applicant, so I don't  
21 know if we need to discuss that in public so much as we need  
22 to discuss how we felt about the interview.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I -- you know what, I -- I  
24 have one -- one pushback on that slightly. In all of our  
25 investigations -- well, I hear you. There may be other

1 things as well that we want the discretion to discuss.

2 In my due diligence, I've had a lot of  
3 conversations and so I would like the opportunity to share  
4 with the public all of the positives and negatives that I've  
5 learned, even if it goes beyond just the interview, just in  
6 deference to -- to being transparent.

7 So I hear what you're saying, but I'm hesitant to  
8 restrict us too much.

9 COMMISSIONER YORK: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Other thoughts?

11 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Well, Commissioner, I  
12 think -- I think it's keeping that flexibility that we are  
13 all interested in doing. 'Cause I would -- I would agree  
14 that if there's -- if there's a reason and we choose to --  
15 we ask to go to executive session to have some of the  
16 conversations that Commissioner York is mentioning, I would  
17 support that; and I think each Commissioner could make that  
18 suggestion if at some point we feel this would be a good  
19 time.

20 We want to be as transparent as possible, but there  
21 may be something we don't -- like you said earlier, we don't  
22 want to do something or say something that might harm any  
23 individual.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. I -- I like the  
25 flexibility and -- and, from my perspective, I like the

1 opportunity to do both. I like the opportunity to really  
2 have a robust discussion in public so the public is aware of  
3 how we're thinking, why we're thinking; and I also like the  
4 idea of a planning to go into executive session, so that we  
5 all feel comfortable to share whatever pieces of -- of  
6 information or questions that we have, that we have that  
7 space to do that without having to worry about in any way,  
8 you know, doing any negative anything to, again, the five  
9 applicants today who have really put a lot of work into this  
10 and -- and, you know, I'm excited to hear from them.

11 If there's no other further discussion on this  
12 topic, we'll come -- oh. There is. Okay.

13 Commissioner York.

14 COMMISSIONER YORK: No, I -- I don't have any  
15 further discussion.

16 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Sorry. Your box lit  
17 up.

18 We will come back to this and vote. So, again, we  
19 have full flexibility. Just for the sake of efficiency, I  
20 thought this conversation would be helpful to us as we're  
21 doing the interviews and thinking about the conversations  
22 that we're going to have.

23 With that, we'll move on. We'll use the discretion  
24 that we have to move around the agenda, and for the sake of  
25 efficiency with time, we'll move on to Item No. VI, which is

1 discussion of public comments received prior to today's, the  
2 March 16th, meeting.

3 I'll -- I'll start by sharing my -- my perspective.  
4 We did have an uptick again in public comments, not like it  
5 was at the very beginning of the process, but I think people  
6 are becoming more and more engaged.

7 What I'm hearing is an interest in really kind of  
8 fleshing out our website, you know, potentially creating a  
9 24/7 portal or some kind of method that makes it a little  
10 bit more accessible for the public to share comments; as we  
11 flesh out the website, maybe more educational material.

12 (Whereupon Tom Augheron joins meeting.)

13 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Somebody requested -- and  
14 thank you Kyle Cummings for the material that was presented  
15 to the Commission last week on the past legal cases that our  
16 counsel has had to defend in court.

17 I've heard the desire for us to really travel the  
18 state and learn about the needs of all of the different  
19 constituent groups/communities of interest prior to the  
20 census data coming in, and all of that makes perfect sense.

21 Any other observations, notes, reactions to public  
22 comments that we've received prior to today's meeting?

23 COMMISSIONER YORK: Commissioner Neuberg, this is  
24 Commissioner York. I also thought that I read quite a few  
25 comments regarding a delay in using -- or, recommending that

1 we wait for the actual census data as opposed to going back  
2 and looking at older numbers. So, with that, we'll have to  
3 do some communities of interest discovery prior to the data.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes. There's -- there's  
5 great sensitivity about this; appropriately so.

6 And we will continue to solicit the opinion of the  
7 public and move in a way that will not compromise trust in  
8 the process. We are all -- all on board with being invested  
9 in the legitimacy of what we're doing and it will take great  
10 caution.

11 Any other thoughts on that?

12 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Yeah. Madam Chair, this is  
13 Commissioner Watchman.

14 I guess for me, I just encourage the public that's  
15 listening, you know, to continue to listen in and continue  
16 to provide public comment; I think it's very, very  
17 important.

18 Unfortunately, you know, like where I'm from, the  
19 Internet is not readily available, and so -- I was just on a  
20 call this morning, and so the user has to decide, you know,  
21 to turn off the video and go audio only, so. So there's a  
22 lot of limitations, so I do -- I do hope that at some point  
23 we get out to the community, but for the time being, I'm not  
24 sure how we can garner support from -- especially the rural  
25 communities out there. And so from my understand, just

1 don't have the ability to listen in here.

2 So, you know, that's something that's far beyond  
3 our control, but I just want to point that out that, you  
4 know, especially with the 22 reservations that are here in  
5 this state, many of them are so isolated that the  
6 telecommunications system is very, very limited.

7 So I'm not sure what we can do about that, but I  
8 just want to raise that. But I encourage that despite that,  
9 you know, that they continue to listen and offer their  
10 opinion. Because we're here to serve all of the Arizonians.

11 So thank you for the opportunity, Madam Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: That's, you know, an  
13 incredibly insightful comment and observation; and -- and,  
14 yes, we can do something about it. And as we flesh out our  
15 -- our website -- and we will repeat this verbally -- we can  
16 ensure that there are written, you know -- people can write  
17 a letter, a physical letter the old fashioned way, you know,  
18 and express their opinions and mail it to -- to our central  
19 location.

20 And, in fact, there was a question I believe in one  
21 of the public comments asking what our physical address was.  
22 And if somebody wanted to send something to us and doesn't  
23 have access to the Internet and they're listening --  
24 although, I don't -- you know, there's other means to  
25 listen, we're going to actually have to think through all of

1 this.

2 But, Yasmin, I know I'm putting you on the spot.  
3 Can somebody please share the address of the IRC, that if  
4 somebody wanted to send something through snail mail, it  
5 could get to us.

6 MS. RAMOS: So right now I believe the address --  
7 your new address is 1110 West Washington Street. I'm not  
8 sure about the suite number, though. So I'll have to look.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Right. That's what I can't  
10 remember either. It's on the first floor.

11 MS. RAMOS: Yes. I'll find out right now.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. That'd be terrific so  
13 we can make that accessible.

14 But, Commissioner Watchman, let's -- let's keep our  
15 eye on this. The good news is that, you know, if everything  
16 goes according to plan today, you know we're going to be  
17 starting to really build out staff; and I think our website  
18 and, you know, more importantly our strategies to be  
19 connecting with our community, can -- can significantly, you  
20 know, improve and -- and accelerate.

21 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Madam Chair, I just want to  
22 mention that our first candidate is online.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay.

24 Where -- I do not see the first candidate in my --  
25 oh. I do see the first candidate in our boxes. There we

1 go.

2 Okay. With that, we will table the agenda -- well,  
3 what we're discussing right now, we'll move back to Item No.  
4 IV, which is our interview process.

5 And with that, I would like to welcome our first  
6 candidate, Mr. Aughterton.

7 Can you please help us with the pronunciation of  
8 your last name?

9 MR. AUGHERTON: Yes, Madam Chair. Good morning.  
10 It's Tom Awe-ger-ton (phonetic).

11 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Very nice to meet you  
12 and thank you so much for your interest and for joining us  
13 this morning.

14 We are going to do something a little different;  
15 we're going to reverse the typical order that we do things  
16 with our voting, and we're going to go in opposite order  
17 today. And so with that, I'm going to take the discretion  
18 and ask the first question.

19 MS. PEISER: Commissioner --

20 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes.

21 MS. PEISER: I'm sorry, Chairwoman Neuberg. This  
22 is Pamela Peiser. I just wanted to confirm if the agenda  
23 specifically said 9:30 our time.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Oh. Okay.

25 MS. PEISER: In which case the --

1 MS. RAMOS: The agenda did not.

2 MS. PEISER: Then carry on.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. If the candidate is  
4 comfortable, we're all here, it wasn't in the agenda so the  
5 public has not been misinformed, I -- I think we can  
6 continue.

7 So I'll take the prerogative and ask the first  
8 question.

9 Please tell us a bit of why you're interested in  
10 this position; and what kind of experiences or what kind of  
11 backgrounds you have that has prepared you for this job.

12 MR. AUGHERTON: Well, good morning, Madam Chair,  
13 and good morning Commissioner Mehl and York and Watchman and  
14 Lerner; and I appreciate the opportunity and the invitation  
15 to be here this morning with you.

16 It's not without apprehension that I put the  
17 application in because the work of the Redistricting  
18 Commission, not only is as critical today as when the voters  
19 first approved it, but the political backdrop in America and  
20 Arizona makes the process even more critically focused on  
21 transparency and documentation and authenticity and  
22 approachability by the folks that are watching the process.

23 Redistricting, of course, has been problematic  
24 since the dawn of the country, and going back to the origin  
25 of the term gerrymandering and so forth.

1           The specific answer to your question is, I've been  
2           in government really going back those whole -- I'll draw  
3           attention to my maturity -- going back to 1976, when right  
4           across the street from your office location, I was an intern  
5           at the state senate; and I've been really in part of the  
6           process ever since the time when I was starting out  
7           academically with that program.

8           And I've had a lot of good fortune over the years  
9           to be working for organizations and elected leaders and  
10          appointed leaders that have been involved in some of the  
11          seminal policy issues in the last three, three and a half  
12          decades; and it's a continuing learning experience.

13          I'm originally from Washington D.C., as you see  
14          there on the résumé, and originally worked back in  
15          Washington before I came to Arizona as a graduate student,  
16          and never got away from the -- the company trade; I worked  
17          on the Hill originally and worked for the executive branch;  
18          and then when I moved to Arizona, I found this legislative  
19          internship program, which applied for, and that steered me  
20          career-wise to the path that I'm still on today as a state  
21          executive director.

22          I think that the Commission -- the position of  
23          executive director for the Commission, is really someone who  
24          is a student of the process, but also able to tap into the  
25          existing resources that would be available to try to be

1 effective for the Commission.

2 I was thinking before this morning's meeting of a  
3 metaphor that might work, and it's kind of like a maiden  
4 voyage, where each of you are the crew that is about to  
5 embark. When you first step on the ship, it's not the same  
6 footing as being on dry land; and as the ship gets underway,  
7 you're in the harbor, you look at the depths of the water,  
8 as you get out to sea, you start to watch the horizon; and  
9 when you're out to sea then you watch the weather.

10 And a new embargo like the third iteration of the  
11 Commission is somewhat similar to that: No matter how  
12 prepared and how many contingency plans the staff  
13 collectively tries to provide for the Commission, there will  
14 always be a degree of uncertainty or unpredictability to  
15 things that will come in your path as you deliberate.

16 And then, of course, Madam Chair, you have  
17 indicated your expected timeline, so to try to be ready for  
18 the elections next year; and I believe you publically  
19 indicated January.

20 So the thing that's most critical is to have a  
21 timeline but work in reverse. So if you're drop-dead  
22 deadline or your preferred deadline is January of next year,  
23 what must be done between this moment and when you make a  
24 decision on this position, to the time that you've targeted  
25 as the Chair, as the Commission of the helm, and next

1 calendar year.

2 And then you do the punch list, unlike -- not  
3 unlike you're building a house and you're working with  
4 subcontractors, as you hire your attorney and you hire your  
5 cartographer and things like that, and you assemble your  
6 actually working staff, there needs to be a punch list to  
7 make sure that, in fact, nothing has been unanticipated,  
8 nothing has planned.

9 And, finally, there has to be, I think, a focus on  
10 contingency. Everything from computer security with the  
11 materials the Commission is working with, to site locations  
12 if there is a fire one day in the hotel or if there is a  
13 water leak at the office building and so forth. The  
14 obligation of continuity with the work that the Commission  
15 requires contingency planning as well.

16 The good news, of course, is you're already in a  
17 dry dock with the Department of Administration, and you have  
18 the resources and the skills and the trained individuals  
19 there at DOA, who really run state government; so having  
20 them launch your figurative ship of state as you embargo on  
21 this journey, is really a tremendous resource that should be  
22 drawn on.

23 And I don't want to go on and take up too much time  
24 here, Madam Chair, but I think in 10 words or less, it's the  
25 timeline and the punch list, with the recognition for a

1 contingency planning as well. That's the focus.

2 Madam Chair, I think you're muted.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Sorry about that.

4 As a very quick follow-up -- thank you so much for  
5 your response -- you alluded to state government/ADOA, can  
6 you share with us how experienced are you with issues like,  
7 you know, our procurement code, personnel rules, the  
8 budgeting process, public meeting laws, things like that.

9 MR. AUGHERTON: Yes, Madam Chair and Commissioners.

10 Well, I've been doing this since the 1980s when I  
11 used to work at the Department of Corrections as the litisit  
12 (phonetic) liaison for Sam Willetts, so I've cut my teeth  
13 with staffs that have been involved with the preparation of  
14 the budget, the advocacy on behalf of the public budget  
15 submitted to both jail BC and the OSP bidding; and then  
16 articulation of the old days, we had a lot more  
17 appropriation subcommittees where the work was primarily  
18 done, but later tendency in recent years has been to work  
19 the full appropriations committee; and then after the budget  
20 is approved and signed by the governor, then the allocation  
21 procedure.

22 The time I was probably most focused on the flow of  
23 money and compliance with procurement was when I was chief  
24 of administration for the Arizona Attorney General's Office  
25 in '91 to '99; and, of course, the Attorney General back

1           then was Grant Woods. So we had a thousand employees, it  
2           was the largest law firm in the state at that time, 330  
3           attorneys, and a \$71 million budget. So in those days I had  
4           a staff of 65.

5                        So currently my budget is under \$500,000, and I  
6           have a staff of four, but the concept and principles are all  
7           the same. And really truly, it is intimidating in terms of  
8           the complexity of compliance, but it becomes second hat  
9           after you've done it for a long period of time. And once  
10          you know the basic statutory requirements of the ethical and  
11          reporting requirements, it's really also a parallel  
12          challenge of meeting the personnel at all these respective  
13          agencies and getting on the first-name basis with them, to  
14          get the inevitable assistance that you will need for a full  
15          compliance. So, whether it's the Attorney General's Office,  
16          whether it's the Auditor General's Office, whether it's the  
17          executive branch with our Board's liaison, it is what you  
18          know, almost as importantly it's who you know, too, to be in  
19          full robust compliance.

20                      CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

21                      With that, I'll turn it over to Commissioner York,  
22                      please.

23                      COMMISSIONER YORK: Good morning, Mr. Augheron.

24                      I'd like to ask you some questions regarding our  
25                      work. You know one of our key rules is to draw boundaries,

1           so I guess my -- one of the first questions I'd like you to  
2           answer or tell us about is, how do you feel the executive  
3           director would be involved in this process.

4           MR. AUGHERTON: Madam Chair, Commissioner York,  
5           this position in my interpretation does not set policy, the  
6           policy is set by the Commissioners themselves. The value or  
7           the role or the challenge for the executive director is to  
8           provide the resources and the expertise from special experts  
9           to you as you go forth on a deliberative basis.

10          I live in the town of Cave Creek, and I have been  
11          in probably four different communities in this legislative  
12          district in the last 20 years; we used to be in Scottsdale,  
13          now we're in Prescott, so I have seen the fluidity of lines  
14          as the census has indicated, population changes and  
15          population trends and so forth.

16          So we as residents of districts have to keep an  
17          open mind because we think we know which district we're in  
18          and then we see a change, it doesn't usually change who our  
19          representatives are; but geographically being centered in a  
20          particular district is not necessarily a guarantee that  
21          we'll remain in that as the process goes forward.

22          So as a voter and as a resident, we all take an  
23          active interest in where we end up, not so much in a  
24          partisan way but more in a regional way. You know, if all  
25          politics is local, we tend care about who our representative

1 is because we care about how they articulate what's  
2 important to us outside our kitchen windows, so.

3 I don't think that -- I think in 60 words or less,  
4 I think the role of the executive director is to  
5 substantially provide the resources that the Commission  
6 needs, but I also think that this adventure that you've  
7 embarked on should have some enjoyment -- and not  
8 necessarily fun per se, but a personal satisfaction as  
9 participants, and if staff can provide to you along this  
10 journey historical experts in the Arizona history issues or  
11 Arizona locations, if they can provide to you acquisitions  
12 or statisticians or others as you deliberate when it gets  
13 down to specific locations of boundaries, it might be  
14 interesting. Not to use an extensive amount of time, but  
15 might be more of a passing interest for the Commissioners to  
16 have a menu of source experts that might not ordinarily be  
17 considered in a redistricting process brought in, to give  
18 that icing that needed historical perspective that what has  
19 happened in this state historically since we joined in 1912.

20 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you, Tom.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: No further follow-up?

22 COMMISSIONER YORK: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. We'll move on to  
24 Commissioner Lerner, please.

25 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Welcome, Mr. Augherton.

1 MR. AUGHERTON: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER LERNER: The Constitution requires  
3 that the Commission conducts its effort in an honest,  
4 independent, and impartial manner to uphold the  
5 confidence -- public confidence -- in the integrity of the  
6 redistricting process.

7 Is there anything in your background that would  
8 make it difficult to fulfill this responsibility; and do you  
9 have any examples of past experiences that required  
10 bipartisan support?

11 MR. AUGHERTON: Well, two different questions.

12 COMMISSIONER LERNER: I can -- I can repeat the  
13 question.

14 MR. AUGHERTON: No, no, no. No, I got both of them  
15 but they're two kind of cradle and point questions.

16 Let me do the second one first. I have done, like  
17 I said, advocacy at the Capitol really going back to  
18 internship, but professionally since the '80s, and actually  
19 was an advocate at the Capitol for the Government. Most  
20 people don't realize that there's public sector lobbyists,  
21 but the State of Arizona also has public sector lobbyists;  
22 so cabinet-level agencies, boards and commissions, up until  
23 recently actually required the ability appear at the state  
24 legislature and now they register as lobbyists.

25 Historically, not only were -- was I trained by a

1 lot of the private sector lobbyists years ago, some of the  
2 old giants who have since retired or passed away, but the  
3 one fundamental thing that they always taught me was that  
4 someone doing advocacy does not have a vote, and that should  
5 never be construed with having power. You can offer  
6 influence. And the other admonition that I was raised on  
7 many years back, was that now only do you have not have the  
8 vote, but a conscientious advocate -- or registered  
9 lobbyist, whatever term you want to use -- you have a moral  
10 obligation to give your opponent's argument as well as  
11 advocacy argument. Now, you have to do it in good faith and  
12 in good content and do it in a way that would be  
13 representative of how they would present the issue as well.

14 Now, when you have finished giving the opponent's  
15 argument, you then, of course, try to make your argument and  
16 your justification more attractive, and hopefully with  
17 better research, you try to swing a person towards at least  
18 considering that point of view.

19 Bipartisan involvement in the state legislature was  
20 historically more a pattern and behavior of practice in the  
21 1980s and the 1990s, probably 'cause I've always been  
22 partisan, but historically in the time that I came along,  
23 issues required -- typically because of the specific number  
24 of votes available in caucuses -- they required horse  
25 training. And if anybody is old enough to remember Burton

1 Barr and Alfredo Gutierrez and Art Hamilton and so forth,  
2 the republicans at that time, got a little weary of the  
3 process, and they referred to it as going to the senate to  
4 shop at Alfredo's store.

5 So there was a policy cost of exchanging views and  
6 opinions, and eventually the votes that determined state  
7 policies on the respective chamber floors, by not only  
8 literally reaching across the aisle, but figuratively  
9 reaching across the aisle into the chamber.

10 Of course, bipartisanship is still there today, but  
11 it has -- probably has different challenges than it did  
12 20 years ago, so.

13 I just would offer this, that an absence of  
14 bipartisanship, a simple polarity with either party -- I've  
15 been in the Capitol when the democrats ran the senate; I've  
16 been at the Capitol when the republicans ran the senate, I  
17 worked going back as far as Governor Castro, Governor  
18 Mofford, who were democratic governors, and I've worked  
19 there under Nepal, Governor Brewer, Governor Mecham,  
20 Governor Symington, and so forth; and bipartisan is -- is --  
21 is the, would be underpinnings of the ability to be  
22 effective in accomplishing what you want, because democracy  
23 was never intended to be efficient. It is a bar brawl; it  
24 is people robustly arguing the merits of their positions,  
25 and hopefully from the stew in this process to the average

1 person looking in seems astonishing -- I think of the old  
2 Charles Duvall adages that two things you don't want to see  
3 is meat packing and legislation. Now, I'm paraphrasing  
4 pretty heartily there.

5 Bipartisanship is the ability to, even when have a  
6 polarity of votes, it's the ability to involve others  
7 because eventually majorities and moralities change.

8 Now, on your first question that I guess I will  
9 need reminding on that as I'm giving a filibuster here.

10 COMMISSIONER LERNER: The first part of that was,  
11 is there anything in your background that would make it  
12 difficult to fulfill the responsibility to have that honest,  
13 independent, impartial manner and uphold public confidence  
14 and integrity of the redistricting process.

15 MR. AUGHERTON: Okay. Thanks, Commissioner.

16 No, I don't believe so, and I believe that my  
17 record can speak for itself.

18 But in Arizona we're a small community, and forget  
19 the Internet, we didn't always have that, if you want to  
20 really find what someone has done, it's pretty easy to track  
21 their contacts over the years; and the political community  
22 and the residential community, and I don't believe that  
23 would be something that I anticipated in the past and would  
24 not -- I would not be concerned about having any type of  
25 moral dilemma or moral conflict with what the population of

1 the state expects from the Redistricting Commission.

2 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

4 Commissioner Mehl.

5 You're on mute, Commissioner Mehl. I did that.

6 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Here we go.

7 Welcome, Mr. Augherton, thanks for your time. The  
8 Constitution sets forth certain priority requirements for  
9 the drawing of redistricting boundaries. And are you aware  
10 of this, and as executive director how would you perceive  
11 your responsibility in following the guidelines of the  
12 Constitution?

13 MR. AUGHERTON: Well, I think the hierarchy is easy  
14 in one respect because in Arizona we follow the rule of law;  
15 the Commission follows the Arizona Constitution. The  
16 Commission follows statutory law and follows case law since  
17 its origin; and one of the resources I was referring to  
18 earlier that I think would be part of the third cycle of the  
19 discussion, would be for the person who gets this position  
20 to go back and speak to the two prior executive directors,  
21 not only for historical interest, but also to get to some  
22 fundamental underpinnings of how they thought the job could  
23 effectively be done.

24 So the -- the yardstick really -- and, of course,  
25 the results of the United States census.

1           But that would be the yardstick, in my opinion:  
2           The rule of law, the Constitution, statutory law, obviously  
3           the federal statutory law, the history of redistricting goes  
4           back to the colonies, and then case law since you on the  
5           Commission have been established by the voters and  
6           propositions since.

7           COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you.

8           Commissioner Watchman.

9           VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you, and good morning,  
10          Tom. How are you doing?

11          MR. AUGHERTON: Yes, sir; thank you.

12          VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Good, good.

13          It's important for the Commission to hear from as  
14          many communities across the state as possible. What -- what  
15          is your vision as to we should conduct statewide outreach,  
16          and how do we engage the community in our broad state?

17          MR. AUGHERTON: Like -- Madam Chair, Commissioner  
18          Watchman, thank for you the question.

19          Like was discussed earlier and, of course, things  
20          are different now with the pandemic, when I worked for the  
21          Arizona Supreme Court, the high court here in the state  
22          actually goes out and holds regional live sessions in rural  
23          communities primarily, inviting local grade school kids and  
24          high school kids and their families to participate because  
25          not a lot of folks here in rural Arizona get to Phoenix and

1 get to sit through a live Arizona Supreme Court session; and  
2 afterwards the judges take -- the justices take questions  
3 from the audience; and it's an awesome opportunity to reach  
4 out to the local press.

5 This is a very small and very humble version of  
6 that, but I stole the idea from Dave Byers of the AOC, and  
7 we do it at The Massage Board, and we actually give credit  
8 hours to LMTs, licensed massage therapists, that come to the  
9 public meetings of the board, as a way to give them hours of  
10 continuing education credit by attending to participate, and  
11 they sit through a live -- a live hearing with  
12 administrative questions, and many questions the respondent  
13 bring their attorneys. So, it's just like sitting through,  
14 and, in fact, is an administrative judicial process.

15 And again there's a Q and A session after that --  
16 that primary session to respond to people's questions about  
17 the mechanics and so forth.

18 You know, Arizona may have one political reality,  
19 but you've lived here long enough, if you're the tour at  
20 Canyon de Chelly, or you've walked along the canal in Yuma,  
21 or you're familiar with South Tucson versus regular Tucson,  
22 there were many realities here in the state, and the  
23 realities are the self-analysis that people do who live in  
24 these communities, who when it comes to governments, they  
25 have expectations of the people that represent them; not

1           only coming from their communities and being aware of their  
2           issues, but also making them accessible of the deliberative  
3           process through the representatives.

4                        So I don't think there is a substitute for  
5           physically going out to the hinterlands. Those of us who  
6           live here in Phoenix in the great state of Maricopa -- and  
7           I'm a former Tucsonan, so I say that with a little bit of  
8           snarkiness -- but Arizona is larger than Phoenix, and it is  
9           larger than Maricopa County.

10                      And there's no downside to outreach, by making the  
11           physical effort to go out and meet in local communities at  
12           local facilities with local press and local elected  
13           officials that are acknowledged in that process, I think the  
14           attendees, the Commission, and the staff actually come away  
15           with more value than the people that have shown up for the  
16           hearing that day; and when you're referring to your duties  
17           back in Phoenix and back to your office, I just think you've  
18           seen a face of Arizona that we don't ordinarily see inside  
19           the freeways and stuck on our electronic devices 24 hours a  
20           day.

21                      So, you know, a lot of people probably do travel  
22           around the state, but it's primarily recreational; when you  
23           go to a small rural community, and you see what their  
24           meeting facilities look like, you meet their elected  
25           officials, and you see boarded-up windows and so forth,

1           there's no way to really appreciate the true state. You can  
2           do it this way, online, but I think that physically the act  
3           of travel, the act of being hosted, and meeting with local  
4           officials have a lot of value to the extent it can be done  
5           with pandemic.

6                         Now, you can't do that, I think there could be  
7           Op-Ed pieces in local newspapers. That's my other side  
8           suggestion.

9                         VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Well, if I could ask a  
10          follow-up, Madam Chair.

11                        CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Please.

12                        VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: You know, I -- I come from  
13          the Navajo Nation and so, you know, that's always the  
14          challenge. You mentioned local communities, but you didn't  
15          mention tribal communities, and so.

16                        You know, it's -- it's an interesting fact, you  
17          know, you got tribal government with the reservation and the  
18          state, and so in my opinion, you know, there's almost a  
19          separate -- separate country, if you will. So, what's your  
20          experience working with tribes, because tribal land is about  
21          a quarter of the state, and so.

22                        So when you refer to the "local," does that also  
23          include the tribal communities? Because a lot of tribal  
24          members look to their tribal leadership, you know, to  
25          represent them like here -- here in the state of Arizona.

1           So what's your take on working with the tribal communities,  
2           which is also very important?

3                   MR. AUGHERTON: Mr. Watchman, that's a very good  
4           question, and I actually probably am guilty of omission that  
5           I did not offer that reference. When I first started at the  
6           legislature as an intern in 1976, I worked under Senator  
7           Hubbard who was on the senate finance committee, and then  
8           later years when I was doing advocacy at the Capitol for the  
9           state, I worked closely with Senator Jim Henderson. And  
10          Senator Henderson lived in Window Rock, and he would leave  
11          for work on Monday morning, and those cowboy boots would hit  
12          the accelerator, and he would brag to me about speeds which  
13          I won't plaster publically on the state highway system, but  
14          he was able to commute from home to the State Capitol in  
15          time for 9 o'clock to 10 o'clock meetings.

16                   So I am ommissive in not mentioning that upfront,  
17          too, which I apologize. The Native American communities in  
18          Arizona not only, of course, are the larger reservations,  
19          but smaller of the reservations and native lands as well,  
20          and they are many times invisible within the metropolitan  
21          and urban experience. I should say Gila River Indians and  
22          the Mari- -- Salt River and Maricopa, and the Pima, Tohono  
23          O'odham, and so forth.

24                   And it's probably useful to remember that until  
25          1964, Native Americans didn't have the vote. So the history

1 of inclusion culturally in this country is still new, and  
2 the history of representation bringing effective value to  
3 the residents of these lands could arguably -- arguably be  
4 improved in terms of basic commodities of water and  
5 electricity and things like that, Internet and so forth as  
6 you refer to earlier.

7 I live in Cave Creek which is -- used to be rural,  
8 part of it is kind of a suburb of a suburb, but I didn't  
9 have Internet here until recently, and we would cobble  
10 together telephones and so forth; and -- and, really, the  
11 standard by which the state lives by is not universal, and  
12 it's probably important of those who are still not  
13 benefitting from the infrastructure, whether it's highways,  
14 water, electricity, and so forth, remind those of us who  
15 flip a switch and flip a Wi-Fi receiver, that we're not  
16 quite all on the same page literally yet.

17 But, again, the point you make as a representative  
18 of the Navajo Nation is something bears not only awareness  
19 of this staff position, but probably an active conscious  
20 effort to maybe address additional attention to communicate  
21 given the infrastructure limitations of some of these lands.  
22 Even in the -- even in the urban areas quite frankly.

23 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

25 MR. AUGHERTON: You know, one what last thing I can

1 tell you, if it has any amusement value to you, sir, is I  
2 used to serve on the Maricopa Association of Governments and  
3 I was from a small community, of which there were few on  
4 MAG, and we -- they kind of put us at the kids' table, all  
5 the smaller towns were at the kids' table; and I always sat  
6 next to the governor from the Maricopa Nation at that time,  
7 and we could kind of visit among ourselves just what issues  
8 were important to us while we were waiting for the larger  
9 urban areas to decide what was going to proceed.

10 So I'm not fully conversed on what it means, but  
11 I've had some peripheral experience of what it means to be  
12 at the kids' table, so.

13 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Appreciate that, thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you. We -- we have  
15 just a few more minutes so I'm going to squeeze one more  
16 question in, and then I know we're running out of time, but  
17 leave a couple minutes if there's anything very brief that  
18 you'd like to ask of us.

19 But have you followed either of the two previous  
20 Commissions; and, if so, are there any lessons you've  
21 learned that you would like to bring to this Commission?

22 MR. AUGHERTON: Well, as ex- -- Madam Chair,  
23 Commissioners, as an exercise for today I went back and  
24 revisited what Bart Turner, who I had been friends with for  
25 many, many years, but we lost touch in recent years, and of

1 course, he was the original co-chairman of Proposition 106,  
2 and I went back and spoke to former Attorney General Grant  
3 Woods who was involved as well, and then I went through your  
4 web page, which actually has a lot of gold to find.

5 The public comments began with the preliminary  
6 comment on your page from Dennis Burke, in which he was kind  
7 of sending a message in a bottle to the new commissioners  
8 today about what the task is before you, and by visiting --  
9 again, the value of historical references I think in Arizona  
10 can never be understated. By going back and speaking to  
11 some of the literal campaign volunteers who -- and, by the  
12 way, Bart Turner now is an elected official in Glendale City  
13 Council. But going back and talking to them today, 20 years  
14 after, I haven't had the opportunity or time to talk to the  
15 two former executive directors, but I think that would be  
16 fascinating.

17 It -- it was newer territory. It was like an  
18 outward bound experience I think originally for -- for --  
19 for the Commission. You know, Arizona, regardless of  
20 whether people are republican, democrat, independent, or  
21 don't even participate, the one thing we all have in common  
22 that runs our blood, and whether you've been here through  
23 generations and you're original, or whether you've been here  
24 for two years from another part of the country, if you have  
25 not been from where you came from, you will become here

1 somewhat of a populus.

2 The origins of Proposition 106 really show the  
3 character of Arizona. People can root for their teams, blue  
4 and red and things like that, but at the end of the day, if  
5 you look back at how we snookered President Taft and took  
6 out the initiatives and referendums to get to be the 48th  
7 state in the country and then quickly put it back in, the  
8 citizenry of this state, in addition to voting, are highly  
9 likely to become activists, even sometimes to the chagrin  
10 and the dismay of their elected officials because they think  
11 they have the inherent right to communicate the ferocity of  
12 their opinion if they're not getting a receptive audience.

13 So, you know, there's a great legal review done by  
14 your former attorney Mary O'Grady, which kind of gives the  
15 pathrolige of the Commission in terms of cases before the  
16 Supreme Court and the leaders of the legislature and so  
17 forth; but I think the legacy, if you were to ask what the  
18 DNA of the Commission is, it starts with the people. And  
19 not necessarily the co-chairs or the supporters of the  
20 effort, the concept of the Arizona public, which they've  
21 been known to do periodically, to come up with this  
22 proposition. I voted it in favor of it initially, it seemed  
23 like a reasonable healthy civics pursuit, and I think it's  
24 been proven to be so.

25 There will never be an absence of criticism or

1           skepticism, things like that, you, Commissioners, have  
2           embarked on a journey where you will become an audience of  
3           one, you'll be together as an audience of five, and you'll  
4           have no shortage of people coming to you with all types of  
5           materials and all types of opinions. And I've only been an  
6           elected official for a very short period of time, but when  
7           you spend time in your head before you cast a vote and when  
8           you spend time after all this input, and you decide who you  
9           are and how you're going to vote, it's a very solitary  
10          experience on how you vote and what you decide to do and  
11          what you authorize; you can't really discuss with your  
12          family or your friends, it's something that's internal to  
13          your value and your experience even after all the input has  
14          been provided.

15                 So the challenge for this third iteration of the  
16          Commission, is this caliber of the individuals that are on  
17          this commission today, and the chair, of course, who is  
18          going to be the gentle orchestra leader as you go forward,  
19          is the internal process by which you deliberate, and I think  
20          that is the challenge of the Redistricting Commission.

21                 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

22                 In -- in the last minute, I want to -- is there any  
23          urgent, important questions from my fellow Commissioners  
24          that you'd like to just close the loop on?

25                 MR. AUGHERTON: Madam Chair, no. Thank you very

1 much for the opportunity to ask a question. I don't really  
2 have any. I wanted to thank you for the invitation to be  
3 here this morning. This is the big league. This is very  
4 exciting. I'm very flattered to be in an excellent pool of  
5 candidates.

6 I am going to shamelessly plug Kristina Gomez who  
7 is a candidate coming up to you later --

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay.

9 MR. AUGHERTON: -- she works in the same building  
10 with myself, she's the gentle woman of the Dental Board, and  
11 we work in the same building as it's kind of a Hogwarts of  
12 boards and commissions, we're all in one location, and we  
13 all keep up with what is happening, but I did want to give  
14 her a plug because she used to work with the Commission, and  
15 I actually did seek her out and try to get some background  
16 for today's meeting, so.

17 But thank you again for this opportunity, it's very  
18 flattering.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you so much for joining  
20 us and thank you for your passion for Arizona. We're --  
21 we're very appreciative.

22 MR. AUGHERTON: Thanks, guys.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay.

24 MR. AUGHERTON: Bye-bye.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Bye-bye.

1 (Whereupon Mr. Augherton exits the meeting.)

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. With that, we have a  
3 very brief break before our next applicant will come up.  
4 The next applicant is Keely Varvel Hartsell.

5 MS. RAMOS: Chairwoman, do you want me to try to  
6 get her on now or should we just take a few minutes?

7 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: It's very close. I'm -- I'm  
8 okay waiting a couple minutes.

9 MS. RAMOS: Perfect.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I wouldn't be surprised if  
11 she, you know, pops up, you know, a minute or two early; and  
12 if we have a little space in between interviews, that --  
13 that's okay.

14 Thank you.

15 (Whereupon Keely Varvel Hartsell joins the  
16 meeting.)

17 MS. RAMOS: And we have Keely on.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Hello.

19 MS. HARTSELL: Hello.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you, Ms. Hartsell.  
21 Thank you so much for joining us today and for your interest  
22 in this position. With that, I think we will just dive in.

23 MS. HARTSELL: Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Please tell us why you're  
25 interested in this position and what in your background

1 makes you feel that you're prepared and qualified for this.

2 MS. HARTSELL: Well, I believe that the  
3 reapportionment process is probably one of, if not the most  
4 important, political processes that the government engages  
5 in because of its long listing -- long-lasting impact on  
6 policymaking because of the representation that results as a  
7 result of that process.

8 I personally feel that the Independent  
9 Redistricting Commission approach is a very innovative  
10 approach. I -- I like the idea; I like the idea of removing  
11 people who have a self-interest in this process because  
12 they're running for election themselves from the  
13 decision-making. I know firsthand how that can influence  
14 the decision-making. And, honestly, I think the  
15 competitiveness factor, even though I know that it has a lot  
16 of other areas that it competes with in terms of being able  
17 to be considered, is something important and unique about  
18 this process because it creates, I think, competitiveness,  
19 creates a sense of accountability of elected officials, and  
20 -- and so that to me is a feature of the Redistricting  
21 Commissions Band-Aid that I think is very unique.

22 In terms of my own background, I anticipated a  
23 question about that and I have a lot to say, and I think  
24 you're going to ask me more questions. So, I'll just say in  
25 general, I think I have a unique blend of skills and

1           experience that make me very well suited for this position,  
2           because I've done work across many government agencies that  
3           give me a little bit here and there of the different skills  
4           and experience that you guys really need in an executive  
5           director to help provide you the support you need to be able  
6           to get this really difficult job done.

7                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: As a very brief follow-up,  
8           how familiar -- familiar are you with the state statutes  
9           regarding procurement code, personnel rules, budgeting  
10          process, and public meeting law.

11                   MS. HARTSELL: Well, I have been an administrator,  
12          an executive-level administrator, of a very large state  
13          agency. I was the director of the division that oversees  
14          employment services and programs for the Department of  
15          Economic Security, which had 1,500 employees at the time I  
16          was there, as well as most recently being the executive  
17          manager over the Recording Office in the Elections  
18          Department, the parts of the Election Department that the  
19          Recording -- the Recorder supervises at the County. So  
20          those two jobs have given me extensive experience in both  
21          the state and the county, which is very very similar, almost  
22          identical in many cases to the state, the laws and rules and  
23          processes around those issues.

24                   So procurement specifically, I've overseen  
25          personally two very large procurement RFP processes. When I

1 was at DES, I had oversaw -- you know, had staff and oversaw  
2 those staff that worked with the contracts that we had with  
3 the County, which were multimillion dollar contracts, so I'm  
4 very familiar with those processes and how they -- you know,  
5 how they're laid out in law, as well as the procedures you  
6 go through when you're selecting and doing evaluations of  
7 those contracts.

8 I also have managed those consultants, which is a  
9 whole different job in terms of making sure that they're  
10 staying accountable and staying within budget and asking  
11 before they move forward with things that cost you money,  
12 those kinds of things I'm very familiar with; and also just  
13 all the other type of things that come with administration.

14 So very familiar with personnel laws; I have  
15 recruited and hired and fired, just like you guys are kind  
16 of making your way through right now, through the state  
17 personnel employees.

18 I know about budgeting, financial planning,  
19 accounting processes and procedures, facilities, equipment,  
20 all those types of things that -- that you do day-to-day  
21 when you're operating a large man- -- or a large agency.

22 And in public records, I've worked in areas that  
23 have a lot of scrutiny that comes to public records and open  
24 meetings and archiving and retention of records because at  
25 DES, obviously, I was working on social welfare programs

1 that was somewhat controversial, and then at Recorders  
2 Office and Elections Department, we had lot of scrutiny and  
3 hundreds of public records request, so I -- and also we were  
4 the agency responsible for recording all of the property  
5 records for the County. So we worked directly with the  
6 state library and archives on retention of documents, and I  
7 have a lot of experience in those two areas, and managing --  
8 you know, getting those kinds of resources or getting those  
9 types of requests responded to in an effective way.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

11 Commissioner York, please.

12 COMMISSIONER YORK: Good morning, Ms. Hartsell.

13 How are you?

14 MS. HARTSELL: Good. Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER YORK: Nice to see.

16 I have a question; I assume you've read in  
17 extensive -- well, a bit about the job description, and  
18 there are many different skills that are needed, and I'm  
19 concerned about, and I guess I'd like you to describe to me,  
20 what do you believe in some of these attributes that might  
21 be something you're challenged with, and also describe to us  
22 some of the attributes you might have your strengths with.

23 MS. HARTSELL: Well, like I -- I touched on, I  
24 think I have a unique blend lots of experience and skills  
25 that will be helpful in this job. So I would say, first

1 off, I am very familiar with redistricting process; I've had  
2 some level of involvement in it for the last three  
3 redistricting processes, I've done a lot of even statistical  
4 analysis and some rudimentary mapping myself during those  
5 processes, and provided advice to various players and  
6 stakeholders, primarily legislators around what's going on  
7 and what the impact will be from, experience there.

8 A lot of the jobs I've had, particularly the human  
9 service jobs, legislative, and then most recently in the  
10 Elections Department of the Records Office, I've done a lot  
11 of work in community outreach and engagement, so I've  
12 developed and implemented various effective strategies to  
13 get people information about what we're doing, as well as  
14 engage them in the process.

15 And I've worked a lot with the media; I've actually  
16 been a press person, at one point I was a press secretary  
17 for the legislature at one point. So I've done everything  
18 from write press releases to create social media content to  
19 managing large-scale paid advertising campaigns.

20 Legislature, I have a lot of experience with the  
21 legislature, I know their processes and procedures, the  
22 budget process which I know is really important to you right  
23 now, like how to interface with that process strategically  
24 and try to get what you need, and the timelines for that;  
25 and also the -- you know, the relationship and the history

1           between the legislature and IRC I have a lot of familiarity  
2           with because I was an observer of that and worked on that  
3           and advised legislators around those issues.

4                       And then I think the most recent work I've done the  
5           last four years in elections is very important to this job.  
6           Not only have I had to theoretically understand the Voting  
7           Rights Act and other federal legislation like Help America  
8           Vote Act, the National Voter Registration Act, the issues  
9           that prompted US Department of Justice preclearance in the  
10          past. I actually had to implement programs and work with  
11          staff to maintain compliance with those laws, and so I have  
12          a very under- -- you know, deep understanding of those laws  
13          and what their intention is.

14                      And I have a really -- a lot of legal community  
15          that does election work; I've worked with all of them over  
16          the last four years, and even previous to that because  
17          obviously they had a lot of interest in legislative work as  
18          well; and we did a lot of mapping and GIS-type work based on  
19          those districts for the Country for elections  
20          administration. A lot of people don't think about how these  
21          districts are going to actually impact the administration of  
22          elections, but they do. So, again, I have that kind of  
23          perspective that I draw on.

24                      And I guess, you know, I just worked for public  
25          officials for a long time, usually elected officials but

1       also boards and commissions, and I have a -- I feel like I  
2       have the ability to know when I can just take care of the  
3       housekeeping stuff and keep it off your plate, but know that  
4       this might kind of be something of a red flag that I need to  
5       rise of the -- of the Commission and seek their guidance on  
6       how to handle it.

7               So I think those are all my strengths, maybe overdo  
8       it in terms of answering that question.

9               In terms of the weaknesses, I think, you know, a  
10       hurdle I feel like I have, though personally I feel like I  
11       can do it, is having the confidence of everyone on the  
12       Commission that I can work across the aisle. I do realize  
13       that the most of my work has been with democrats in the  
14       past, though I would say particularly most recently, I've  
15       had to work very closely with republicans; and, frankly, in  
16       just in a nonpartisan way. I mean, I didn't even sign  
17       petitions in the last four years, because I felt like it was  
18       my job to be as unbiased and as, you know, as I could be in  
19       terms of administering the election department and all the  
20       responsibilities we had because that was my duty.

21               And I think integrity and ethics is very important  
22       to me. I don't cut corners; I don't take liberties or bend  
23       the rules, and so all I can do really is, you know, convince  
24       the folks on the Commission that may be skeptical of my  
25       intentions and that I am somebody who can work on all sides

1 and bring that kind of consensus building strategy to the  
2 work that I do here, but that I feel like is -- is frankly  
3 the biggest hurdle that concerns me walking into this job.

4 COMMISSIONER YORK: Sort of on a follow-up  
5 question, what do you -- how would you describe your --  
6 obviously we'll have some conflicts as we draw boundaries  
7 and create new --

8 MS. HARTSELL: I didn't hear -- what did you say?  
9 I'm sorry, can you say it again? I lost you for a second.

10 COMMISSIONER YORK: I said obviously we'll have  
11 some conflicts as we develop new districts, can you give us  
12 a glimpse into some of your conflict resolution skills?

13 MS. HARTSELL: What I feel like the important thing  
14 about conflict resolution is, first off, doing the homework  
15 to really understand all the parties involved and get to  
16 know them, take the time to understand what motivates them,  
17 why they're here, wh- -- what they want to accomplish, maybe  
18 what constituencies or issues they feel are important to  
19 them and are going to be someone they feel accountable to,  
20 so that you are walking into any kind of conversation, to  
21 the extent possible, seeing the perspective of all the  
22 people around the table.

23 And I think the important thing in terms of  
24 facilitating and working through conflicts, is really to  
25 help find the common ground, and helping folks move toward

1 consistent -- around the things that they have in common,  
2 and hopefully mitigating to some -- you know, as much as you  
3 can, the issues that create conflict.

4 And, really, it's about communication and open  
5 minded and being willing to compromise. And for me as a  
6 staff person, I think understanding when, I've done -- you  
7 know, I've done my job in terms of giving advice and being  
8 helpful and providing the guidance that's appropriate for my  
9 position; but, ultimately, you guys are the decision-makers,  
10 and there comes a point where I have to step away and say "I  
11 can't be personally invested in this," because they are the  
12 ones who are accountable to the public. They've been  
13 appointed to these positions; and so maybe you're going to  
14 decide something that I personally don't agree with, but  
15 it's not my place to try to undermine that or -- or push  
16 that, you know, in a way that is -- is counter to what you  
17 as the appointed officials who have this job  
18 constitutionally want to do.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

20 Commissioner Lerner.

21 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Some of this -- welcome,  
22 Ms. Hartsell.

23 MS. HARTSELL: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you for being here.

25 Some of this is kind of addressed a little bit in

1 terms of this, you've covered quite a bit of things that --  
2 that were in there.

3 I'd like to just ask you questions about the IRC's  
4 mandate that we have. What -- how do you see yourself best  
5 helping us to succeed, what role do you play to help us  
6 succeed?

7 MS. HARTSELL: Well, I think first and foremost,  
8 having watched your previous meetings, I just -- it, like,  
9 pains me to see all of the housekeeping stuff that you guys  
10 are so bogged down on without having staff. So I think  
11 being able to take some of that off your plate, being able  
12 to have the general knowledge about how government works to  
13 just sort of answer your question right away or behind the  
14 scenes so it's not taking up your time in these meetings.  
15 So I think just being that sort of person who understands  
16 how government works, is a really huge benefit, I think  
17 would be a benefit to you now.

18 I'm a strong manager; I've -- I've managed people  
19 for a long time so, and I find that hiring is 95 percent of  
20 the battle; if you hire the right person, you're not going  
21 to have problems, and I've pretty effective at and  
22 successful in hiring good people. So I think trying to get  
23 you a team onboard that's going to be able to serve you  
24 well, and do that in a way where we minimize the number, you  
25 know, people who maybe are going to create problems down the

1 line, that's I think an important thing that I would do for  
2 you.

3 And then I do have just history and experience and  
4 knowledge from many, many years working in politics in  
5 Arizona, and I think that I can just provide that to you as  
6 context sometimes.

7 And, like I said, I -- I think I'm a good  
8 facilitator. One of the key things I did in the last four  
9 years was help to broker the agreement between Republican  
10 Adrian Fontes and the republican-controlled County Board of  
11 Supervisors in terms of how we were not just going to  
12 philosophically manage the -- to manage the Elections  
13 Department, but actually operationalize it; and then I went  
14 day to day and worked with the staff to make that happen.

15 So I think I can help you from a policymaking  
16 decision level in terms of helping you get some guidance,  
17 giving you guidance there as appropriate, but also taking  
18 that back and actually making it happen on the ground so  
19 that you get work done by your staff as efficient and  
20 effective, and isn't wasting, you know, the time you have  
21 because I really feel like you guys need to be focused on  
22 the big picture, the difficult decisions, engaging the  
23 community and, you know, being -- that's where I would think  
24 your time is being spent, and so I would hope that I could  
25 take a lot of those other pressures off of your back.

1 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay.

3 Commissioner Mehl, please.

4 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you. Welcome.

5 MS. HARTSELL: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER MEHL: You know, the -- the  
7 Constitution talks about certain priorities for the drawing  
8 of district boundaries, and you mentioned competitiveness as  
9 being very important, but the Constitution has multiple  
10 factors. Are you --

11 MS. HARTSELL: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER MEHL: -- familiar with that and how  
13 would you weigh those factors and how would -- how would  
14 that influence how you guide this Commission as how you  
15 follow the law?

16 MS. HARTSELL: Yes, I'm very familiar with the six  
17 factors and all the discussion over the past years about how  
18 they should be weighed.

19 Obviously the legal requirements, the very first,  
20 the US Constitution and the Voting Rights Act compliance is  
21 non-negotiable, and I would feel like that to the extent we  
22 can make them equal populations is non-negotiable, too.

23 The other four, obviously you can tell just by the  
24 language, to the extent practicable; and then last one,  
25 competitiveness, arguably, some argue would be a lower

1 priority than the others.

2 I think -- I think they all need to be taken into  
3 consideration, the other four. Like I said, I think the  
4 competitiveness is a unique factor here that you don't see  
5 in other areas, so that's -- I -- I like it. But I am  
6 pragmatic about understanding the challenges. I think it's  
7 extremely challenging, if not impossible to -- to accomplish  
8 all six of those in a way that's going to -- certainly  
9 everybody is going to agree with your interpretation.

10 And so it's -- it's going to be a process; it needs  
11 to be a process of community engagement to where you  
12 understand from the community and the stakeholders, as well  
13 as in your own minds, how those should be weighed and what  
14 those -- those -- you know, where the balance is and what  
15 compromises should be made; and so I think my role wouldn't  
16 necessarily be to push one or the other, but to help you  
17 facilitate that process where you feel comfortable that  
18 you've gotten the kind of information you need, whether  
19 that's community input or legal or, you know, philosophical,  
20 about those six areas and are able to make an informed  
21 decision as you move forward. When you make decision by  
22 decision, because this is going to feel different when  
23 you're talking about Yuma and San Luis than it is when  
24 you're talking about Flagstaff and Sedona.

25 Like, it's going to -- it's going to be -- it's

1 going to be challenging. I have no doubt this is going to  
2 be very challenging. And like I said, I think that balance  
3 is really the crux of the issue here, and it's difficult to  
4 achieve. So I guess I will just say I understand your  
5 plight and I can help -- just help you have a process that  
6 you feel gives you the ability to have contemplated all of  
7 these issues in a way so that -- that you make a decision,  
8 you feel like it's the best informed decision you can make.

9 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Watchman,  
11 please.

12 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

13 And good morning, Ms. Hartsell.

14 MS. HARTSELL: Hi.

15 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Hi. You mentioned the  
16 challenges in the community, and we certainly have a diverse  
17 community here in Arizona. What's your vision on how you  
18 would conduct with the Commission statewide outreach and  
19 community engagement?

20 MS. HARTSELL: Well, I would -- I know you guys  
21 have been talking about a listening tour, and I would agree  
22 that's probably the first step, especially since you're  
23 waiting for the census data, and I think going physically  
24 and being places is important to get a flavor of those  
25 communities. I think it's great that we have the online

1 option, 'cause it just allows more people to participate.  
2 So I think certainly some sort of a hybrid approach would be  
3 good.

4 I think it's really important that that work is  
5 well publicized so that you're getting stakeholders maybe  
6 just beyond the typical types of people that are really  
7 engaged in politics all the time because, you know,  
8 ultimately most voters are not engaged like, really, day in  
9 and day out on all the ins and outs of politics.

10 So I would, you know, use the background I have in  
11 developing community relations strategies and public  
12 relations strategies to try to get you as much penetration  
13 into those communities as possible with those -- with those  
14 meetings, and to get the kind of media coverage you'd need  
15 to -- to get that done.

16 I do have -- the last job I had, we did receive a  
17 national award for our community engagement program that  
18 around stakeholder roundtable program, and so I've certainly  
19 implemented large-scale efforts to go out and work in the  
20 community and get them involved in the process.

21 So that's -- I think the listening tour is a good  
22 idea. And, frankly, I know I've also heard you guys talking  
23 about, you know, once you get the maps you can kind of work  
24 quickly. I frankly think you should probably do another  
25 round of in-person meetings after you have the maps done or

1 draft map people done, so that people have a chance to  
2 react, too; because if you don't, I think people are going  
3 to have -- they're going to be critical of this process.

4 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Follow-up. Can you help me  
5 explain -- what's your definition of the communities here in  
6 this state? Kind of a list of them.

7 MS. HARTSELL: Well, I think that's a broad -- it's  
8 a broad constituency for this effort. I mean, obviously,  
9 your political parties are major stakeholders in this  
10 process, as well as the sitting elected officials and people  
11 who want to run for office; but I think that the whole --  
12 the beauty of this process is the idea it is supposed be  
13 involving other people than that.

14 So I would say your local communities by cities,  
15 towns, the tribal nations, the various groups that represent  
16 people of interest in these areas, the disabled, the folks  
17 that are protected by the U.S. Department of Justice Voting  
18 Rights Act, people who speak other languages, the -- I think  
19 even to the extent you can through successful public  
20 relations strategies engage sort of regular people that  
21 aren't necessarily showing up to groups and activities, to  
22 at least be aware of this process and -- and how it impacts  
23 them and impacts long-term politics in this state, I think  
24 efforts to try to outreach to those people is important.

25 And, luckily, with technology and social media,

1           you've got -- we've got a lot of opportunities, I think, to  
2           do that and probably have more engagement in this process  
3           this time than ever before because it's so much easier now  
4           to get the information and to interface with his ag- -- with  
5           you guys as a Commission and the agency.

6                        So I would take a really broad brush, I even know,  
7           you know, social service groups are interested in this issue  
8           because they care about their clients and they want to  
9           register them to vote. So there are sometimes some groups  
10          that you wouldn't even expect that are interested, that I  
11          think I would take a very broad brush. Everyone from, you  
12          know, neighborhood associations to veteran's groups, to --  
13          you know, any kind of group out there I think probably cares  
14          about who they vote for every -- every few years to try to  
15          at least make sure that they know that they have the  
16          opportunity to try and engage in this process.

17                       VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.

18                       CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you,  
19          Commissioner Watchman.

20                       Next question. Have you followed either of the two  
21          previous Commissions; and, if so, are there any lessons  
22          you've learned that you want to bring to this Commission?

23                       MS. HARTSELL: Yes, I've followed their work quite  
24          closely.

25                       I think that -- I think that you can't remove

1 politics from this process. I think you've just got to go  
2 into this realizing it's a very political process and just  
3 admit that from the start. And I think the -- the trap I  
4 sort of feel like some of them fell into a little bit, was,  
5 you know, pitting these -- these six factors against each  
6 over and finding -- you know, using that for political gain  
7 sometimes. And I -- really -- ultimately, that might be  
8 impossible to avoid, but I -- it feels like it's not in the  
9 best interest of the voters to kind of easily fall into  
10 those traps.

11 And so I think I would just bring to this the idea,  
12 one, that you really need to take a broad brush in terms of  
13 getting community input; and just because you've got the  
14 squeakiest wheels, that doesn't necessarily mean that they  
15 represent the vast majority of the people out there.

16 And then secondly, really work hard to try and find  
17 consensus to create maps that create -- that achieve this  
18 balance. And even -- and, you know, I think that there will  
19 be some solidarity in all of you working together to maybe  
20 fight off some of the -- the pressures you're getting from  
21 those that have more of a specific interest.

22 And, you know, and that's not to minimize the fact  
23 that I know some of you have been appointed by partisan  
24 folks, you certainly have that as a huge stakeholder; but I  
25 think ultimately trying to have a collaborative approach

1 will help -- will help minimize the controversy because it  
2 won't be -- the people who want to create controversy and  
3 division won't be able to play you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

5 I think we'll have time for probably one more  
6 question, and then a very quick opportunity for you,  
7 Ms. Hartsell, to ask question of us.

8 Commissioner York, you have an additional question.

9 COMMISSIONER YORK: Yeah, I had one additional  
10 question.

11 I was curious, Ms. Hartsell, if you had any  
12 experience in dealing with media or in the social media  
13 arena as it relates to this issue.

14 MS. HARTSELL: Not specifically on redistricting,  
15 but -- well, other than I've probably written a few press  
16 releases about it for legislators in the past, but certainly  
17 on elections issues. So, yes, I was -- I was sort of the  
18 big boss so I had people that were involved day in and day  
19 out on the actual media work, but I -- you know, I've  
20 written text for press releases; I'm familiar with the  
21 reporter community, I have relationships with the reporter  
22 community; I've been a public spokesperson, though frankly I  
23 like it when the appointed or elected officials are more of  
24 the people out front when it comes to being a public  
25 spokesperson, but I would certainly do whatever it was that

1           you wanted me to do in that way.

2                       I am familiar with creating social media content  
3           for all of the platforms, so there's some variances, there's  
4           also some sort of tricks around how those things work, like  
5           you can't post too frequently or they start hiding your  
6           posts; and I'm familiar Google analytics and some of the  
7           ways to evaluate the effectiveness of your social media  
8           reach; and, like I said, I don't know that there's the  
9           funding for it, but I think I certainly have worked with  
10          organizations that have extensive paid advertising campaigns  
11          around elections-type projects as well. And so if there was  
12          an interest in trying to do something that was a more broad  
13          outreach than kind of what we could do on the cheap, I have  
14          experience doing that as well and overseeing those types of  
15          consultants and -- and programs to make sure that they're  
16          cost efficient and targeted, and we're getting the biggest  
17          bang for our buck in terms of the media buys and that sort  
18          of thing.

19                    So, yes, I have pretty extensive experience on the  
20          public relations front when it comes to working with the  
21          media.

22                    COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you.

23                    CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. So we can -- I believe  
24          we have the time to move on to another question if  
25          Commissioner Lerner would like to ask a question.

1 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

2 One would be -- so you would be a go-to person for  
3 the Commissioners, and you've actually mentioned that you  
4 had partisanship in your background as part of that, how  
5 would you balance the communication that needs to occur?  
6 With the Commissioners, we have different interests on the  
7 Commission, of the Commissioners we do have partisan  
8 backgrounds. How would you balance of working with the  
9 Commissioners as a result of that of your background?

10 MS. HARTSELL: Well, you know, it is the case that  
11 I've worked for democrats in the past, but even in those  
12 settings, it's been for groups of people -- who might all  
13 belong to the same party, but I'll tell you they certainly  
14 have a lot of different opinions about things. And so I've  
15 had to work for caucuses as large as 29 members, and all of  
16 them have equal access, and I had to serve them all with,  
17 you know, with integrity and confidentiality if they  
18 requested it.

19 I think it's really important, and this isn't  
20 something I've heard you guys talk a lot about and maybe we  
21 haven't gotten to this point yet because you don't have  
22 staff, but I think there need to be clearcut protocols  
23 around how you guys want to be communicated with. I think  
24 that if there's the expectation that things you say to me  
25 are confidential unless you tell me otherwise, that's

1 completely your prerogative; and I would certainly respect  
2 that. I've done that. I've had to work -- I've had to  
3 literally, you know, draft bills that are in direct conflict  
4 of each other for two members of the same caucus and not  
5 talk to either one of them about it, and give one, you know,  
6 strategy advice on how to sell their bill and the other  
7 strategy advice on how to sell their bill. So this is not  
8 an unusual place for me to be in terms of having people of  
9 competing and different agenda needing staff support.

10 And so, like I said, I think having really clear  
11 expectations about the protocols is important, and -- and  
12 then treating everybody with fairness and integrity.

13 My professional reputation is very important to me,  
14 and I think I have manage to have almost a 30-year career in  
15 politics in Arizona with a good reputation, even with the  
16 republicans I have worked with; and, you know, and that I  
17 think is probably most -- I don't know if you all saw my  
18 references, I know there was an issue, I think, about  
19 getting them out. But I worked very -- very well with the  
20 County Board of Supervisors members; and, again, I -- you  
21 know, I had a specific task to do and a group I represented  
22 and I was true to that, but I was somebody I think they  
23 could talk to and work with on issues, and help me -- you  
24 know helped everybody move toward consensus and -- and  
25 collaboration when it was appropriate to do that.

1           And I also know, because I've done this a long  
2 time, when to get my nose out of it and let you guys work  
3 with each other on these things and not be involved because  
4 it's not my place to be involved as a staff person. So I --  
5 I understand that, too.

6           COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

7           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you,  
8 Commissioner Lerner.

9           We have a couple more minutes, we'll need to wind  
10 down, is there anything very briefly that you'd like to ask  
11 of us?

12          MS. HARTSELL: Well, in listening to the -- the  
13 stories you've been having, it sounds like the plan to hire  
14 three more staff: An executive assistant, like a PR person  
15 of some sort, a PIO, and a deputy. Is that your -- is that  
16 the plan?

17          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: You know, we have some ideas  
18 based on past experiences, but to be perfectly honest, I  
19 think we all embrace this new challenge with fresh eyes and  
20 will give deference to our executive director, you know,  
21 with -- with what we collectively feel we need.

22          MS. HARTSELL: Okay.

23          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: And so with that, I -- I hope  
24 that we will build a diverse and robust staff that will best  
25 reflect Arizona and -- and uniquely tap into different

1 strengths; we don't want redundancy, we -- we want to, you  
2 know, hire those who will bring unique abilities to our  
3 process.

4 MS. HARTSELL: Okay. I understand that.

5 Okay. Well, I don't want to keep you from your  
6 next person, so I will certainly wait with bated breath for  
7 who gets to come to the second round, so.

8 Thank you very much for considering me; I  
9 appreciate it.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: We appreciate your interview  
11 and your interest and your service to our state very much.

12 And with that, I think we'll be able to take a few  
13 minute break before our next interview. It's slated to  
14 begin at 10:40. In case our applicant is ready a few  
15 minutes early, of course that's always wonderful to get  
16 started with that a little bit of -- of some wiggle room.

17 Thank you very much, Ms. Hartsell.

18 MS. HARTSELL: I'm trying -- I'm trying to figure  
19 out how to turn myself off, sorry.

20 I guess I'll just close the whole meeting down.  
21 All right. Thank you.

22 (Whereupon Ms. Hartsell exits the meeting.)

23 COMMISSIONER LERNER: So, Commissioner Neuberg,  
24 would you like us to be back in the next three to four  
25 minutes in case that person is here early?

1                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes, please. So let's --  
2 we'll take a three-minute break, four-minute break, but I --  
3 I think to the extent that we're going on time and -- and  
4 our applicants are anxious to participate, there's no reason  
5 not to start.

6                   So let's at least take a three-minute break.

7                   (Recess taken at 10:32 to 10:36 a.m.)

8  
9                   (Whereupon Kristina Gomez joins the  
10 meeting.)

11                  CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I see that our next  
12 applicant, Ms. Kristina Gomez, has joined us.

13                  We're a few minutes early, so let's just make sure  
14 that everybody is dialed in and on board. We have our  
15 counsel; we have our Commissioners, and we have Angela who  
16 is transcribing.

17                  MS. RAMOS: I'm not sure if Commissioner Watchman  
18 is back.

19                  CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: You're correct.

20                  MS. RAMOS: His camera is off.

21                  CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: We will wait for  
22 Commissioner Watchman.

23                  Thank you, Ms. Gomez, by the way, just so for, you  
24 know, dialing in a little early. I know with technology  
25 it's -- you never know exactly when there's going to be, you

1 know, challenges. So thank you.

2 I see Commissioner Watchman has joined us. So with  
3 that, we'll move on to our next interview with -- which is  
4 with Ms. Kristina Gomez.

5 I will start. Ms. Gomez, please tell us a little  
6 bit about why you're interested in this position and what  
7 experience in your background makes you prepared for this.

8 MS. GOMEZ: Well, thank you so much for that  
9 question. And, first of all, I'd like to say, thank you so  
10 much for this invitation to go ahead and to meet all of --  
11 of you, this is actually -- this is certainly a treat for  
12 me, since I've worked at, as you know, with 11 other  
13 commission members. It's always exciting to meet new -- new  
14 members, and this is such a great time for our -- our state.

15 To answer your question, Chairman Neuberg, I'm  
16 interested in this position because I absolutely love  
17 redistricting. Redistricting has been the most -- in my  
18 professional career, it's been the most exciting and  
19 rewarding time of -- of my life. With the first commission  
20 being brand-new, the members are making history; they were  
21 creating the path for -- for future commission members and  
22 for future commissioners; and I believe that with the second  
23 commission, they learned those lessons from the first  
24 commission and they -- and they moved forward and created  
25 their own history; and now I feel you all will now be

1 creating another history, another historical part of -- of  
2 our state.

3 And, truthfully, the entire country watches the  
4 Arizona Redistricting Commission. We were one of the first  
5 independent commissions in the entire country; right now  
6 there's 10. I believe this body is going to -- is going to  
7 go ahead and to be a model for other states throughout this  
8 entire country.

9 So I love redistricting. I could talk about  
10 redistricting all day long, I'm passionate about it, and I  
11 think this is such important work, not only for our state  
12 but for the entire country.

13 The experience that I will bring is obviously from  
14 my -- from my years with the 2001 Commission and with the  
15 2011 Commission. I have an extensive background in public  
16 administration; I have a master's in public administration.  
17 I've implemented all of what -- what I've learned in state  
18 government for over 20 years; right now I'm at the Arizona  
19 State Dental Board of Examiners. So to be able to work as a  
20 public administrator for over 20 years within state  
21 government, that's pretty important, and that's a lot of  
22 hard work. You never make everybody happy within being a --  
23 a state employee, but it's hard work, and it's rewarding at  
24 the same time.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

1           As a quick follow-up, in particular, can you share  
2 with us if you have experience with the procurement code,  
3 personnel rules, budgeting process and public meeting law.

4           MS. GOMEZ: Budgeting process, I do have extensive  
5 experience in that. I was involved with seeking  
6 supplemental appropriations for the 2011 Commission cycle  
7 numerous times; there was a funding issue there. I also  
8 took part in drafting the budget every single cycle for --  
9 for the Commission.

10           I also -- as far as with HR, I'm also involved with  
11 human resources. I've been the point of contact for human  
12 resources -- human resources for the last Commission and  
13 also for my current position with the Dental Board as well.

14           Procurement, I do have experience with the  
15 procurement office. Those -- I think that office, it's  
16 pretty -- there's a lot of information that -- that changes  
17 within the procurement office, but I believe I do have a  
18 good working relationship with the -- with that office, and  
19 I -- I am able to go ahead and to work -- work well with  
20 them.

21           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you very much.

22           With that, I'll move on to Commissioner York,  
23 please.

24           COMMISSIONER YORK: Good morning, Ms. Gomez. How  
25 are you?

1 MS. GOMEZ: Good. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER YORK: Great.

3 I have a question. Obviously, there's quite a bit  
4 of partisan conflict in this process, and so I'm curious if  
5 you were to look at your previous experience, could you give  
6 us some insight as to how you will deal with conflict  
7 resolution.

8 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you for that question.

9 Whenever there has been partisan conflict in the  
10 past we -- we usually work with -- with the Commission  
11 members, we -- I've usually reached out to the Chair and  
12 I've also reached out to the members to help to resolve  
13 these -- these issues.

14 This agency, obviously there's a lot of -- it's a  
15 political agency, even though we all -- this is supposed to  
16 an independent commission, you do have people who are -- who  
17 are partisan who do participate in this process. However,  
18 our job -- my job as an administrator is to be inclusive and  
19 to include everybody within this process. We are to listen  
20 to all sides, we will -- we will take information from all  
21 sides, and we will leave our doors open to everybody who  
22 participates in this process.

23 COMMISSIONER YORK: So follow-up question to that,  
24 Ms. Gomez. If you look at the description and the job  
25 description for the executive director, there's quite a few

1 attributes that are listed that are needed, could you give  
2 us some insight into what you think are your strengths and  
3 what you think are your weaknesses on that list.

4 MS. GOMEZ: My strengths would be my positive  
5 attitude and my -- and my work ethic. I believe that there  
6 is no problem that -- that cannot be resolved; I actually  
7 enjoy challenges. Call me crazy, but I find it rewarding  
8 once a -- an issue is resolved. It just -- it feels  
9 really -- really good to resolve those issues.

10 And also, too, my work ethic. I believe that the  
11 Arizona Constitution, that's what we should follow, that's  
12 what -- that's what I would stick by.

13 And my weakness, I believe I dwell on previous  
14 issues that may have happened. I tend to go back and to  
15 rework and think about those -- those issues again, just  
16 because I don't want to repeat that -- that same mistake. I  
17 tend to dwell on things that happen in the past even though  
18 we're -- we're moving forward.

19 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner, please.

21 COMMISSIONER LERNER: I was muted, sorry. Welcome,  
22 Ms. Gomez.

23 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER LERNER: So in a way that is a little  
25 bit alluded to, but I'd like you to just talk a little bit

1 about the role of the executive director. What's -- what's  
2 the role of the director and what is your understanding of  
3 the roles of the Commissioners in this process.

4 MS. GOMEZ: So the role of the executive director  
5 is I am a neutral party. I work for you. I listen to you.  
6 I take direction from you.

7 I may lead the administrative process of things,  
8 but when everything is said -- said and done, I take my  
9 guidance and my information from -- from you. So I will  
10 always listen to you and listen to your direction.

11 I -- as an administrator, there's planning and  
12 managing involved, there's problem-solving skills involved,  
13 there's leadership skills involved, there's so many things  
14 that -- that come to play when you're leading a state  
15 agency; I've done that already. I've handled the -- I  
16 worked with the IT Department to get computers or to get  
17 e-mail addresses, to get laptops; I work with HR to get  
18 people hired; I've worked with the procurement office to  
19 sign off on contracts. I've worked with so many different  
20 state departments, it's -- the state government is so big  
21 but, yet, I know who to contact and I know who to work with,  
22 and I've developed those relationships.

23 As far as with me being the -- the executive  
24 director, like I said, I would -- I would take instructions  
25 and directions from you, and I would provide you with --

1 with all of the resources that -- that you would need in  
2 order to create maps, to create that -- that policy.

3 I believe that this process, as you know, is going  
4 to be challenging and you're going to -- to face some  
5 obstacles, but my job is to make sure that you have all of  
6 the necessary tools and resources so that you can do your  
7 job and accomplish your goals.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Any follow-up?

9 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Yes, I do. I do have a  
10 follow-up if that's possible.

11 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER LERNER: So you have referred a few  
13 times in your involvement in previous commissions, the past  
14 two cycles that you have been.

15 MS. GOMEZ: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Could you talk a little bit  
17 about what -- you know that things happened with each  
18 commission, right, there were issues with each Commission  
19 that happened.

20 Can you talk about what you might do with -- your  
21 experience that you've mentioned -- what would you do  
22 differently this time from what what happened either last  
23 time or 20 years ago or 10 years ago. Are there things in  
24 the operation of the Commission that could be done  
25 differently based on your experience to make things run

1 smoothly?

2 MS. GOMEZ: Absolutely. From an administrative  
3 standpoint, my recommendation for you when hiring the  
4 mapping consultant, I would not go through the State  
5 Procurement Office, and here's why.

6 They have rules, guidelines, and laws that they  
7 have in order to protect the state of Arizona; and not  
8 that -- I would love to go ahead and to use them during this  
9 process 'cause they have so much knowledge and they're --  
10 they're experts. However, there comes a point where this  
11 process needs to be done fully in open session and everybody  
12 needs to see what's going on, and that didn't go -- that  
13 didn't follow what the rules and guidelines were with the  
14 procurement office back in 2011. There was a point where  
15 the Commission had to go into E-session and to conduct some  
16 of that work within E-session, and the Commissioners didn't  
17 want to.

18 So I believe that's what got the first Commission  
19 tripped up, is they were trying to follow the guidelines  
20 within the State Procurement Office. However, that  
21 doesn't -- that doesn't go well with this process.

22 This agency is not a typical state agency. This is  
23 totally different. You are an independent body and all eyes  
24 are watching you. So it's imperative to do as much work as  
25 possible, especially when you're hiring your legal counsel

1 and your mapping consultants.

2 So that's just one example.

3 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

4 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

6 Commissioner Mehl.

7 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Welcome, Ms. Gomez.

8 MS. GOMEZ: Hi. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER MEHL: You know, the Constitution as  
10 you've alluded to set forth certain priority requirements  
11 for drawing the redistricting boundaries. And, frankly, the  
12 2011 Commission, for certain constituencies in Arizona was  
13 viewed very controversially on this topic. How would you  
14 perceive your responsibilities and how would you perceive  
15 the priorities as set forth in the Constitution.

16 MS. GOMEZ: So I believe with this process, I  
17 wouldn't be doing my job as an administrator if we were not  
18 inclusive. I believe that I wouldn't be doing my job if I  
19 didn't go out and educate as many people as possible about  
20 the subject of redistricting and all of the constitutional  
21 requirements that are involved. I believe it's imperative;  
22 it's crucial for this process to go ahead and to educate  
23 everybody throughout this -- throughout this entire state,  
24 and then to allow them to -- to provide public comment on  
25 what they have learned.

1 I think at times people kind of get lost within the  
2 subject matter 'cause it's not something that's talked about  
3 every single day, but it's so important. And I believe as  
4 staff, it would be my job and my colleagues' jobs to go  
5 ahead and to educate as many people as possible regarding  
6 the Arizona State Constitution under the Redistricting  
7 Commission, Article 4 Section 2 of the Arizona State  
8 Constitution.

9 I would do that. From there -- I've never really  
10 considered myself an expert in -- in public comments, I  
11 didn't think about it because I just do it. So I believe I  
12 would love the opportunity to go ahead and to work with all  
13 groups, rural -- people from rural communities, people from  
14 the grassroots, people left/right, it doesn't matter the --  
15 the Mom's Associations Clubs, any neighborhood associations.  
16 I would love to share my knowledge with them on how to give  
17 all of you effective and substantive public comment because  
18 you cannot draw maps without that public comment, it's  
19 crucial.

20 So my job is to educate everybody and to include  
21 everyone in this state in this process. And I would love to  
22 see more public comments submitted this time than -- than  
23 the last time. The last Commission we had over 10,000  
24 written public comments, I would love to double that this  
25 time.

1 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you.

2 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Watchman.

4 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 Good morning, Ms. Gomez. How are you doing?

6 MS. GOMEZ: Good morning. Good. Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Good, good.

8 You mentioned communities and involving all the  
9 communities, what would be your vision of how we conduct  
10 statewide outreach in community engagement?

11 MS. GOMEZ: That's a good question.

12 So I actually implemented the last public outreach  
13 plan for the 2011 redistricting cycle. I -- I've worked  
14 with staff on selecting specific cities and towns throughout  
15 the entire state so that we can go ahead and go on tour;  
16 once I created a plan, then I worked with the Commission  
17 members to see if they agreed on -- on that list, and if  
18 they wanted to add more.

19 From there, we got -- got the word out. We got the  
20 word out through social media, through the medias, through  
21 communities, libraries, whoever -- counties, to let them  
22 know that we were going on tour. We actually had some  
23 newspapers post the actual -- the meeting schedules to let  
24 them know that we were coming soon.

25 At the same time, we also reached out to -- to

1 communities, to the Latino community, to the tribal  
2 communities as well. We -- we engaged everybody in this  
3 process because it is so important.

4 We actually traveled to Sells twice. We went to  
5 Tucson, we went to Safford, Thatcher, we went to Bullhead  
6 City, we just wanted to capture as much public information  
7 as possible; but not only that, this was an opportunity for  
8 members to learn about the entire state. This was a time  
9 for members to learn about why water issues were so  
10 important for people on -- on the western part of our state.  
11 This was important -- important time for the Commissioners  
12 to learn about the border issues facing some people within  
13 our state; not only that, but mining towns as well, and up  
14 north with the forest and with the rural communities as  
15 well.

16 Not only that but we also worked -- we worked with  
17 people who fall under the Voting Rights Act. We wanted to  
18 engage everybody and make everybody a part of this entire  
19 process.

20 This was not only an educational cycle for the  
21 public to learn about redistricting, but also for members to  
22 learn about people throughout this entire state.

23 So with the first round of public hearings, that  
24 was just a time for us to just go out, to teach people about  
25 redistricting, to capture as much public comment as

1 possible; the second round of public hearings, that's for  
2 people to comment on the actual maps.

3 So that's how we did it the last time, and I  
4 believe that's how they -- they did it with the first  
5 Commission as well.

6 However, I believe every Commission is different  
7 and decisions are different each time. You are the  
8 policymakers, you will be creating your own maps, your own  
9 policy, and through all of this public comment that -- that  
10 you will receive from the entire state from different groups  
11 from people throughout this entire state.

12 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you.

13 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you,  
15 Commissioner Watchman.

16 We have a little bit of time so I will ask another  
17 question.

18 Drawing new boundaries can be an intense and  
19 conflictual process, how do you deal with disagreement? Can  
20 you share with us a little about your conflict resolution  
21 skills?

22 MS. GOMEZ: From an administrative standpoint, one  
23 of our biggest challenges was actually seeking funding. We  
24 actually almost went to court, we almost -- well, it was the  
25 last hour and we almost had to go ahead and file a lawsuit

1           because we weren't being -- being adequately funded. There  
2           were really dark days during that time when we were paying a  
3           state agency to be your fiscal oversight, and them telling  
4           you that you don't have money for that quarter to pay  
5           your -- your bills; and by state law you have to pay your  
6           bills within 30 days.

7                        When people wouldn't speak to you, when you would  
8           go to the legislature to try to seek funding and nobody  
9           would talk to you, nobody would answer your calls, return  
10          your phone calls, those were pretty tough days we went  
11          through. We also went through a 100 percent audit. I don't  
12          know too many people who have had meetings with the Auditor  
13          General herself. I was surprised to -- to see her there.

14                       But what I learned through this entire process is  
15          re- -- is relationship building, being honest with people  
16          and having an open dialogue with people, that's what  
17          actually got us through this entire -- through that entire  
18          process.

19                       People were willing to work with us because we were  
20          honest with them, even though they were upset at the  
21          Commission and it was well documented in public; people were  
22          mean. However, there was a time when you just keep working,  
23          keep moving forward, people were open to us, people started  
24          listening to us, people started trusting us, trusting our  
25          word that the information that we were presenting to them

1 was accurate.

2 So I -- the reason why I say the last Commission  
3 was probably the best time of my professional career, is  
4 'cause I got to work with the Governor's budgeting office, I  
5 got to work with the joint legislative budget committee. I  
6 worked closely with the General Accounting Office, I worked  
7 closely with the Central Service Bureau; I worked closely  
8 with all of these different agencies because I knew we were  
9 being watched, but at the same time I built those  
10 relationships when there -- when there was conflict. And it  
11 wasn't only me, it was our executive director as well, I  
12 learned a lot from him to -- to build those bridges.

13 Nobody would speak to us. And going through a 100  
14 percent audit, I don't know too -- too many people that have  
15 gone through -- through that, but that's nine months every  
16 day of tough questioning and people thinking or assuming  
17 that you did something wrong from an administrative  
18 standpoint.

19 But we built that bridge, we got through those  
20 audits -- that audit, and we, quite frankly, did well.

21 So with dealing with conflict, I would continue to  
22 move forward and to be honest with people and continue to  
23 communicate as best as possible; but, I will resolve any  
24 conflict or any issue.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

1           We still have time for an additional question or  
2 two. So with that, I'll move on to Commissioner York if you  
3 have any follow-up questions.

4           COMMISSIONER YORK: I have -- yes. Good morning.  
5 I have one more follow-up question.

6           As it relates to communication and you sort of  
7 being our backup communication expert, one of the -- one of  
8 the new tools we have in our toolbox is media and social  
9 media and the technology that we see in today's world. How  
10 would you use those to help the Commission propel its  
11 message forward?

12          MS. GOMEZ: That's a good question.

13          So I would go ahead and continue streaming your --  
14 your meetings, you've all done a good job of doing that, so  
15 that everybody can watch, either on -- during real time or  
16 they can go back and watch these videos as well. So I would  
17 continue with live streaming your meetings.

18          I would also implement social media. And not to  
19 chat back and forth with people, but to actually use it to  
20 go ahead and -- and to announce upcoming meetings. So I  
21 would definitely use social media as well.

22          And I would like to use the latest and greatest in  
23 technology with this entire process. I would love to go  
24 ahead and to implement a mapping tool early on and make it  
25 available to everybody so that they can go ahead and create

1 their own maps and submit those as their public comment as  
2 well. So that's one goal that I do have.

3 Another goal, too, is to create an actual database  
4 so that we can have our public input on our website and not  
5 just have a fillable PDF, but actually have a database where  
6 people can go on the website and type in their -- their  
7 concerns, their comments, what they like, what they don't  
8 like, what criteria is important to them. And go ahead and  
9 have that database available, if possible, to -- to all of  
10 the members, to the mapping consultants, and to legal  
11 counsel as well.

12 If we can go ahead and have an upgraded database to  
13 capture public comment, I think that would make our job so  
14 much easier as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. We have just a couple  
16 more minutes. We can entertain a question from you,  
17 Ms. Gomez, if you have something of us; and, if not, I can  
18 punt it to Commissioner Lerner.

19 So first for you, Ms. Gomez.

20 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Any questions of us?

22 MS. GOMEZ: I do. I just want to say thank you  
23 again for this opportunity, it's very exciting to meet all  
24 of you.

25 My question is, what do you want to see different

1 with this Redistricting Commission?

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: That -- that's a loaded  
3 question. I'll -- I'll answer briefly and then punt it to  
4 my fellow Commissioners.

5 I want an independent process that's fresh where we  
6 can learn from everything that we've experienced in the  
7 past, and that we can embrace all constituent groups with a  
8 sense of interest and trust. I would love that. I don't  
9 know if that's possible but, you know.

10 I think we have a remarkable state, we have so many  
11 different groups that have so much to offer, and to the  
12 extent that we can capture their interest, their  
13 perspectives, and we can synthesize that, I think that would  
14 be wonderful.

15 But I'm going to actually punt to -- to my  
16 colleagues here.

17 COMMISSIONER YORK: So this is Commissioner York.  
18 Erika, I echo Erika's consent, I would also say that as a  
19 Commission we would like to be as factual as it relates to  
20 the Constitution as we possibly can, and follow the order in  
21 which it is written.

22 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: And this is  
23 Commissioner Watchman, I'll add that I'd like to maybe --  
24 with the troubled past, I'd like to include as many -- many  
25 different groups from our state, including the tribal

1 communities. I think it's very, very important. You know,  
2 it was noted that Native Americans weren't allowed to vote  
3 in this state until 1964; and so, you know, that -- that's a  
4 recent history. So more -- the more touched and the more  
5 inclusion of our great state, including all of our 22  
6 tribes, I think is very, very important. So that -- that's  
7 my goal for being a Commissioner. So I'll add that.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: With that, thank you so much,  
10 Ms. Gomez, for your application and for your time today.

11 MS. GOMEZ: Thank you again.

12 (Whereupon Ms. Gomez exits the meeting.)

13 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. And -- and with that,  
14 we're approaching about 11:10. We have our next interview  
15 scheduled for 11:15, we'll see if the applicant arrives a  
16 couple minutes early. But with that, we'll take a very  
17 quick two- to three-minute break.

18 (Recess taken from 11:09 a.m. to 11:12 a.m.).

19  
20 (Whereupon Brian Schmitt joins the meeting.)

21 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Hello, Mr. Schmitt, thank you  
22 for arriving a few minutes early. We'll wait until the full  
23 group is convened, and we'll get started.

24 MS. RAMOS: I believe the Commissioners are all on.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Is everybody -- fantastic.

1 Thank you, everybody, for being so punctual; and thank you,  
2 Mr. Schmitt, for joining us today, and we'll just get right  
3 started.

4 Please tell us why you're interested in this  
5 position and what in your background makes you prepared and  
6 experienced for this position.

7 MR. SCHMITT: Absolutely. And, first of all, I  
8 want to thank you guys for having me; I'm excited to be  
9 here.

10 I've always been drawn to the public process and  
11 public service, and my parents encouraged it at a young age.  
12 So in 2008, I had the honor of helping Senator McCain on his  
13 presidential campaign, helped operationalize offices in New  
14 Hampshire, South Carolina, and Florida. After that, I came  
15 back to Arizona and worked at the Southwest Regional  
16 Headquarters and got to help campaign around the state.

17 During that time, I -- I met some great people, one  
18 of them who I really admired was Jim Waring and his  
19 commitment to public service. So once he decided to run for  
20 City Council, I volunteered and did everything I could to  
21 get him elected. After that, I -- he offered me a position,  
22 and I've been with him at the City of Phoenix as chief of  
23 staff for the last almost 10 years.

24 During that time we've worked on a lot of different  
25 projects; one of them that I found most interesting was

1           redistricting, and that's kind of what drew me here today.

2                     At the City I'm responsible for the office, the  
3           day-to-day operations, the budget, and keeping an eye on the  
4           big picture.

5                     And so I'm excited to be here, answer any questions  
6           you guys have, and thank you guys for your service, too,  
7           'cause it's not an easy task.

8                     CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you so much. And as a  
9           follow-up, can you share with us, how familiar are you with  
10          state codes such as our procurement code, personnel rules,  
11          budgeting process, and public meeting laws.

12                    MR. SCHMITT: Sure. Public meeting, open meetings,  
13          public records, all those sorts of things are things I deal  
14          with every day; it's been my life for the last 10 years.

15                    State -- the City operates very similar to the  
16          State, either due to state statute or just because it's  
17          government. So familiar with lots of the different  
18          processes.

19                    CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

20                    And with that, I will turn it over to  
21          Commissioner York.

22                    COMMISSIONER YORK: Good morning, Mr. Schmitt. How  
23          are you?

24                    MR. SCHMITT: Good. How are you?

25                    COMMISSIONER YORK: Good.

1           Question. As you know, we're dealing with  
2 boundaries and lines and drawing maps for districts. What  
3 is the role of the executive director and what do you  
4 believe is the role of the Commissioners?

5           MR. SCHMITT: My role would be to help facilitate  
6 for you all to try and make your life as efficient as  
7 possible to streamline and work with different stakeholders.

8           I -- I've been in government for a while; I'm an  
9 expert at navigating through it; and you guys shouldn't have  
10 to worry about that, I should go and get all the answers,  
11 bring them back and let you all make the decision.

12           You guys are the Commissioners; I would just be  
13 here to help facilitate.

14           COMMISSIONER YORK: As a follow-up question to  
15 that, Brian.

16           MR. SCHMITT: Yes.

17           COMMISSIONER YORK: One of the tools today in  
18 communicating to the public is -- is the new media  
19 technology that's available to us. How do you see -- how  
20 would you consider using that, and what would you con- --  
21 what would you say maybe is one of your strengths in that  
22 area?

23           MR. SCHMITT: Sure. I think that getting as much  
24 input as possible is incredibly important. Going out and  
25 trying to engage the public, social media is a big part of

1           that these days.

2                     My family has a business that's been around for  
3           about 50 years, and for a time I ran their social media and  
4           marketing, so I'm comfortable with that. But I think it's  
5           important that when creating a team that is diverse and  
6           be -- and I can lean on other people's strengths; and I  
7           think you guys have mentioned hiring a PIO, so if that's  
8           more their area of expertise, I would listen to them and  
9           help take direction and make a decision and move forward.

10                    COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you.

11                    MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

12                    CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

13                    COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you for being here,  
14           Mr. Schmitt.

15                    MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

16                    COMMISSIONER LERNER: So the executive director  
17           will be our central spoke which will require strong  
18           management and organizational skills. Can you give some  
19           specific examples from your past or from your present --

20                    MR. SCHMITT: Sure.

21                    COMMISSIONER LERNER: -- where you've had to  
22           multitask, refocus a team maybe to keep them on target; and  
23           then I'll have you do that, and then I have a follow-up from  
24           there.

25                    MR. SCHMITT: Okay. Sure. Thank you.

1                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: Yeah.

2                   MR. SCHMITT: Absolutely. At the City we deal with  
3 pretty controversial cases on a regular basis. It's always  
4 been important to me and to Jim that we maintain  
5 relationships with all the stakeholders' different offices,  
6 city staff, bring 'em together, sit 'em down, and really  
7 listen to them.

8                   So one big accomplishment I would say that we're  
9 probably most proud of us, is Starfish Place, which is a  
10 first -- a newer -- well, actually, first-in-the-nation  
11 public housing facility that's dedicated to victims of human  
12 trafficking and their families. It was a very difficult  
13 process to try and bring everybody to the table and -- and  
14 get the desired outcome; but at the end of the day, it's an  
15 incredible project and very proud of it.

16                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: Okay. Thank you.

17                   It kind of goes with what I just asked, but  
18 maybe -- so maybe -- maybe you can talk a little bit about,  
19 I don't know, what your staff is, but that's part of what I  
20 was wondering was how do you keep your team on task, and you  
21 just -- my second question had been a project that you were  
22 most proud of, you just answered that question.

23                   MR. SCHMITT: Oh. Sure.

24                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: But then as part of it, your  
25 experience. If you can give a couple specific examples,

1           you've mentioned you've done a lot of work with the city  
2           procurement and all of that, can you give some very specific  
3           experience, just like you did with your Starfish example, of  
4           working with your team and, you know, experience managing  
5           contracts and consultants, and your people, your staff --

6           MR. SCHMITT: Yeah.

7           COMMISSIONER LERNER: -- give some examples.

8           Thank you.

9           MR. SCHMITT: Absolutely. RFPs can be some of the  
10          most contentious projects at the City. So I would say  
11          city-wide towing project, the RFP was very difficult.  
12          Again, that was -- we tried to bring everybody together, try  
13          and find a solution; airport concessions, another very  
14          contention RFP process.

15          And you asked a little bit about the makeup of our  
16          team. We run a pretty tight ship, offices are usually three  
17          to five people. Right now it's me and one other; and she is  
18          someone who is amazing and I lean on her strengths, she  
19          handles most of the constituent work, and it's just a great  
20          coworker.

21          COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

22          MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

23          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

24          COMMISSIONER MEHL: Welcome, Mr. Schmitt.

25          MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

1           COMMISSIONER MEHL: The Constitution sets forth  
2 certain priorities for the redistricting boundaries, and it  
3 has been controversial in the past how that has been  
4 interpreted. Do you have -- are you aware of the  
5 constitutional provisions, and how would you see your role  
6 and -- and your understanding of the Constitution.

7           MR. SCHMITT: Yes, I am aware of the six kind of  
8 guiding lights. I'm not an attorney, but usually laws are  
9 written in order for a reason; I also at the end of the day  
10 would be here to execute your vision, it's the independent  
11 Redistricting Commission; I'm not a Commissioner, I would  
12 just be here to help facilitate that process.

13           I also think, too, that it's important that once we  
14 get out there, we educate the public on the process and the  
15 six provisions, that -- or steps, that kind of stuff.

16           COMMISSIONER MEHL: And as a follow-up, maybe tell  
17 us some of your experience working with people of -- of  
18 different beliefs than yours.

19           MR. SCHMITT: No, yeah, at the City we have to do  
20 that all the time. City Council is made up of nine  
21 incredibly unique perspectives, and we wouldn't get anything  
22 done if we didn't figure out some sort of common vision or a  
23 way to come together to actually forge solutions and -- and  
24 really get an outcome that everybody can be happy with.

25           COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you very much.

1 MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Watchman.

3 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 And good morning, Mr. Schmitt. How are you doing?

5 MR. SCHMITT: Good morning. How are you?

6 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Good, good.

7 You know, we talk about communities and our state  
8 has wonderful communities geographically in all four  
9 corner -- four corners of the state. What is your vision in  
10 how we should conduct statewide outreach and community  
11 engagement?

12 MR. SCHMITT: Absolutely. That's a great question,  
13 thank you.

14 I think it's incredibly important to engage and  
15 elicit as much public comment and input as we can by any  
16 mean or mode necessary. I'd love -- I think it would be  
17 great for the Commission to tap into local radio, local  
18 newspapers; and also kind of tap into the already built  
19 systems, local communities, chambers of commerce, community  
20 colleges, universities, and not be afraid to really get as  
21 much dialogue going as possible.

22 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: If I could, can you help me  
23 define what you mean by "communities." You know, which  
24 communities are you talking about? Just, you know, based on  
25 my background, which you probably know.

1 MR. SCHMITT: Yeah.

2 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: So I'm curious about your  
3 answer to that --

4 MR. SCHMITT: Absolutely. Rural and tribal nations  
5 are -- definitely need to be a part of the process, they are  
6 integral to the makeup of the state; and I would work  
7 incredibly hard to make sure that working with the leaders  
8 or -- or local community leaders to try and make sure that  
9 information can get out in the best possible way.

10 Every community is a little different so I would --  
11 I would want to make sure that everybody feels like they  
12 were included.

13 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you.

14 MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

16 Have you followed either of the two previous  
17 Commissions; and, if so, are there any lessons that you've  
18 learned that you would want to bring to this Commission?

19 MR. SCHMITT: Sure. So I -- I have studied up on  
20 them during this process. I think that we're in a unique --  
21 we have a unique opportunity with the census data being  
22 delayed, that we can really get out there and listen to the  
23 community to see what they have to say; at the same time, I  
24 think it's important and one thing we can do differently is  
25 really educate them on the process, what we're going to do.

1           'Cause when you start on a level playing field or a  
2 solid foundation, everybody hopefully at the end of the day,  
3 if they -- even if they don't agree with the outcome, I hope  
4 that they feel like a very -- they got the opportunity to  
5 participate and listen and really made a difference.

6           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Can you share -- as a  
7 follow-up, can you share more about that? What would define  
8 a fair process for you?

9           You talk about people being heard.

10          MR. SCHMITT: Yeah.

11          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Can you share more about what  
12 your vision would be?

13          MR. SCHMITT: Yeah, I think that the -- we're all  
14 very interested in the process and studying up on it more  
15 than the average citizen, so I think even just letting 'em  
16 know that the basic four steps, the grid, adjusting the  
17 grid, advertising, and finalizing from day one so they --  
18 they understand the process; so it's not -- it's not new  
19 every time, they know upfront this is kind of what -- what's  
20 going on to go on.

21          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

22          With that, I'll turn it over again to  
23 Commissioner York.

24          COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you,  
25 Commissioner Neuberg.

1           One quick question. As you saw on the executive  
2 director summary of responsibilities, there's quite a few  
3 administrative -- responsibilities for administration. And  
4 I guess my question to you as it relates to strengths and  
5 weaknesses, as you look down that list, could you give us a  
6 feel for what would be your strengths and what would be one  
7 of your weaknesses.

8           MR. SCHMITT: Sure. I would say I'm incredibly  
9 methodical and pragmatic. I -- I really -- sorry.

10           I always think before I speak; I like to do as much  
11 research as possible; I don't overstep from my principal;  
12 but also at the end of the day, I don't know everything, and  
13 that's why I think it's incredibly important when building  
14 out a team that's as diverse as possible so that I can lean  
15 on other people's strengths and -- and really make sure that  
16 that Commission -- or the Commission and the staff  
17 represents the State well.

18           COMMISSIONER YORK: And a weakness?

19           MR. SCHMITT: The not -- not knowing anything, or  
20 sometimes I can be a little relentless, and I have to step  
21 back, and just know when I've gone as far as I can.

22           COMMISSIONER YORK: And a follow-up question to  
23 that. Can you give us a brief description of your -- your  
24 conflict resolution skills?

25           MR. SCHMITT: That, like I said, making sure that

1           everybody has a seat at the table, talking through things,  
2           and knowing that people -- that you're acknowledging their  
3           opinion; and then trying to work towards a common vision or  
4           goal that everybody can be happy about at the end of the  
5           day.

6                    COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you. Thank you, Brian.

7                    MR. SCHMITT: Thank you.

8                    CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

9                    COMMISSIONER LERNER: Commissioner York, you took  
10           my other question.

11                   Okay. I have -- I have another one for you. Thank  
12           you again, Mr. Schmitt.

13                   MR. SCHMITT: Yeah, sure.

14                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: There's a lot of scrutiny  
15           with this position and as you saw -- as you were aware,  
16           there's litigation in the past. What steps could you  
17           take -- do you think you could take to protect the integrity  
18           of the process as part of us continuing to move forward?

19                   MR. SCHMITT: Sure, absolutely. I think that we  
20           should be -- the Commission should be as open and  
21           transparent as possible so that the public is aware.

22                   Watching some of the previous meetings, I can -- I  
23           can understand some of the frustration that you all have and  
24           I hope that I can help with that; but, also, I think when it  
25           comes to the agenda, there's ways where we could also add

1           like informational packets so that the public can follow  
2           along with a little more info -- information than just the  
3           topics that you guys are going to discuss, so they really  
4           get to be part of the process.

5                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

6                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

7                   COMMISSIONER MEHL: I don't have an additional  
8           question.

9                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Commissioner Watchman,  
10          would you like to ask an additional question?

11                  VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: I don't have another  
12          question. I'm -- I'm satisfied. Thank you.

13                  CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Well, I have a  
14          question.

15                   You spoke about relentlessness.

16                  MR. SCHMITT: Yes.

17                  CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I like that word. Can you  
18          share with us a little bit what you mean by that and, like,  
19          how you, you know, draw the boundaries around  
20          relentlessness?

21                  MR. SCHMITT: Sure, yeah. My family always likes  
22          to joke that I'm a dog on a bone. And I like to do as much  
23          research as possible and really dig into -- dig into an  
24          issue; and sometimes at the end of the day, I have to step  
25          back and know that I've done all my research and homework

1 and I'm content moving forward, and sometimes you do too  
2 much research and just need to be comfortable.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Can you envision how that  
4 might play a role in this redistricting process?

5 MR. SCHMITT: Sure. I -- I think one of the most  
6 important roles for the executive director is making sure  
7 you guys have all the information, that you guys aren't  
8 worrying about dealing with various departments and  
9 directors, that would be my job, and making sure you have  
10 all the possible information for when you have to make a  
11 decision.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Any other questions from our  
13 Commissioners?

14 If not, I have one other one, but I'd like look to,  
15 if we're doing it in order, I would go to Commissioner York.

16 COMMISSIONER YORK: I'm satisfied,  
17 Commissioner Neuberg, Madam Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I have -- I have one last  
19 question. So the Constitution requires that the Commission  
20 conduct its efforts in an honest, independent, and impartial  
21 manner, and to uphold confidence in the integrity in the  
22 redistricting process.

23 Is there anything in your background that you would  
24 make that mandate difficult? And along with that, can you  
25 just share with us some of your experience in bringing, you

1 know, different groups together.

2 MR. SCHMITT: Sure. I -- I would say that everyday  
3 -- I've worked for principals, I don't necessarily agree  
4 with every one of his decisions, but he's -- he's the  
5 elected, he is the -- in this -- commissioner, and at the  
6 end of the day I have to execute what he wants. I can  
7 easily put aside my thoughts or feelings; once a decision is  
8 made, it's made, and that's the path we're going down, and I  
9 can set all personal biases aside and move forward.

10 It's important for the public to think that -- or  
11 to know that this Commission is independent, and that at the  
12 end of the day we walk out of here with our integrity.  
13 That's -- that would be very important to me.

14 And an example of bringing people together is, some  
15 of our most contentious issues besides RFPs I mentioned, are  
16 zoning cases where it deals with neighborhoods and building  
17 communities literally in someone's backyard. So those are  
18 difficult to navigate; we encourage people to really be part  
19 of the process, the whole process; and then, like I said,  
20 hopefully at the end of the day they know that their voice  
21 was heard, they -- they did make a difference and -- and  
22 that we listened, so.

23 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

24 With that, before we turn it over to you if you  
25 have any questions, does any of my fellow Commissioners have

1 any follow-up questions they'd like to ask?

2 Mr. Schmitt, do you have any questions of us?

3 MR. SCHMITT: Sure. Is there any one hot -- not  
4 hot button, but day one thing that I could do to help each  
5 of you besides what I mentioned?

6 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I love that question. Thank  
7 you very much. I'll -- I'll answer it first and then turn  
8 it over to the other Commissioners.

9 What I'm seeking is somebody who will be our  
10 partner in representing the Commission first. You know,  
11 our -- our state agencies are doing a remarkable job in  
12 servicing our needs.

13 It's a unique project, every ten years we're  
14 recreating an entirely independent body; and to have a  
15 partner in seeing everything through the lens of just the  
16 IRC, no other responsibilities to the state, no other  
17 responsibilities to a partner or a party, but rather  
18 somebody who would singularly partner with us in advancing  
19 the five -- you know, we've been selected to represent this  
20 process, and so somebody that would enable us to tap into  
21 our strengths and honor the mandate.

22 And with that, I would love to hear perspectives  
23 from my -- my peers here.

24 Commissioner Mehl, you're on -- you're on mute.

25 COMMISSIONER MEHL: One of those days.

1 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I get it.

2 COMMISSIONER MEHL: So from my perspective, we are  
3 truly looking for a lead staff person who would administer  
4 and guide and work through the government issues and help us  
5 work with one another to maximize the -- the reason that  
6 we're all together as a Commission, and -- and not look for  
7 someone who wants to insert themselves in policy.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: I agree.

9 Any other thoughts?

10 COMMISSIONER MEHL: And, boy, do we need help  
11 working through the public process.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yeah, we're -- we're all  
13 learning. We all want to, you know, adhere to the codes as  
14 best as we can, so.

15 All right. If there's no other questions, thank  
16 you so much, Mr. Schmitt, for joining us today. We  
17 appreciate your time.

18 We will take a short break, and we have our last  
19 interview scheduled for 11:50. If the applicant is ready a  
20 little early, we'll start early.

21 But thank you, Mr. Schmitt.

22 MR. SCHMITT: Bye.

23 (Whereupon Mr. Schmitt exits the meeting.)

24 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Commissioner -- oh, I was  
25 going to try to say it before everybody left, but

1 Commissioner Neuberg, you want us back in five minutes?

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yes. Let's all convene  
3 five -- five minutes early. I think this is a logical  
4 break. And in case our last applicant is early, we will  
5 reconvene at 11:45.

6 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

7 (Recess taken from 11:40 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.)

8

9 (Whereupon Trevor Abarzua joins the meeting.)

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Hello, everybody. I just am  
11 doing a quick look to make sure that our entire group is  
12 convened. I believe I see my Commissioners and our counsel.

13 And, with that, I would like to welcome our last  
14 applicant, Mr. Abarzua, and if I'm -- if I'm butchering your  
15 last name, can you please share with us how -- how to  
16 pronounce it.

17 MR. ABARZUA: No, that was -- that was great,  
18 Commissioner and Chairwoman. It's ab-ar-zoo-a.

19 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

20 And, with that, if we are ready to commence, I'll  
21 start with the first question. Thank you so much for  
22 joining us today and for your interest in the process.

23 Can you please tell a little bit about why you're  
24 interested in this position and what makes you feel that  
25 you're qualified as it relates to your background and your

1 experience?

2 MR. ABARZUA: Sure. Yeah. Well, first off, thank  
3 you for inviting me to interview, and I'm really excited  
4 about the process.

5 I think I'm interested in applying and -- and also  
6 in the position is because of my want of public service.  
7 You know, I was raised to give back to the community. And  
8 my father is an immigrant, you know, he immigrated here from  
9 Chile as a teenager, he joined the Marine Corp to give back  
10 to his country, and then became a state trooper in  
11 Connecticut to give back to his community; and my mom, she  
12 was the oldest of, you know, four little brothers and her  
13 family couldn't afford for her to go to college, so she had  
14 to work really hard to pay for school, and she became a  
15 trooper as well in Connecticut.

16 But they're kind of -- my upbringing is to always  
17 give back, to be part of the community, to be civically  
18 involved. And even though I didn't become a trooper, a  
19 police officer like them, I wanted to use my strengths and  
20 my career path to -- to give back.

21 So I think with my experience previously sets me up  
22 for success with this position and -- and my expertise.

23 You know, traveling around the state with the  
24 Arizona Commerce Authority and really getting to know the  
25 communities around the state; and not just, you know, the

1 big cities, Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff, Yuma, but the rural  
2 communities, and bringing jobs to those rural communities  
3 and those tribal nations, you know, Gila River and Navajo  
4 Nation, and just seeing how diverse the state is, and  
5 wanting to represent, you know, not only the diversity of  
6 the state, but bringing, you know, a level of diversity to  
7 the staff.

8 And I think, you know, with my prior experience,  
9 again, at the ACA and in other governmental roles, I think  
10 I'm perfectly positioned to succeed in this role and to give  
11 back to the state of Arizona.

12 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

13 As a follow-up question, can you share with us,  
14 because we will be operating within the state system, what  
15 your experience is with the state procurement code,  
16 personnel rules, budgeting process and public meeting laws.

17 MR. ABARZUA: Sure, yeah. So in my time at the  
18 Governor's Office I was a policy assistant, and part of that  
19 was being the project manager for a lot of these things  
20 called "goal councils." So there's a lot of diverse issues  
21 throughout the state that sometimes there's -- there's not  
22 an easy fix to or not a policy change, so my role was to  
23 convene experts to solve these issues. So I would say one  
24 of those was we did a law enforcement goal council to attack  
25 wrong-way driving, and it's an issue throughout the state

1 and on our highways; but it's not only a highway issue,  
2 it's, you know, could be a community issue, could be a  
3 policy issue. So what we did and what I was in charge of  
4 was gathering a group of experts, you know, leaders in the  
5 law enforcement community, leaders at the Department of  
6 Transportation and also cities and counties, street systems;  
7 and also, you know, experts not involved in government, you  
8 know, from the private sector, that had some, you know,  
9 technological expertise.

10 So, you know, we convened them, we came up with  
11 solutions, but part of that was navigating that procurement  
12 process. And, you know, obviously when we want to bring on  
13 something and -- and use government funds, we have to go  
14 through that process.

15 So my job was to work in conjunction with  
16 Department -- ADOA, so I have great relationships over at  
17 the procurement office over at ADOA and making sure we're  
18 compliant with everything.

19 So, me being the project manager, again, I wasn't,  
20 so to say, the expert in wrong-way driving, but my job was  
21 to make sure that everything was executed properly, and  
22 working with the proper channels in procurement and open  
23 meeting law.

24 And with the role at the Governor's Office, I also  
25 worked with Board and Commissions Director, Trista Guzman

1           Glover, who, you know, working in conjunction with her to  
2           make sure that the minutes were up to date and everyone, all  
3           the boards and commissions were compliant with open meeting  
4           law.

5                        Again, and I think it goes back to relationships  
6           there at those offices and with those experts, you know,  
7           being able to work and communicate with them, and make sure  
8           that this Commission here is compliant, and you know, I feel  
9           confident I can do that.

10                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

11                   With that, Commissioner York, please.

12                   COMMISSIONER YORK: Good afternoon, Trevor.

13                   Question, as you know, we'll be drawing boundaries  
14           and new lines for districts. What should the role of the  
15           executive director play in the drawing of boundaries and  
16           what do you think -- or how would you describe the  
17           responsibility or of Commission?

18                   MR. ABARZUA: Again, I think the executive  
19           director's role, again, is the convenor. You know, the five  
20           Commissioners, you guys are going to be the ones drawing the  
21           boundaries; and I want to make sure that, you know, we have  
22           the proper data, we have the proper information to make the  
23           most educated and informed decision for the state of  
24           Arizona.

25                   And I think it starts with following the

1 Constitution and making sure that we're following all the  
2 guidelines the Constitution has laid out for us, making sure  
3 that the boundaries have equal population, they're you know,  
4 geographically contiguous I think is important, and respect  
5 communities of interest; and I think the way the  
6 Constitution is laid out is those three -- those three  
7 things are most important, and I think after that, you know,  
8 to the extent practical, is making sure they're competitive.  
9 But I think those three things first and foremost are  
10 important. So, again, making sure that we're following  
11 those guidelines in the Constitution.

12 And I think, too, I think, you know, part of being  
13 an executive director is making sure that we communicate  
14 with the communities properly, you know; and that's not  
15 only, you know, through these Zoom meetings or through our  
16 open meetings, but also through the media, through social  
17 media, and also visiting communities. I think it's very  
18 important, especially in our rural communities and our  
19 tribal communities, that we go out as a Commission and meet  
20 with communities, meet with leaders, and also individuals  
21 that have an interest in this process and make sure it's  
22 completely transparent.

23 I also again I touched on the staff, but I think  
24 building a diverse staff is important that -- that shows the  
25 diversity of the state, diversity of thought, you know

1 diversity of background, and diversity of geographic, where  
2 they came from throughout the state. You know, I think, me  
3 being the leader, the executive director of the staff, that  
4 that would be a big priority of mine.

5 But, again, at the end of the day, it's making sure  
6 we're successful, we're transparent with the community and  
7 the state, and we're following the Constitution.

8 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you. No -- no follow up.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner, please.

10 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Okay. Welcome Mr. Abarzua.

11 MR. ABARZUA: Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER LERNER: The Constitution, you've  
13 already alluded to the Constitution, it talks about the fact  
14 that we conduct our efforts in honest, independent, and  
15 impartial manner, and uphold public confidence in the  
16 integrity of the redistricting process. Can you speak to  
17 your background a little bit, is there maybe some experience  
18 that you've had working in a bipartisan manner, working  
19 across the aisle?

20 Can you give me some examples of where you --  
21 because most of your work has been -- this most recent  
22 administration. Can you just give some example of a part of  
23 that, which would kind of give the public confidence in this  
24 redistricting process?

25 MR. ABARZUA: Definitely. Well, to start, I -- so

1 when I was in college at Arizona State, I was a Capitol  
2 Scholar, so with that, a semester we flew to D.C. and had  
3 the opportunity to do an internship. And I wanted to do  
4 internship with a congressman from my home district, which  
5 was in Connecticut, and she happened to be a democrat,  
6 congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, who was actually one of the more  
7 liberal, you know, members of congress.

8 And it was just about, you know, giving back to,  
9 again, the community I grew up in, and see how the staff  
10 operates with the local county that I lived in; and also,  
11 too, seeing how they worked -- you know, from the other  
12 side, how they worked across party lines.

13 So to be in that environment, to be in that staff  
14 environment to see, oh, okay, you know, this is how, you  
15 know, the other things thinks or operates; and to be quite  
16 honest, you know, it's -- it's pretty much the same, they  
17 want to do what's best for their district and what's best  
18 for the country. They might disagree on a policy issue here  
19 or there, but what I found is, you know, everyone is -- is  
20 in public service to better their community. So that was  
21 one example.

22 I think another one Arizona specific, would be my  
23 role at the ACA, and my role is to bring business to the  
24 State, you know, from all around -- all industries, but, you  
25 know, mainly from California, and also, you know, in the

1 automotive sector and advance manufacturing.

2 So we get these large employers that want to come  
3 here, you know, big brand names, you know, hundred of jobs,  
4 you know, billions of dollars in investment; and my job is,  
5 again, to be that project manager, to make sure that, you  
6 know, we're doing the best foot forward for the client, but  
7 also for the state and the communities that are interested.

8 And it's a competitive process, Arizona versus  
9 other states, but also, too, within the state, you know,  
10 okay, if they are going to choose, say, Tucson or Yuma or  
11 Phoenix or even a rural part of the state. So I have to  
12 make sure to balance all the relationships out and working  
13 with staff and working with elected officials on both sides,  
14 you know, of the aisle.

15 My most recent win and which I'm really proud of,  
16 is Whitehall Industries, which is an electric vehicle  
17 manufacturer, they -- they produce parts. But I had to work  
18 in conjunction very closely with a lot of the city officials  
19 in Flagstaff in getting through government fees and waivers  
20 and -- and all the things you need to -- to apply for  
21 business licenses here and to get through Department of  
22 Environmental Quality.

23 So I've had to reach across party lines in this --  
24 and this role is very nonpartisan in the sense that, you  
25 know, I'm working with all communities, all parties, and all

1 backgrounds. So being able to manage those relationships,  
2 and, you know, being able to also, you know, sometimes give  
3 the bad news to communities that they -- they didn't win a  
4 project and it's going, you know, maybe across the state.  
5 Having that experience has really helped, and I think that  
6 that prepares me for this Commission.

7 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you. I don't think I  
8 have a follow-up on this one. Thank you.

9 MR. ABARZUA: Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you very much.

11 With that, I'm going to use a little discretion,  
12 I'd like to announce that Commissioner Watchman is going to  
13 leave our morning meeting at noon; he will come back and --  
14 and join us again for our afternoon meeting at 3:00.

15 But, Commissioner Mehl, I apologize, just give him  
16 one last chance to -- to get a question in before he -- he  
17 leaves.

18 Commissioner Watchman.

19 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you, Madam Chair, and  
20 members of the Commission. And good morning, Trevor.

21 MR. ABARZUA: Good morning.

22 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: I forgot about daylight  
23 savings; I know Arizona doesn't follow it, but here on  
24 Navajo it's now almost 1 o'clock. So I have to figure out  
25 how to adjust, you know, how I conduct business on Navajo

1 with -- with folks in Phoenix and so.

2 But and I appreciate, Madam Chair, allowing me to  
3 ask my question.

4 You mention the communities in the different parts  
5 of the state. You know where I'm from, and so, you know,  
6 one of the big things that I'm interested in, is your vision  
7 and how you would conduct statewide outreach, and how do  
8 we -- how would you with us do community engagement across  
9 the state?

10 I'm curious about your thoughts on that.

11 MR. ABARZUA: Thank you, Commissioner Watchman. I  
12 think that's going to be one of the most important parts of  
13 this process and with the Commission is making sure that the  
14 words gets out and that we're engaging with the community.  
15 I think a strategy of mine would be to engage from a media  
16 perspective and from, you know, having great relationships  
17 with media. And that's just not, you know, the Arizona  
18 Republic or the Tucson Daily Star; you know, there's local  
19 papers throughout the state and rural area and, you know,  
20 Cochise County and Safford and -- and Navajo Nation.

21 And also includes, you know, tribal communities as  
22 well, and working with the way they administer, you know,  
23 the news and working with those local publications. I think  
24 it's going to be important, too, and I -- and I think just  
25 my experience in working in rural Arizona, is, you know,

1 actually visiting those -- those communities and those  
2 counties. You know, showing that, you know, the Commission  
3 does care about their voice and that their voice matters  
4 just as much as, you know, Maricopa and Pima and the other  
5 larger parts from a population standpoint.

6 I think now in this 2021, I think social media and  
7 our website will be important, and I think it's great that  
8 we have this tool to be able to live stream, but I think  
9 being able to stay on top of that. But that's not the only  
10 way, again, and I think, you know, making sure that we do,  
11 we touch all the points of rural Arizona, the tribal  
12 communities in -- in the state.

13 So that's going to be one of the biggest  
14 priorities. And I think building out a staff, I think  
15 bringing on someone that has relationships with members of  
16 the media, I consider myself a great communicator, but I  
17 think I do not have the great relationships as some of the  
18 people on the staff that someone have relationships. And,  
19 again, not only with the big papers but also those local  
20 papers.

21 So that would be my vision and also implement the  
22 vision of -- of the Commission.

23 VICE CHAIR WATCHMAN: Thank you. Thank you very  
24 much.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. With that,

1 Commissioner Mehl, please.

2 (Whereupon Vice Chair Watchman leaves the meeting  
3 at 12:00 p.m.)

4 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Welcome, Mr. Abarzua. Thank  
5 you for being here.

6 MR. ABARZUA: Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Some of the more mundane tasks  
8 of this position is preparing budgets, and it's managing a  
9 small staff, and what in your background would prepare you  
10 to do this; and how would you see filling out a staff that  
11 would compliment your skills.

12 MR. ABARZUA: Sure. I think my experience at the  
13 Arizona Commerce Authority is not only just, you know,  
14 communicating from client to myself and figuring out how to  
15 get the deal done, but it's convening groups of people and  
16 different organizations, you know, within the Arizona  
17 Commerce Authority but throughout the state.

18 You know, on -- at the ACA, you know, we have, you  
19 know, our marketing team and our, you know, research team  
20 and our media team, and being a project manager for some of  
21 the large projects is convening those groups and -- and  
22 leading the projects. So figuring out where they bring  
23 strengths, how they fit into the process, and making sure it  
24 gets over the finish line.

25 So I think my experience leading these large

1 employer projects that have a lot of eyes on them and  
2 they're very competitive throughout the country, it takes a  
3 lot, you know, and it takes a lot to go -- that goes into  
4 it.

5 And I think on the budget side, you know, part of  
6 the job at the ACA is also working with the -- the incentive  
7 and also a lot of the tax code. So going through the  
8 numbers on, you know, the types of taxes they -- they have  
9 to pay, but also that some of the exempt taxes. Like, for  
10 example, the sales tax exemption for manufacturers. So  
11 being able to budget those out and figuring out of all the  
12 investment they're making in the state, how much, you know,  
13 will they have to, you know, be exempt from.

14 So working with numbers is a strength of mine as  
15 well, and I think, you know, balancing a budget is important  
16 and also, you know, balancing the staff budget and the IRC  
17 staff will be important, and I think that would be a  
18 priority of mine, and I feel confident that I would be able  
19 to handle that.

20 COMMISSIONER MEHL: And as a follow-up, have you  
21 dealt with much conflict in -- in your different positions;  
22 and how do you handle conflict resolution?

23 MR. ABARZUA: Sure, yeah. Conflict resolution I  
24 think is a key part, and I think to -- to manage that is  
25 communicating and being over -- overly communicating; and

1           figuring out both sides, you know, if there is a conflict on  
2           the Commission or -- or in any part, is just figuring out  
3           what the two sides, what the issue is, and figuring out the  
4           best way to get that answer.

5                     And I think some experience with that, and I know I  
6           touched on it, is working with these communities. You know,  
7           you have these cities or these towns and they all want to  
8           get employers to move to their district or their town, and  
9           -- and figuring out the conflict of, you know, with the  
10          client, you know, why this -- why a certain community makes  
11          sense over another.

12                    But communicating to the city that might not win,  
13          you know, the reasons why; and also figuring solutions on,  
14          okay, maybe the next time it comes, let's figure out ways  
15          that, you know, this project would have chosen let's say, I  
16          don't know, Queen Creek or something like that.

17                    So -- so I think, again, being able to communicate  
18          in, you know, success but also in, you know, failure; but  
19          figuring out the ways to -- to get to the finish line, I  
20          feel confident in doing that.

21                    COMMISSIONER MEHL: Thank you.

22                    MR. ABARZUA: Thanks.

23                    CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. I'll take the next  
24          question.

25                    Have you followed either of the two previous

1 Commissions; and, if so, are there any lessons that you've  
2 learned that you would want to bring to this Commission?

3 MR. ABARZUA: Yes. I have followed, I went back  
4 and watched some of the videos and watched some of the  
5 coverage on it, and I think one thing that I would do  
6 differently as a Commissioner [sic] would be, I think the  
7 last Commission really put first competitiveness in the  
8 districts, and I think it was a point of contention and a  
9 point of, you know, kind of chaos within the Commission to  
10 -- to do that; and I think, again, following the  
11 Constitution of those three pillars of, you know, equal  
12 population, contiguous, and communities of interest, I think  
13 highlighting those first and foremost, you know, following  
14 the Constitution, I think it would get rid of a lot of  
15 contention within the Commission and then the voices  
16 outside.

17 And also, too, again, I think making sure that  
18 everyone is cordial with one another. You know, we're all  
19 doing what's best for the state and we're all, you know,  
20 want to make sure that we're drawing the lines to the best  
21 of the Constitution, the best for the state. So, you know,  
22 being kind of that -- that project manager and that person  
23 to -- to help guide the conversations, that would be a  
24 priority of mine.

25 And, again, you know, the Commissioners are the

1 ones that are going to be drawing the lines, I want to be  
2 the one to help manage the process and make sure that you  
3 guys are only worried about drawing the best lines; and I  
4 want to handle the staffing side of it, you know, the  
5 communicating side of it with communities and -- and with  
6 media, and make sure that you guys are focused on the number  
7 one task at hand.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

9 With that, I'll turn it over to Commissioner York,  
10 if you have an additional question.

11 COMMISSIONER YORK: I have one quick question  
12 regarding responsibilities.

13 If you look at your executive director job  
14 description that was posted on the Arizona website, there  
15 are a number of responsibilities listed that the executive  
16 director is going to have to provide to the IRC; and I guess  
17 from my standpoint I'd like to know how your strengths,  
18 which ones you feel you are really strong in, and there are  
19 any you feel you have any weaknesses on.

20 MR. ABARZUA: Sure. I think -- I think when I  
21 looked at the application it was like, wow, you know, this  
22 would be a perfect opportunity for me based on my past  
23 experience, but also I think my interpersonal skills. And I  
24 think one of my strengths is communicating, you know,  
25 whether it's one-on-one or whether it's in a group setting,

1 and leading as well, and being able to lead a team or being  
2 able to lead the Commission.

3 But also, too, you know, following the -- the  
4 respect, you know, and the request of the Commissioners.  
5 Again, like I touched on, you know, it's you guys'  
6 Commission and I'm here to kind of manage and coach that.

7 I think a weakness of mine would be that even  
8 though I do consider myself a great communicator and have  
9 great communication skills is those relationships in the  
10 media; and think to round out the staff and talking about  
11 diversity of staff, I think bringing on someone that is a  
12 real expert and has those relationships with media and  
13 bringing on, you know, a strong PIO or deputy that would be  
14 able to communicate that and get the ball rolling.

15 Again, so I think, you know, bringing -- bringing  
16 in a diverse staff that would compliment, you know, my  
17 strengths but also weaknesses and the Commissions, and  
18 making sure that it's diverse, that, you know, it's touching  
19 every part of the state.

20 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you, Trevor.

21 MR. ABARZUA: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

23 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you. I'm just trying  
24 to find my -- sorry. I apologize.

25 Okay. So my question for you is, I know you're --

1           sorry, I apologize for that, I've got -- I've been taking  
2 notes so I've got a lot of stuff.

3           MR. ABARZUA: No, yeah.

4           COMMISSIONER LERNER: So you would be the go-to  
5 person for the Commissioners, and how would you balance the  
6 communication that needs to occur; and what would you do in  
7 terms of the Commissioners if you have two opposing  
8 viewpoints, one Commissioner comes to you and says I'd like  
9 this and another one comes and says I want that, how do you,  
10 as the executive director, how would you balance that?

11           And that's -- so this is more internally within the  
12 organization.

13           MR. ABARZUA: Sure. I think, you know, having  
14 individual relationships with each Commissioner is going to  
15 be important, and -- and building that trust in those  
16 relationships will be, you know, first and foremost to  
17 start.

18           I think, you know, I'm a big -- I believe in data  
19 and facts and I think we're going to be getting a lot of  
20 data and census data that is going to help dictate how we  
21 draw these lines, and I think going back to, you know,  
22 again, following the Constitution first and foremost, but  
23 using the data to make educated choices and -- and choices,  
24 correct choices I think will help.

25           And I think, again, dealing with different

1 personalities on the Commission, different individuals,  
2 that's a strength of mine, and I think that's one of my best  
3 strengths is, you know, hearing -- hearing them out, but  
4 also to knowing the end of the day the mission is to -- to  
5 do what's best for the state and to draw those lines. And I  
6 think, you know, along with the data, bringing those two  
7 together, bringing those two viewpoints together, and -- and  
8 really talking it out in a cordial way and also relying on  
9 the facts. That's how I would handle it.

10 But, again, I think that's one of my strengths is,  
11 you know, that person-to-person communication, I would  
12 consider myself a people person, and being able to manage  
13 and mitigate those discrepancies or some of those  
14 disagreements, I think that -- I think I'd be really  
15 properly equipped to handle those.

16 COMMISSIONER LERNER: And just as a follow-up, kind  
17 of a scenario kind of question that goes with that, because  
18 what you're saying is bringing people together, which is  
19 what we always hope for, thank you.

20 What if one of the Commissioners or if either or  
21 both of them said: Hey, I've got something I'd like you to  
22 do, please don't pass that on to anybody, this is something  
23 between us, and you may feel it's not appropriate.

24 MR. ABARZUA: Again, I think transparency is the  
25 biggest part of this process, and I think to get public

1 trust and to get trust from the community, I think we need  
2 to be transparent, so I would not entertain that.

3 I think, you know, being -- I think in having  
4 relationships with each individual is important, but I think  
5 also, again, following the rules, following the  
6 Constitution, and -- and, you know, putting the best foot  
7 forward for the state, you know, that's what I'm here for  
8 and first and foremost.

9 Again, I would not entertain -- in that scenario, I  
10 would not entertain it, and I would ask, you know, the  
11 Commissioner to -- to please refrain from telling me  
12 anything that they would like to keep confidential; but  
13 also, you know, doing it -- doing a lot of those talks, you  
14 know, in the public forum in public session to be able to  
15 not have to worry about any of that.

16 So, again, I'm here -- I'm here to -- to work with  
17 the state and I mean help the Commissioners, but to follow  
18 the Constitution first and foremost, and that's what I want  
19 to do.

20 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Thank you.

21 MR. ABARZUA: Thanks.

22 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. With that, we would  
23 like to see if you have any quick questions of us.

24 MR. ABARZUA: I think one question would be kind of  
25 your guys' vision to fill out the staff. You know, in

1 working with me and making sure that, you know, the  
2 Commission is the most successful, but I am most successful,  
3 you know, what the is the vision in terms of what you would  
4 like to see round out the staff?

5 You know, I know I touched on having someone with  
6 media expertise, but wanted to see if that was something the  
7 Commission agreed on and just vision on staff.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you for your question.  
9 I'll take a stab at that, then I will turn it over to my  
10 Commissioners.

11 For me I would like to see a staff that reflects  
12 Arizona. I'm deeply concerned about "group think" just as a  
13 psychologist, and I know that the data show that a variety  
14 of opinions typically leads to better decision-making. So  
15 aside from the moral aspect of representing our broader  
16 state, I'm deeply committed to making the best decisions  
17 possible, and -- and believe that a diversity of opinion and  
18 challenging what the status quo is, is something that's  
19 positive.

20 And with that, I -- I will turn it over to my  
21 peers.

22 COMMISSIONER YORK: This is Commissioner York. I  
23 believe that one of the things that as a Commission we're  
24 struggling with is public policy and how to perform in now a  
25 public arena.

1           The other thing that we felt strongly is that we  
2 wanted an independent staff that was going to follow the  
3 Constitution but also listen to the Commission broadly; and  
4 -- and for that, we felt also it was very important that the  
5 executive director had any input to the staff -- staffing  
6 positions that we hire. We have a limited budget, so we  
7 need to be cognizant of that, coupled with Erika's  
8 description of the state, I think those are things that we  
9 need to consider.

10           COMMISSIONER MEHL: This is Commissioner Mehl. I  
11 think the self-awareness of the executive director of what  
12 your strengths and weaknesses are and a recognition that in  
13 those other positions we need skill and ability, that will  
14 round out and supplement what -- what your abilities are, so  
15 that in a small staff we have really true competence, I  
16 think is also very important.

17           COMMISSIONER LERNER: I have nothing to add. Thank  
18 you. Everything was great.

19           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you --

20           MR. ABARZUA: Thank you.

21           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: -- so much for joining us  
22 today and for your interest in the position. We appreciate  
23 your time and your commitment.

24           MR. ABARZUA: Thank you so much for the  
25 opportunity. I appreciate it and look forward to hearing

1 back. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you. And with  
3 that, I'm going to ask that all Commissioners stay online.  
4 We have a robust agenda still.

5 (Whereupon Mr. Abarzua exits the meeting.)

6 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: We have about 35 minutes  
7 before we're going to have a hard stop, so I'd like to be  
8 able to move through the agenda as expeditiously as we can.

9 With that, we're going to move on to immediately  
10 Item V, which is discussion and possible action on executive  
11 director interviews, including selection of candidates --  
12 well, we've already selected those to interview in the  
13 afternoon in -- the meeting.

14 Commission may vote to go into executive session,  
15 which will not be open to the public for purpose of  
16 discussion or consideration of personnel matters, including  
17 on matters related to executive director candidates, A.R.S.  
18 38-431.03(A)(1), for discussion or consideration of records  
19 exempt by law from public inspection, including the receipt  
20 and discussion of information or testimony that is  
21 specifically required to be maintained as confidential by  
22 state or federal law pursuant to A.R.S. 38-431.03(A) --  
23 (A)(2), as well as to obtain legal advice specifically  
24 related to executive director candidates A.R.S.  
25 38-431.03(A)(3).

1           And with that language, let us move to process the  
2 interviews that we just experienced.

3           We alluded to some of this discussion earlier. I  
4 suggest that we take turns, maybe we go through each  
5 applicant one at a time, we share what we feel are the --  
6 the strengths, then the weaknesses; and after that, we go  
7 into executive session to have that exact same conversation  
8 that is a little bit more sensitive; and then we will  
9 reconvene as a group to do our public vote.

10           And unless there's any disagreement on that  
11 process, I'd like to open it up to begin to discuss these  
12 strengths and weaknesses of our candidates.

13           With that, I would like to start with our first  
14 candidate, Tom Augherton, and if we want to go just maybe on  
15 the same order that we did the interviews; it's arbitrary,  
16 but why don't we just go with it.

17           So, Commissioner York.

18           COMMISSIONER YORK: I thought Mr. Augherton  
19 demonstrated quite a bit of experience and that would be a  
20 strength. My consensus is the weakness was perhaps it would  
21 take him time to lead us to a solution.

22           COMMISSIONER LERNER: I'm sorry. It got choppy for  
23 just a moment, Commissioner York. Would you just repeat the  
24 last part of what you said? Sorry about that.

25           COMMISSIONER YORK: I felt that it would take him a

1 long -- quite a while to lead us to a solution if we had an  
2 issue we were trying to resolve.

3 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Commissioner Lerner,  
4 would you like to share your comments, please.

5 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Yeah, I like Mr. Augherton's  
6 experience. I felt he had quite a bit of good experience,  
7 has been around and has an understanding of the  
8 redistricting process; he's been involved in state  
9 government for a long time, I think he could handle the  
10 administrative aspects really well.

11 He seemed to have some experience, maybe not as  
12 much as we want, on the rural communities. He didn't have  
13 quite the strength maybe that others have shown in terms of  
14 their discussion, but I do feel that he's had real solid  
15 experience in working across the aisle, 'cause he's worked  
16 in a lot of different positions where he's had to do that,  
17 and also a lot of experience in working in administration.

18 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

19 Commissioner Mehl.

20 COMMISSIONER MEHL: I was impressed by  
21 Mr. Augherton in -- in many respects. I mean, and clearly  
22 he has a depth of background, and he had administrative  
23 experience.

24 But having said that, I thought some of the other  
25 candidates were -- were simply stronger. So I would -- I

1 think he would be a very good executive director, but I  
2 think we have some alternatives that -- that I would be more  
3 interested in.

4 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. Thank you.

5 You know, personally I felt, again, that this  
6 person was motivated for the right reasons; I feel that he  
7 did his homework; I was impressed that he would not approach  
8 this as a sixth commission member, but rather as somebody  
9 who would want to understand our vision of what, you know,  
10 the process was about.

11 I share some of the concerns that maybe, you know,  
12 he's not quite as ready to jump in with the relationships  
13 and the experience, but -- but I felt comfortable that this  
14 person could represent our Commission and our state well.

15 With that, we'll move on to the second candidate,  
16 Ms. Keely Hartsell.

17 Commissioner York, would you like to start.

18 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you,  
19 Commissioner Neuberg.

20 Ms. Hartsell was obviously very experienced in the  
21 task at hand, in some ways almost too much I felt. The  
22 other thing I felt, that she had a hard time getting to the  
23 answers of our questions when we were asked. I also am  
24 concerned as far as -- and she even mentioned it in the  
25 process -- with the partisanship of her past, would create

1 an issue for the Commission.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. With that, we'll move  
3 on.

4 Commissioner Lerner, would you like to add anything  
5 to that?

6 COMMISSIONER LERNER: Well, I felt she did bring  
7 the most experience to this. She's been involved in all  
8 different parts of government; she understands  
9 redistricting; she's worked in the area of voting; she  
10 understands Voting Rights Act. Her strengths were wide in  
11 terms of, you know, her knowledge, she's worked in a lot of  
12 things that we were asking about in terms of procurement,  
13 public media, she had quite a bit of experience with that.

14 She talked about working across the aisle, she  
15 acknowledged -- what I appreciated, actually, is that she  
16 did acknowledge her partisanship, that she has worked  
17 primarily or with one side more than others. So the fact  
18 that she acknowledged that, I thought was good for us to  
19 hear; and she addressed how she would avoid that in the  
20 future. And to me that was a positive to hear because we  
21 know that's something we are looking for is somebody who is  
22 going to be as nonpartisan as possible in this particular  
23 role.

24 So I just saw a lot of strengths across the board.  
25 I do understand what Commissioner York is saying, there were

1 some questions maybe that weren't answered as  
2 comprehensively as they could have been; but overall, I just  
3 think she brings a lot of strength with her experience.

4 I also liked her answer about communities. She  
5 gave a very broad perspective that we didn't hear from any  
6 of the others in terms of what a "community" is.

7 And -- and she also made a comment that I thought  
8 was good is about not pitting the six requirements against  
9 each other for political gain. So I like the fact that she  
10 acknowledged that we need to try to do what we can to get  
11 politics out of the process as part of that.

12 That's all for right now.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

14 COMMISSIONER MEHL: Well, if nothing else, I've  
15 been consistent on some of my priorities for our Commission,  
16 and -- and following the Constitution is -- is, obviously,  
17 my big one, and she started right off with the position that  
18 I would say is controversial on putting competitiveness,  
19 which I think the Constitution makes clear is the last  
20 priority of the six, and putting it as her top one, which is  
21 what got the 2011 Commission into -- into problem.

22 And I'd also say, and I didn't know, and I started  
23 to ask something and I didn't really know quite how to do  
24 it, she comes out of the Maricopa County Elections  
25 Department, and that's the most controversial place in the

1 state right now on election issues, and I don't think it  
2 would -- I don't think it would serve us well to bring  
3 someone in from that department.

4 Notwithstanding that, she clearly had a lot of  
5 skill and ability; a very talented woman. But for those  
6 reasons I just stated, I would not want -- not want her to  
7 be the executive director.

8 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: With that, I'll share my  
9 opinion. I agree, I think this is a person of great skill.  
10 I was very seriously attracted by her knowledge of the  
11 Voting Rights Act; I was very attracted by her knowledge of  
12 state government and felt that this person could advocate  
13 for our Commission very strongly.

14 I am not concerned by the partisanship. And I know  
15 that this is going to be something that we're going to talk  
16 about with all candidates, we -- we addressed this last week  
17 -- or at least I did -- you know, we are the five  
18 Commissioners, we will determine, you know, the decisions,  
19 and we need the strongest person possible to advance our  
20 issues. And so with that in mind, understanding that if we  
21 rule out all people who have a partisan inclination, we may  
22 be ruling out the best candidates that we have to represent  
23 us and -- and do the best job.

24 So with that, you know, I understand and -- and  
25 respect her background, I thought she -- she would uphold

1           our ethics, I felt that she understood the role of what an  
2           executive director would be.

3                       And in terms of weaknesses, I would agree with  
4           Commissioner Mehl in I think, you know, in the process of us  
5           all applying and reflecting on this iteration of the  
6           Redistricting Commission, I think we've collectively  
7           acknowledged that there is a reality of the hierarchy of the  
8           Constitution; and at the end of the day, I would like to  
9           make sure that anybody that we hire, would only uphold our  
10          visions of that and facilitate that.

11                      And so with that, I really don't have, I think,  
12          much to add.

13                      Let's move on to candidate three, Kristina Gomez.  
14          Commissioner York.

15                      COMMISSIONER YORK: I enjoyed Ms. Gomez's interview  
16          quite a bit. By far the most experienced applicant we had,  
17          as far as I was concerned, based on the previous two  
18          Commissions.

19                      Articulate, joyful, those are kind of words that  
20          come to mind. She's very talented.

21                      One of the -- the only -- the weakness to my,  
22          again, would be sort of the optics with the previous  
23          Commission that she was simply involved with as the deputy,  
24          so how could she -- or how could we overcome that, would be  
25          the question that I have that -- have out.

1                   CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

2                   COMMISSIONER LERNER: I will agree with you on my  
3 take in terms of Commissioner York, I felt she was very --  
4 she's a very strong candidate because she really could --  
5 we've talked about hit the ground rule running; she  
6 certainly understands the process. She understands our  
7 mission.

8                   I think the reason we asked her what would you do  
9 differently last time was, from my perspective, to  
10 understand -- to see if she had an understanding of where --  
11 what maybe happened last time that could be dealt with  
12 differently. I think it was important to hear that  
13 perspective, and she gave, I thought, a good answer; as well  
14 as she made a comment that I thought was -- when she talked  
15 about her own weakness about dwelling on previous issues,  
16 but basically to not repeat mistakes, she made a comment  
17 about trying to look ahead and to not repeat what's happened  
18 in the past.

19                   So I think she certainly could move forward and  
20 I -- I like that as well.

21                   I like the fact that what she had to say about  
22 being inclusive, about leaving doors open, about trying to  
23 resolve issues. I liked her example that she gave of the  
24 challenge in terms of funding and what happened and then how  
25 they worked to resolve that, and I saw that as being very

1 positive of somebody who would reach out to others to try to  
2 find resolution. So I thought that was a strength as well.

3 And she certainly knows what needs to happen  
4 with -- in terms of the Commission and what needs to happen  
5 to make us -- make us function.

6 Last point, I like the fact she claims -- she said  
7 the director has to be a neutral party, somebody who  
8 basically is there for guidance, for information, you know,  
9 basically works with the Commission, like this is the person  
10 who's -- she listens to the direction and help plan and  
11 manage and resolve issues.

12 So those are some strengths.

13 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

14 Commissioner Mehl.

15 COMMISSIONER MEHL: I think clearly that Ms. Gomez  
16 has some strength and experience that are very relevant, she  
17 presented that background very well.

18 Again, I'm probably equally as concerned with --  
19 with us tying ourselves back to the last Commission,  
20 which -- which I think is problematic.

21 And, interestingly, she has the most experience in  
22 some ways but the least experience in actually managing  
23 people. She -- she's been a number two for a long time in a  
24 lot of different spots, and I -- and I think that is a  
25 little bit of a gap; but overall still a very impressive

1 candidate.

2 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

3 You know, I -- I share those thoughts, Commissioner  
4 Mehl. First of all, she's an impressive candidate, I have  
5 no doubt she could do this job. I think there are huge  
6 strengths with her being experienced with the -- the past  
7 Commissions. I think that there are some limitations with  
8 that because I think we all aspire to have a unique, you  
9 know, experience that is reflective of the five of us.

10 I -- I believe she could do a good job -- yeah.  
11 I -- that's what I'd like to say.

12 With that, let's move on to the fourth candidate,  
13 which is Brian Schmitt.

14 Commissioner York.

15 COMMISSIONER YORK: Brian Schmitt, had -- had some  
16 experience, maybe not as much as others, for that it was a  
17 fresh look. What I did think he gave to the Commission is a  
18 more neutral government-involved representative with  
19 experience in the government in the state of Arizona and in  
20 Phoenix, in Maricopa County in general.

21 But weakness, perhaps is probably as not as dynamic  
22 as maybe we thought we might need or leadership skills  
23 weren't quite maybe at the level of some of the other  
24 candidates.

25 COMMISSIONER LERNER: And this is --

1 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Lerner.

2 COMMISSIONER LERNER: I was getting the hang of it,  
3 I was just about to go. Almost there.

4 I will agree. I don't -- very nice person. And I  
5 don't feel he brings the level of experience that we need.  
6 His work at the city level is strong, but he doesn't have  
7 the work at the state level that I think we need; and even  
8 though he made the comment that the city operates similar to  
9 state, it's not exactly the same. And so I think there  
10 would be a pretty good learning curve that has to happen for  
11 him.

12 He certainly seems to understand the Constitution  
13 in terms of those requirements. He talked about being as  
14 open and transparent as possible, certainly talked about  
15 constituents so he had some good things to say. But I feel  
16 that he's probably not as strong because of his lack of  
17 experience maybe with the state at the same level as some of  
18 the other candidates.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl.

21 COMMISSIONER MEHL: I -- I thought that -- that  
22 Brian Schmitt was a very strong candidate and actually 10  
23 years working as a chief of staff for the city council in  
24 Phoenix, he probably has the most bipartisanship  
25 relationships of any of the five candidates that we have

1 interviewed.

2 He's not as personally dynamic, but we're not  
3 looking for someone to be dominant. So I think he  
4 understands the chief of staff role. He's been managing a  
5 staff of almost the identical size that we would have for  
6 the last 10 years, so he has strong management ability.

7 So I was very impressed with him and I would -- I  
8 would think that he would do an excellent job for us.

9 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Yeah, thank you.

10 I agree with that -- that assessment. My -- my  
11 sense of him is that he's a little bit shyer, and -- and  
12 that may be a quality that serves us quite well. When  
13 people listen more than speak, they have two ears and one  
14 mouth; and -- and that suggested to me that this candidate  
15 would be somebody that's not going to inject his or her or  
16 their, you know, opinion about what -- what the districts or  
17 what this process should look like.

18 He was very process orientated and -- and this may  
19 be touching upon the application more than just the  
20 interview, but -- but I felt that Brian was very sensitive  
21 to having a legitimate, you know, accessible process to our  
22 state.

23 I feel that this candidate has a deep understanding  
24 of Arizona. If everybody read kind of the background on  
25 this person, I believe he's a fourth-generation Arizonan,

1 somebody that has deep roots with our state.

2 And I would also just bring to mind that when I  
3 think about kind of the role of the executive director, and  
4 I think about the role of a chief of staff, there's a lot of  
5 commonalities. Meaning, that it's not about that person but  
6 rather that person bringing out the strengths and -- and the  
7 talents of the team around themselves, understanding what  
8 the boundaries are, and -- and their role, so.

9 And I also did not have the concern that this  
10 person would not have the ability to get things done on the  
11 state level; 10 years of working within a city system in  
12 which there are no democrats, no republicans, but rather  
13 individuals who are coming to do the city business, you're  
14 required to put aside those differences and just be highly  
15 pragmatic with getting the job done. And -- and a chief of  
16 staff taps into, you know, the staff members, the lay  
17 leaders, all of that, so.

18 So I would like us to give considerable attention  
19 to this unique skill set.

20 And with that, unless there's any other comments,  
21 we can move on to the fifth candidate, Trevor Abarzua.

22 Commissioner York please.

23 COMMISSIONER YORK: Thank you,  
24 Commissioner Neuberg.

25 Trevor Abarzua was probably my favorite candidate.

1 I thought that his immigration background from his parents'  
2 experience fit well with Arizona, as far as our amount of  
3 different populations we have in the state. His experience  
4 with the Arizona Commerce Commission in recruiting other  
5 businesses and creating that possible path for growth was a  
6 strength that that would serve the Redistricting Commission  
7 well. I liked his personality, his ability to engage the  
8 audience.

9 His weakness probably was that he didn't have  
10 enough experience maybe with media and some of the other  
11 items that he felt he needed have staff for, but he also had  
12 ability to understand what his strengths and weaknesses  
13 were.

14 COMMISSIONER LERNER: And I will -- I think he has  
15 -- Mr. Abarzua has great communication skills, in terms of  
16 that he presents very well.

17 He has a very positive perspective, I thought, that  
18 he brings in part -- in his discussion. I thought he gave  
19 some good examples as well of things that he has done to  
20 resolve -- to solve issues, how you bring people together.  
21 Those were -- those were good examp- -- I mean, he gave some  
22 specific examples, which we asked for. Many of the  
23 candidates didn't always give as specific an example as we  
24 got with Mr. Abarzua. So I thought that was a very good  
25 positive, as part of it.

1           Probably in terms of weaknesses, again a little bit  
2 of lack of broad experience that he might have; that he  
3 didn't -- doesn't necessarily have as much as some of the  
4 other candidates in the areas that we are looking at. I  
5 didn't quite get the seasons in terms of how -- I mean, I  
6 know he works with lots of different staff, but I don't know  
7 if he himself has much of a staff, I forgot whether he spoke  
8 to that or not, but I know he works with other groups out  
9 there.

10           So I think he's a strong candidate. I -- the only  
11 probably concern I had is when he was asked about the  
12 Constitution, I was a little worried about whether he would  
13 insert himself into the process versus being the person who  
14 is our administrator based on his -- his response there.

15           So I think his interpersonal skills were good, but  
16 maybe not having all the experience that we've had with some  
17 of the other candidates, maybe not as quite as strong as  
18 some of the others.

19           Thank you.

20           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Commissioner Mehl, very  
21 quickly, we have about 10 minutes, and I'm hoping we're  
22 going to vote on advancing two candidates, so let's be very  
23 quick.

24           COMMISSIONER MEHL: I was very impressed with him,  
25 I thought he was a very dynamic candidate. I think his

1 background is different but very -- very solid. I think his  
2 ability to work in different settings has been very  
3 exemplary; and, overall, I would rate him high.

4 And he did seem to understand the Constitution.

5 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Thank you.

6 You know, I agree with everything, and I'm just  
7 going to say that I have one concern, and maybe this is the  
8 elephant in the room.

9 I thought he was a great public speaker; I loved  
10 his answers. It's very hard to ignore the fact that he  
11 applied to be a republican representative of the Commission.  
12 And -- and in terms of just seeing, you know, who is going  
13 to represent us in our truest mission, you know, it's hard  
14 to unring the bell; and -- and I just want to acknowledge  
15 that publicly.

16 With that, we have a very short window of time.  
17 If -- if there is a sentiment amongst my Commissioners that  
18 we need to go into executive session, we can certainly do  
19 so.

20 I don't have anything that I need that share that  
21 is not appropriate for the public, but please share  
22 immediately if you think otherwise.

23 COMMISSIONER LERNER: This is Commissioner Lerner.  
24 I have one thing that I would like to share.

25 CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG: Okay. So with that, I would

1           like to vote to go into executive session.

2                   Do I have a motion?

3           COMMISSIONER MEHL:   So moved.

4           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG:  Do I have a second?

5           COMMISSIONER LERNER:  Second.

6           COMMISSIONER YORK:   Second.

7           CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG:  Okay.  A vote.

8           Watchman is gone now, so it's Commissioner Mehl.

9           COMMISSIONER MEHL:   Yes.

10          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG:  Lerner.

11          COMMISSIONER LERNER:  Yes.

12          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG:  York.

13          COMMISSIONER YORK:   Aye.

14          CHAIRPERSON NEUBERG:  Neuberg is an aye.

15                   And with that, we will quickly go into executive  
16          session.

17                   Please hang up and go into the other line.

18                   (Whereupon the proceeding is in executive session  
19          commencing at 12:42 p.m.)

20  
21                                   \* \* \* \* \*

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARIZONA )

) ss.

COUNTY OF MARICOPA )

BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing proceedings were taken before me, Angela Furniss Miller, Certified Reporter No. 50127, all done to the best of my skill and ability; that the proceedings were taken down by me in shorthand and thereafter reduced to print under my direction.

I CERTIFY that I am in no way related to any of the parties hereto nor am I in any way interested in the outcome thereof.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have complied with the requirements set forth in ACJA 7-206. Dated at Litchfield Park, Arizona, this 29th of March, 2021.

Angela Furniss Miller, RPR, CR
CERTIFIED REPORTER (AZ50127)

\* \* \*

I CERTIFY that Miller Certified Reporting, LLC, has complied with the requirements set forth in ACJA 7-201 and 7-206. Dated at LITCHFIELD PARK, Arizona, this 29th of March, 2021.

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