17 Alternatives Offered For Reapportionment Plan

Drafted by Greene County Planning Director Ronald Roth, the alternatives call for from three to seven legislative districts. The legislature currently has seven districts and 13 legislators.

In a related development, Assistant County Attorney Charles Brown of Windham has indicated his opinion that submission of a plan calling for a return to a Board of Supervisors with weighted voting would be inappropriate.

The county has until the end of the month to submit a reapportionment plan to Federal Judge Roger Miner in response to a lawsuit brought last year by Richard Schaufert of Jewett. Schaufert filed the suit after he lost the election for county legislator in District 7 in November 1983.

Schaufert agreed to drop the suit if the county came up with a reapportionment plan approved by the judge. The county is expected to choose at least two or three of the plans for submission.

The county admitted no wrongdoing but acknowledged that the most recent population data indicated that its districts could stand some revision.

Brown cited court decisions which called weighted voting only “an acceptable temporary solution of an intolerable situation” and said it could result in a “mathematical quagmire.” The attorney noted that weighted voting can be constitutional when the county demonstrates that each legislator’s voting power would be sufficient to affect passage of a measure, but that in Greene County, with a disparity between 150 persons in Halcott and 11,453 in Catskill, such a standard would be virtually impossible.

Roth submitted seven plans for the legislature’s consideration late last year but because they called for an increase in the number of legislators to 18 and 19 in most cases, they met with little enthusiasm.

He noted that the 17 plans just submitted to the legislators are based on the 1980 census and all come as close as possible to a Total Deviation of 10 percent or less, meaning the percentage of difference between the district with the highest legislator-to-population ratio and the population of the district with the lowest legislator-to-population ratio.