



Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau

Guidelines for Adjusting Municipal Wards Following the 2020 Federal Census

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April 1, 2016

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GUIDELINES FOR ADJUSTING MUNICIPAL WARDS FOLLOWING THE 2020 FEDERAL CENSUS

I. INTRODUCTION

This publication provides information on the ward subdistricting process, the statutory requirements and legal deadlines that must be met, and the relationship among state, county, and local governments in establishing and using municipal wards to form election districts. It provides guidance to counties and municipalities regarding adjusting ward boundaries so that wards may be combined to form election districts at every level of government.

II. WHAT IS A WARD AND HOW IS IT USED?

Definition

What we in Wisconsin call a *ward* is referred to as a *precinct* in some states or a *voting district* by the Census Bureau. Wards do not constitute election districts from which municipal officials are elected, and thus are not subject to the “one person, one vote” requirement which governs the formation of election districts. Instead, wards are intended to serve as administrative subunits that are aggregated into election districts of equal population. Cities, villages, and towns form municipal wards by combining whole census blocks. Municipalities are required to adjust ward boundaries following the decennial federal census to conform to statutorily prescribed population ranges and meet other requirements including compactness, contiguity, and community of interest. Once established, wards serve as the building blocks used by the legislature, counties, and cities in redistricting their respective election districts.

Why Use Wards to Form Election Districts?

The initial rationale for establishing municipal wards was to give local governments the opportunity to influence the delineation of the boundaries of census tracts and enumeration districts and have a useful tool for planning purposes. As the result of enactment of federal legislation in 1975 (P.L. 94-171), municipalities were given the opportunity to receive population data for voting districts as well as census geography. The establishment of wards was made mandatory following the 1980 census, and the legislature and the courts have used those wards to form legislative districts. This is in contrast to previous legislative redistricting that relied on geographic descriptions to define the boundaries of legislative districts.

The use of locally defined wards which take into account growth patterns, communities of interest, and geography rather than the population collection units devised by the Census Bureau provides a more meaningful building block to form election districts. In addition, using the same wards to describe the boundaries of aldermanic, supervisory, and legislative districts aids voters and election officials.

Who Is Required to Establish Wards?

Section 5.15, Wisconsin Statutes, requires that all cities, villages, and towns with a population of 1,000 or more establish wards. Municipalities under 1,000 population may establish wards if they choose. In addition, a county board may request that a municipality within the county establish a ward or wards if the county board proposes to place the municipality in two or more supervisory districts. The governing body of a municipality—the common council or village or town board—is responsible for establishing ward boundaries. An ordinance or resolution describing the ward boundaries must be adopted by a majority of the members of the governing body.

Requirements for Creating Wards

In creating wards, municipalities are required to follow the standards specified in § 5.15, Wisconsin Statutes. Wards must:

1. Be comprised of whole census blocks.

Wards are constructed by aggregating whole census blocks so that the population of the ward falls within a predetermined range. (See “Population Ranges of Wards.”) The census block is the smallest unit for which population is tabulated, and is typically bounded by streets or other prominent physical features. Political boundaries (municipal limits and county lines) may also serve as block boundaries. Blocks may be as small as a typical city block bounded by four streets or as large as several square miles in rural areas. They usually contain fewer than 100 people (§ 5.15 (1) (b), Wis. Stats.).

There are two exceptions to the “whole block” requirement. A municipality may split a census block if its population is too large to permit the establishment of aldermanic districts of equal population. If annexed or detached territory divides a block, or if a block is only partly contained in a city, the affected municipalities may incorporate only the portion of the block contained within their boundaries (§ 5.15 (2) (c) and (g), Wis. Stats.).

Any division of blocks must be based on the best evidence available of where the block’s residents actually live. “Best evidence” includes data such as housing units, utility connections, and vehicle registrations (§ 5.15 (2) (cm), Wis. Stats.).

2. Suit the convenience of voters.

Wards should “as far as practicable” be kept compact and observe the community of interest of existing neighborhoods (§ 5.15 (1) (b), Wis. Stats.).

3. Be comprised of contiguous territory.

The only exception is island territory which is defined as territory separated from the major part of the municipality by water or the territory of another municipality (§ 5.15 (1) (b), Wis. Stats.).

4. Take into account the county supervisory district plan.

Municipalities must make a “good faith effort” to accommodate the tentative county supervisory district plan by establishing wards that meet the county’s needs (§ 5.15 (2) (d), Wis. Stats.).

5. Consider population and racial and ethnic characteristics.

Wards must be constructed in a manner that permits the creation of supervisory and aldermanic districts of substantially equal population. They must also enhance the participation of members of racial or language minority groups in the political process and their ability to elect representatives of choice (§ 5.15 (1) (a) 2. and (2) (bm), Wis. Stats.).

6. Comply with the population ranges specified by law. (See “Population Ranges of Wards.”)

7. Lie entirely within one municipality and one county. Wards may not cross municipal or county lines (§ 5.15. (1) (d), Wis. Stats.).

8. Reflect the municipal boundaries in place on April 1 of the year following the census.

By specifying a uniform “snapshot” date for municipal boundaries, discrepancies are avoided in municipal boundaries; this is especially important for those also forming the boundaries between legislative districts (§ 5.15 (1) (b), Wis. Stats.).

Annexations

In general, annexations take effect on the date specified by the annexation ordinance or resolution. For purposes of adjusting ward boundaries, however, territory affected by annexations and detachments occurring up to April 1, 2020, must be incorporated in the ward plan adopted by the municipality.

Once the boundaries of legislative districts are established by the legislature, annexations, consolidations, detachments, or any other action by a municipality cannot alter legislative districts. If a city or village annexes territory that is part of an adjacent assembly district, the annexed territory remains, for the rest of the decade, in the assembly district in which it was placed by the legislature.

Population shifts occurring during the decade are not reflected in supervisory or aldermanic districts recorded until the next decennial census is taken, except that a county may alter the boundaries of its supervisory districts during mid-decade to reflect municipal boundary changes and a city may adjust the number of aldermanic districts in the city not more than once every two years, using the existing wards.

Thus, for purposes of redistricting, municipal boundaries and population must be shown as of April 1, 2020.

Population Ranges of Wards

The population ranges for wards were not arrived at arbitrarily; they were intended to approximately correspond to the population ranges of the geographic reporting units used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Section 5.15 (1) (a), Wisconsin Statutes, directs that the population of a ward be established at a “convenient point” within the population range set by law with “due consideration for the known trends of population increase or decrease.” Accordingly, the population of each ward should be set at a level that is consistent with the prescribed population ranges, and which can accommodate fluctuations in population over a relatively long time.

Section 5.15 (2) (b), Wisconsin Statutes, establishes specific population ranges, tied to the population of the municipality:

| Population of Municipality | Ward Population Range |
|---|------------------------------|
| Cities over 150,000 | 1,000 to 4,000 |
| Cities 39,000 to 149,999 | 800 to 3,200 |
| Cities, villages, or towns | |
| 10,000 to 38,999 | 600 to 2,100 |
| 1,000 to 9,999 | 300 to 1,000 |
| Cities, villages, or towns fewer than 1,000 | No division required |

Wards may be established below the prescribed population ranges under several specified circumstances. These situations include territory that is located in a county or school district other than the county or school district in which the major part of the municipality is located; island territory containing resident population; territory which becomes part of a municipality after April 1 of the census year; territory consisting of a portion of a ward the remainder of which has been detached from a municipality; and wards established because of deviation between census geography and between municipal boundaries.

Adjusting Ward Boundaries in 2021

Ward boundaries are intended to be as permanent as possible with changes made only to accommodate changes in population growth patterns, alterations in municipal boundaries, or the mathematical requirements of creating election districts of equal population. Ward boundaries require adjustment under the following circumstances:

1. To reflect changes in population.

Municipalities are required to adjust the boundaries of those wards which, according to the 2020 census, have either gained or lost population and as a result no longer fit with the statutory population ranges. A ward which exceeds the maximum of the applicable population range is to be divided into two or more wards; a ward which falls below the minimum of the applicable population range is to be combined with an adjacent ward or combined with the adjacent ward and subdivided into two or more wards (§ 5.15 (1) (a) 3., Wis. Stats.).

2. To reflect changes in minority population.

Municipalities are also required to consider the racial and ethnic characteristics of the population when adjusting ward boundaries so that members of racial or language minority groups have an opportunity to elect candidates of their choice. Although wards do not directly constitute election districts, they are used to form such districts. Thus, minority population must be distributed within a combination of wards in such a manner as to make it possible to combine those wards to construct an aldermanic or supervisory district in which a racial or language minority has an opportunity to elect a representative of its choice. Court decisions have held that Black and Hispanic populations must be given special attention in redistricting and that election districts must be drawn so that a minority group has a fair chance to elect a candidate of its choice (§ 5.15 (1) (a) 2., Wis. Stats.).

3. To reflect changes in municipal boundaries.

Adjustments in ward boundaries must be made to accommodate annexations, detachments, or other changes in municipal boundaries that have occurred since the previous ward plan was adopted (§ 5.15 (1) (b), (2) (f), Wis. Stats.).

4. To accommodate the establishment of county supervisory districts.

Wards may also need adjustment to permit the establishment of county supervisory districts of equal population. Municipalities are required to consider the tentative county supervisory district plan in determining whether existing ward boundaries need to be changed. The county's tentative plan must include the number and tentative boundaries of the proposed supervisory districts or a description of boundary requirements. In the event that a municipality needs to be divided into two or more supervisory districts which cannot be accommodated within the existing ward plan, the county board is

to submit a written statement to the municipality indicating the approximate location and population of the requested wards (§ 5.15. (2) (d), Wis. Stats.).

5. To facilitate the creation of aldermanic districts of equal population.

A municipality may find it necessary to adjust existing ward boundaries if they no longer allow for the creation of aldermanic districts that are as nearly equal in population as practicable (§ 5.15 (2) (bm), Wis. Stats.).

6. Mid-decade changes.

Once established, the boundaries of each ward are to remain unchanged until the next decennial census. However, several exceptions are recognized, although no ward line adjustment may cross the boundary of an assembly district. A municipal board may adjust ward boundaries if a new municipality is created or if part of the municipality is annexed to a city or village and realignment of the remaining municipal wards becomes necessary (§ 5.15 (7), Wis. Stats.). A city, village, or town must adjust ward boundaries to reflect a municipal detachment (§ 5.15 (2) (e), Wis. Stats.). New territory that becomes part of a municipality during the decade may constitute a new ward, even if that ward falls below the prescribed minimum population range (§ 5.15 (2) (f) 4., Wis. Stats.). An annexation ordinance may annex territory to an existing ward or may place it in a new ward (§ 66.0217 (8) (b), Wis. Stats.). Finally, a ward may be adjusted by the legislature, as a matter of statewide concern, in the enactment of legislative districts (§ 5.15 (1) (c), Wis. Stats.).

7. To accommodate a legislative redistricting plan enacted by the legislature under Article IV, Section 3, of the constitution.

A provision requiring municipalities to make their ward plans consistent with a previously enacted block-level redistricting plan created by 2011 Act 39 remains in effect, should this situation arise again following the 2020 census (§ 5.15 (4) (a), Wis. Stats.).

To summarize:

Ward boundaries may be adjusted to (1) comply with the population ranges required by law; (2) reflect changes in municipal boundaries occurring subsequent to the adoption of the previous ward plan; (3) permit the establishment of election districts of substantially equal population; (4) permit the establishment of aldermanic or supervisory districts that enhance the participation of minorities in the political process and their ability to elect representatives of their choice; and (5) accommodate a legislative redistricting plan enacted prior to completion of the statewide ward database.

The intent is that wards remain relatively permanent, with changes in ward boundaries made only to accommodate changes in population growth patterns, alterations in municipal boundaries, or the mathematical requirements of creating election districts of equal population.

In addition to the obvious benefit of greatly simplifying the task of reestablishing a ward plan based on the decennial census, municipalities benefit in other ways when ward lines are not disturbed. When wards remain relatively constant, the administration of elections is simplified. Although the combination of wards comprising an election district may change, and aldermanic, supervisory, legislative, and congressional districts must be redrawn to reflect shifts in population, ward boundaries often need not

change. Voter identification with the ward develops and is strengthened over time, and election officials have fewer problems in administering elections.

III. USING WARDS TO FORM ELECTION DISTRICTS

Three-Step Process

The establishment of municipal wards requires cooperation between the municipality and the county board of each county in which a municipality is located and involves a three-step process. Each step must be completed within 60 days.

1. The first step requires the county board to submit a tentative county supervisory district plan to each municipal governing body in the county. The county board is required to hold a public hearing on the tentative plan. If a municipality needs to be divided and placed in more than one supervisory district, the board is to indicate the approximate location of the territory from which a ward is sought and the approximate population of the ward.
2. In the second step, municipalities have a maximum of 60 days to adjust ward boundaries to comply with the proposed supervisory district plan following receipt of the tentative plan (after holding a public hearing).
3. The third 60-day step requires counties to adopt final supervisory district plans and cities to establish aldermanic district plans.

The governing body of a municipality—the common council or village or town board—is responsible for establishing ward boundaries. An ordinance or resolution describing the ward boundaries must be adopted by a majority of the members of the governing body. Section 5.18 of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that if a municipality fails to adopt a ward plan within the prescribed period, the county or any elector of the municipality may submit a proposed ward plan to the appropriate circuit court. If the court finds that the existing municipal ward plan fails to comply with statutory requirements, it may promulgate the submitted plan, or any other plan, to serve as a temporary ward plan until superseded by a valid plan enacted by the municipality.

Timetable

The official publication of population data and census maps starts the redistricting clock. This data is typically received about one year after the date of the census. As noted, counties have up to 60 days to enact a tentative redistricting plan; municipalities are allotted up to the following 60 days to enact an ordinance or resolution establishing municipal wards; and counties and municipalities are given up to 60 days to establish election districts. Each step begins when the previous step is completed and each step must be completed within 60 days. The three steps should be completed by approximately October 1, 2021. The Wisconsin Legislature is given the entire 2021–22 session to establish legislative district boundaries. As a practical matter—so that the 2022 legislative elections can be based on the new districts—the legislature must complete redistricting by mid-March 2022 (§ 10.06 (1) (b), Wis. Stats.) to facilitate publication of the first legal notice in March 2022 for the 2022 fall elections.

| Requirement | Date Completed By |
|--|---------------------|
| P.L. 94-171 file received | March or April 2021 |
| Population data posted on the redistricting Web site | March or April 2021 |

| Requirement | Date Completed By |
|---|--------------------------|
| Counties adopt tentative supervisory plans | June 2021 |
| Municipalities adopt ward plans | August 2021 |
| Counties establish aldermanic districts | October 2021 |
| Cities establish aldermanic districts | October 2021 |
| Legislature establishes legislative and congressional districts | March 2022 |

Numbering of Wards and Combining Wards for Voting Purposes

Wards are to be designated by consecutive, unique whole numbers beginning with the number “one.” Wards may be combined to allow the use of a common polling place as long as the numbering of the combined wards is not changed (§ 5.15 (6) (a), Wis. Stats.). Municipalities having a population of 35,000 or more are required to maintain separate returns for all wards but may by ordinance combine wards with a population of 20 or fewer with adjacent wards. Municipalities under 35,000 population are not required to maintain separate returns for combined wards as long as all voters in the combined wards are eligible to vote for the same offices. A resolution combining wards for voting purposes must be adopted prior to each election, although resolutions adopted by municipalities under 35,000 remain in effect until modified or rescinded (§ 5.15 (6) (b), Wis. Stats.).

IV. COUNTY SUPERVISORY DISTRICTS

There are two steps involved in the establishment of county supervisory districts. The first step requires the county board to adopt a preliminary county supervisory district plan within 60 days after detailed population data and block-level maps are made available by the state. The second step begins after municipalities adopt ward plans and requires the county board to enact a final supervisory district plan. A public hearing is required before adoption of both the tentative and final plans.

Step 1—§ 59.10 (3) (b) 1., Wis. Stats.

At the first public hearing, the county board is directed to solicit suggestions from municipalities concerning the proposed tentative plan. The plan may be amended after the public hearing to incorporate suggestions received. A copy of the tentative plan is to be sent to the governing body of each municipality in the county.

County boards are to work cooperatively with municipalities in establishing supervisory districts. Supervisory districts are to be comprised of whole, contiguous municipalities, parts of the same municipality, or contiguous parts of adjoining municipalities consisting of whole wards. All districts are to be substantially equal in population. Multi-member districts are not permitted. If the tentative plan requires that a municipality be divided between two or more districts, the county board is to provide the municipality with a copy of the plan and a statement specifying the approximate location and population of the territory needed for the wards required to create the districts.

If the county board fails to adopt a tentative plan within 14 days from the expiration of the 60-day period, any municipality or voter within the county may submit a proposed plan to the circuit court. The court may promulgate that plan, or any other plan, as a temporary supervisory district plan until superseded by a valid plan enacted by the county board (§ 59.10 (6), Wis. Stats.).

Step 2—§ 59.10 (3) (b) 2., Wis. Stats.

The second step in the process requires the county board to hold a second public hearing and adopt a final supervisory district plan. This is to occur within 60 days after all the municipalities in the county have adjusted wards. All wards within a supervisory district must be contiguous, except for wards within a municipality that are wholly surrounded by water or another municipality, in which case the noncontiguous ward may be combined with its parent municipality to form a supervisory district. The county board chairperson is to file a copy of the final plan with the secretary of state.

The complete text of Section 59.10 (3) (b), Wisconsin Statutes, governing county supervisory districting is printed in Part VIII.

V. ALDERMANIC DISTRICTS

The common council of a city is required to redistrict aldermanic districts within 60 days of adjusting its ward boundaries. Aldermanic districts are to be constructed from contiguous, whole wards, except any isolated ward consisting of island territory surrounded by water or another municipality; must be as compact as possible; and must contain, as nearly as practicable, an equal number of inhabitants according to the most recent federal census.

The redistricting ordinance must be adopted by a majority vote of all members of the common council. The common council is authorized to increase or decrease the number of aldermanic districts during the decade. Such action must not occur more frequently than once every two years and requires a two-thirds vote of the members of the common council.

Only towns and villages with a population of 1,000 or more are required to establish wards. However, all municipalities may be required to establish wards when necessary to create supervisory, legislative, or congressional districts of equal population. Town supervisors and village trustees continue to be elected on an at-large basis.

The text of Section 62.08, Wisconsin Statutes, pertaining to the alteration of aldermanic districts, is printed in Part VIII.

VI. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the division ordinance or resolution, municipalities must provide to the county clerk of each county in which the municipality is located a list of census block numbers contained within each ward. Any split blocks must be identified and the population for each part provided, based on the April 1, 2020, reporting date. A map of the municipality showing the revised ward boundaries is also required. The resolution or ordinance, list of blocks, and map must be sent to the appropriate county clerk or clerks within five days after adoption of the ward plan.

2015 Wisconsin Act 55 created new reporting requirements for municipalities in addition to those in force following the 2010 census. After adjusting wards in 2021, municipalities must file a report with the county clerk of every county in which the municipality is located, certifying the ward boundaries and including a map and a list of census blocks of which each ward is comprised.

The new law requires, during the decade, the county clerk to file a report with the Legislative Technology Services Bureau a report confirming the boundaries of each municipality, ward, and supervisory district in the county, along with a map, twice each year: on January 15 (reflecting the boundaries as

of January 1) and on July 15 (reflecting the boundaries as of July 1). The report must be in a format approved by LTSB. In years following the census (2021), the county clerk must file the July report reflecting the new ward boundaries no later than November 1, current as of the date of the report.

VII. FURTHER INFORMATION

For assistance in ward subdistricting and alteration of election districts, local officials, including regional planning commissions, county extension agents, county land information officers, and local government interest groups, have a number of resources available. Population data, maps, and other information are available on the Wisconsin Legislature's redistricting Internet site at <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/ltsb/gis/>. The U.S. Census Bureau provides maps and redistricting population data at <http://www.census.gov/rdo/>.

At the state level, information is available from the following sources:

Legislative Reference Bureau

1 East Main Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 2037
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-2037

Contact: Michael Keane, (608) 266-0346 or michael.keane@legis.wisconsin.gov, for general information on redistricting and format for sending ward plans to the state.

Legislative Technology Services Bureau

17 West Main Street, Suite 200
Madison, Wisconsin 53703-3305

Contact: Tony Van Der Wielen, (608) 283-1817 or tony.vanderwielen@legis.wisconsin.gov, for information on using WISE-LR software; electronic data; copies of maps.

Elections Commission

812 East Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 7984
Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7984

Contact: Michael Haas, Elections Administrator, (608) 266-0136 or michael.haas@wi.gov, or Ross Hein, Elections Supervisor, (608) 267-3666 or ross.hein@wi.gov for questions on elections administration.

VIII. STATUTORY REFERENCES

The following statute sections are reprinted from the *2015-16 Wisconsin Statutes*.

Text of Section 5.15, Wisconsin Statutes

5.15 Division of municipalities into wards. (1) (a) 1. Every city, village, and town in this state shall by ordinance or resolution of its common council or village or town board, respectively, be divided into wards as provided in this section, except as authorized in sub. (2). The boundaries of the wards established under this section, and the number assigned to each ward, are intended to be as permanent as possible, and to this end each ward shall when created contain a population at a convenient point within the applicable population range under sub. (2) (b), with due consideration for the known trends of population increase or decrease within that part of the municipality in which the ward is located.

2. Once established, the boundaries of each ward shall remain unchanged until a further decennial federal census of population indicates that the population of a ward is then above or below the applicable population range, or until the ward boundaries are required to be changed to permit creation of supervisory or aldermanic districts of substantially equal population or to enhance the participation of members of a racial or language minority group in the political process and their ability to elect representatives of their choice, or until otherwise authorized or required under this section.

3. If the population of a ward has increased above the maximum of its population range or if the population of a ward must be decreased for a reason specified in subd. 2., the ward shall be divided into 2 or more wards in compliance with sub. (2) (b). If the population of a ward has decreased below the minimum of its population range or if the population of a ward must be increased for a reason specified in subd. 2., the ward shall, if possible, be combined with an adjoining ward, or the underpopulated ward and one adjoining ward shall be combined and together subdivided into 2 or more wards in compliance with sub. (2).

(b) Except as authorized in sub. (2) (a), within 60 days after the receipt of a tentative supervisory district plan and written statement, if any, from the county board of each county in which a municipality is located, the governing body of the municipality shall adjust its wards according to the schedule shown in sub. (2). All territory contained within the municipality, and only the territory so contained, on April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census shall be contained within a ward established under the division ordinance or resolution. Except as authorized in sub. (2), each ward shall consist of whole blocks, as utilized by the U.S. bureau of the census in the most recent federal decennial census. To suit the convenience of the voters residing therein each ward shall, as far as practicable, be kept compact and observe the community of interest of existing neighborhoods and other settlements. All territory within a ward shall be contiguous, except for island territory as defined in sub. (2) (f) 3. Enactment or adoption of a division ordinance or resolution requires the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the governing body.

(c) The wards established by municipal governing bodies in a division ordinance or resolution enacted or adopted under this section shall govern the adjustment of supervisory districts under s. 59.10 (2) (a) and (3) (b) and of aldermanic districts under s. 62.08 (1) for the purpose of local elections beginning on January 1 of the 2nd year commencing after the year of the census until revised under this section on the basis of the results of the next decennial census of population unless adjusted under sub. (2) (f) 4. or 5., (6) (a), or (7), or unless a division is required to effect an act of the legislature redistricting legislative districts under article IV, section 3, of the constitution or redistricting congressional

districts. The populations of wards under each decennial ward division shall be determined on the basis of the federal decennial census and any official corrections to the census issued on or before the date of adoption of the division ordinance or resolution to reflect the correct populations of the municipality and the blocks within the municipality on April 1 of the year of the census.

(d) Every ward shall be wholly contained within a single county.

(2) (a) Except as required by par. (d), no city electing its common council at large in which the total population is less than 1,000, and no village or town in which the total population is less than 1,000 is required to be divided into wards under this section, but any such city, village or town may divide itself into wards if the creation of wards facilitates the administration of elections. No village or town located in a county having only one town is required to be divided into wards under this section.

(b) Except for wards created to effect an act of the legislature redistricting legislative districts under article IV, section 3, of the constitution or redistricting congressional districts and except as authorized under pars. (bm), (c), (e), and (f) and sub. (7), wards shall contain the following numbers of inhabitants:

1. In any city in which the population is at least 150,000, each ward shall contain not less than 1,000 nor more than 4,000 inhabitants.

2. In any city in which the population is at least 39,000 but less than 150,000, each ward shall contain not less than 800 nor more than 3,200 inhabitants.

3. In any city, village or town in which the population is at least 10,000 but less than 39,000, each ward shall contain not less than 600 nor more than 2,100 inhabitants.

4. In any city, village or town in which the population is less than 10,000, each ward shall contain not less than 300 nor more than 1,000 inhabitants.

(bm) Every city electing the members of its common council from aldermanic districts shall assemble the blocks wholly or partially contained within the city into wards that will enable the creation of aldermanic districts that are substantially equal in population. If a block is partly contained within the city, the city shall divide the block to form a ward containing the portion of the block that lies within the city.

(c) If the population of a block exceeds the maximum population for a ward otherwise specified in this subsection, such block shall be constituted a ward by itself, except that if the population of a block substantially exceeds the

population of proposed aldermanic districts in a city so that, if the block were to constitute an aldermanic district, the populations of the aldermanic districts in the city would not be substantially equal, the city shall divide the block to permit assembly into wards that will enable creation of aldermanic districts that are substantially equal in population.

(cm) Any division of blocks under this section shall be based on the best evidence available. In this paragraph, “best evidence” includes, but is not limited to, the population of the block and other information received from the U.S. bureau of the census and such data as number of housing units, utility connections and vehicle registrations or a special census conducted locally. For each ward so established, the population estimate shall be correlated with the results of the most recent federal decennial census, so that the total population reported for all wards in the municipality agrees with the census results.

(d) Every municipality shall make a good faith effort to accommodate the tentative plan submitted by the county or counties in which it is located under s. 59.10 (2) (a) or (3) (b) 1., and shall divide itself into wards in such a manner that will permit the creation of county supervisory districts in accordance with the population requirements for the plan specified in s. 59.10 (2) (a) or (3) (b) 1.

(e) If territory is detached from a city, village or town after April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census, and the remaining portion of the ward to which it was attached falls below the prescribed minimum population for the applicable range, the remaining portion of the population may be constituted a ward by itself.

(f) Any city, village or town may establish a ward below the prescribed minimum population for the applicable range whenever the proposed ward is established under par. (a), (d) or (e) or whenever the proposed ward contains solely:

1. That part of a city or village situated in a county other than the county in which the major part of the municipality is located.
2. That part of a city, village or town belonging to a school district other than the school district to which the major part of the municipality belongs.
3. Island territory containing a resident population. In this subdivision, “island territory” means territory surrounded by water, or noncontiguous territory which is separated by the territory of another municipality or by water, or both, from the major part of the municipality to which it belongs.
4. New territory which becomes a part of a city, village or town after April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census.

5. Territory that lies between an actual municipal boundary that existed on April 1 of the year of a federal decennial census and an intersecting municipal boundary that deviates from the actual municipal boundary on that date if the deviating boundary was used by the U.S. bureau of the census to enumerate the population of the municipality in that census.

(g) If a block is affected by an annexation or detachment which establishes a municipal boundary that subdivides the block, the municipalities in which the block is contained shall incorporate only the portion of the block contained within their boundaries in their division ordinances or resolutions.

(4) (a) Except as provided in par. (c), the division ordinance or resolution shall number all wards in the municipality with unique whole numbers in consecutive order, beginning with the number one, shall designate the polling place for each ward, and shall describe the boundaries of each ward consistent with the conventions set forth in s. 4.003. The ordinance or resolution shall be accompanied by a list of the block numbers used by the U.S. bureau of the census that are wholly or partly contained within each ward, with any block numbers partly contained within a ward identified, and a map of the municipality which illustrates the revised ward boundaries. If the legislature, in an act redistricting legislative districts under article IV, section 3, of the constitution, or in redistricting congressional districts, establishes a district boundary within a municipality that does not coincide with the boundary of a ward established under the ordinance or resolution of the municipality, the municipal governing body shall, no later than April 10 of the 2nd year following the year of the federal decennial census on which the act is based, amend the ordinance or resolution to the extent required to effect the act. The amended ordinance or resolution shall designate the polling place for any ward that is created to effect the legislative act. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to compel a county or city to alter or redraw supervisory or aldermanic districts.

(b) Within 5 days after adoption or enactment of an ordinance or resolution under this section or any amendment thereto, the municipal clerk shall transmit one copy of the ordinance or resolution or the amendment to the county clerk of each county in which the municipality is contained, accompanied by the list and map specified in par. (a). Each copy shall identify the name of the municipality and the county or counties in which it is located.

(bg) No later than October 15 of each year following the year of a federal decennial census, each municipal clerk shall file a report with the county clerk of each county in which the municipality is contained confirming the boundaries of the municipality and of all wards in the municipality. The report shall be accompanied by a map of the municipality and a list of the block numbers of which the municipality

and each ward within the municipality are comprised. Within 5 days after notice to the municipal clerk of a judgment that has the effect of changing the municipal boundaries, the clerk shall file the same report. Each report filed under this paragraph shall identify the name of the municipality and the county or counties in which it is located.

(br) 1. Except as provided in subd. 2., no later than January 15 and July 15 of each year, the county clerk shall transmit to the legislative technology services bureau a report confirming the boundaries of each municipality, ward, and supervisory district in the county together with a map of the county, in an electronic format approved by the legislative technology services bureau. Each report shall be current to the nearest January 1 or July 1 preceding the date of the report.

2. In each year following the year of a federal decennial census, the July report shall instead be transmitted no later than November 1 and shall be current to the date of the report. The November 1 report shall be accompanied by a list of the block numbers of which the county and each municipality and ward within the county are comprised.

(c) Wards that are created to effect an act of the legislature redistricting legislative districts or congressional districts and wards authorized under sub. (2) (bm), (c), (e), or (f) or (7) may be numbered with a combination of whole numbers and letters.

(5) When a town is divided into wards, the annual town meeting shall be held in a location authorized under s. 60.11 (3) (a).

(6) (a) Following any municipality-wide special federal census of population, the governing body of the municipality in which the special census was held may, by ordinance or resolution, adjust the ward boundaries, but no ward line adjustment may cross the boundary of a congressional, assembly, or supervisory district. The municipal clerk shall transmit copies of the ordinance or resolution in compliance with sub. (4) (b).

(b) No later than 30 days before each election, the governing body of any municipality may by resolution combine 2 or more wards for voting purposes to facilitate using a common polling place. Whenever wards are so combined, the original ward numbers shall continue to be utilized for all official purposes. Except as otherwise authorized under this paragraph, every municipality having a population of 35,000 or more shall maintain separate returns for each ward so combined. In municipalities having a population of 35,000 or more, the governing body may provide in a resolution that returns for any ward having a population of 20 or less be combined with returns for any adjacent ward, if the total population of the combined wards does

not exceed the applicable population range under sub. (2) (b) for wards in that municipality. In municipalities having a population of less than 35,000, the governing body may provide in the resolution that returns shall be maintained only for each group of combined wards at any election. Whenever a governing body provides that returns shall be maintained only for combined wards under this paragraph, the municipality shall report separate results for each separate ballot required under ss. 5.58 to 5.64. The municipal clerk shall transmit a copy of the resolution to the county clerk of each county in which the municipality is contained. In municipalities having a population of less than 35,000, the resolution shall remain in effect for each election until modified or rescinded, or until a new division is made under this section. Whenever needed for purposes of this paragraph, the municipal clerk shall determine the population of each ward in his or her municipality. If the population of a ward cannot be determined from census results, the clerk shall determine the population of the smallest unit encompassing the entire ward that can be determined from census results. The clerk shall then divide the land area of the ward by the land area of that unit. The clerk shall then multiply that result by the population of the unit to determine the population of the ward for purposes of this paragraph.

(7) If a new municipality is created or if part of a municipality is annexed to a city or village during a decennial period after April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census, the governing body of any municipality to which territory is attached or from which territory is detached, without regard to the time provisions of sub. (1) (b), may, by ordinance or resolution, create new wards or adjust the existing wards in that municipality to the extent required to reflect the change. If a municipality is consolidated with another municipality during a decennial period after April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census, the governing body of the consolidated municipality, without regard to the time provisions under sub. (1) (b), may, by ordinance or resolution, create new wards or adjust the existing wards of the municipality to the extent required to reflect the change. No ward line adjustment under this subsection may cross the boundary of a congressional, assembly, or supervisory district. Within 5 days after adoption of the ordinance or resolution, the municipal clerk shall transmit copies of the ordinance or resolution making the adjustment to the county clerk in compliance with sub. (4) (b).

(8) Until divided, all elections are held in the established wards.

History: 1971 c. 304 ss. 3 to 5, 29 (2); 1977 c. 26, 418, 427, 449; 1979 c. 260; 1981 c. 4 ss. 2 to 10, 18; 1981 c. 314; 1983 a. 29, 192, 442; 1983 a. 484 ss. 8e, 174; 1983 a. 538; 1985 a. 304 ss. 8 to 10, 12; 1987 a. 391; 1991 a. 5, 143, 315; 1993 a. 213;

1995 a. 201; 1999 a. 182; 2005 a. 149, 312; 2011 a. 39, 75; 2013 a. 155; 2015 a. 55.

City and county apportionment is discussed. City of Janesville v. Rock County, 107 Wis. 2d 187, 319 N.W.2d 891 (Ct. App. 1982).

Annotation: The court properly voided the city's plan and adopted the county's plan, even though the county did not adopt the plan within 60 days of receiving census data. County of La Crosse v. City of La Crosse, 108 Wis. 2d 560, 322 N.W.2d 531 (Ct. App. 1982).

Text of Section 5.18, Wisconsin Statutes

5.18 Enforcement of division requirement. If any municipality fails to comply with s. 5.15, the county in which the municipality is located or any elector of the municipality may submit to the circuit court for any county in which the municipality is located within 14 days from the expiration of the 60-day period under s. 5.15 (1) (b) a proposed plan for the division of the municipality into wards in compliance with this section. If the circuit court finds that the existing division of the municipality into wards fails to comply with

s. 5.15, it shall review the plan submitted by the petitioner and after reasonable notice to the municipality may promulgate the plan, or any other plan in compliance with s. 5.15, as a temporary ward plan for the municipality to remain in effect until superseded by a ward plan enacted or adopted by the governing body in compliance with s. 5.15.

History: 1985 a. 304 ss. 9, 11, 12; 2011 a. 39.

Text of Section 59.10, Wisconsin Statutes

59.10 Boards: composition; election; terms; compensation; compatibility. The boards of the several counties shall be composed of representatives from within the county who are elected and compensated as provided in this section. Each board shall act under sub. (2), (3) or (5), unless the board enacts an ordinance, by a majority vote of the entire membership, to act under sub. (1). If a board enacts such ordinance, a certified copy shall be filed with the secretary of state.

(1) **SELF-ORGANIZED COUNTIES.** (a) *Number of supervisors and apportionment of supervisory districts.* In each county with a population of at least 500,000, sub. (2) (a) and (b) applies. In counties with a population of less than 500,000 and more than one town, sub. (3) (a) to (c) applies. In counties with one town only, sub. (5) applies.

(b) *Terms.* The term of office of supervisors is 2 years. A board may determine whether the terms shall be concurrent or staggered. Supervisors shall be elected at the election to be held on the first Tuesday in April next preceding the expiration of their respective terms and shall take office on the 3rd Tuesday in April following their election. If the board determines that supervisors shall serve staggered terms, the board shall, by ordinance, provide for a division of supervisors into 2 classes, one class to be elected for one-half of a full term and the other class for a full term and thereafter the supervisors shall be elected for a full term. The board shall publish the ordinance as a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, or as a notice, as described under s. 59.14 (1m) (b), before publication of the notice of the election at which supervisors are to be elected.

(c) *Compensation.* The method of compensation for supervisors shall be determined by the board.

(d) *Vacancies.* A board may determine the procedure for filling a vacancy.

(2) **MILWAUKEE COUNTY.** In each county with a population of at least 500,000:

(a) *Composition; supervisory districts.* Within 60 days after the population count by census block, established in the decennial federal census of population, and maps showing the location and numbering of census blocks become available in printed form from the federal government or are published for distribution by an agency of this state, but no later than July 1 following the year of each decennial census, the board shall adopt and transmit to the governing body of each city and village wholly or partially contained within the county a tentative county supervisory district plan to be considered by the cities and villages when dividing into wards. The tentative plan shall specify the number of supervisors to be elected and shall divide the county into a number of districts equal to the number of supervisors, with each district substantially equal in population and consisting of contiguous whole wards or municipalities, except as authorized in sub. (3) (b) 2. Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the board shall develop and adopt the tentative plan in accordance with sub. (3) (b) 1. The tentative plan shall not include provision for division of any census block, as utilized by the U.S. bureau of the census in the most recent federal decennial census, unless the block is bisected by a municipal boundary or unless a division is required to enable creation of supervisory districts that are substantially equal in population. The board shall adopt a final plan by enacting an ordinance in accordance with sub. (3) (b) 2. to 4. Changes to the final plan shall be governed by par. (d) and sub. (3) (c).

(b) *Election; term.* For an election that is held before 2016, supervisors shall be elected for 4-year terms at the election to be held on the first Tuesday in April next preceding the expiration of their respective terms, and shall take office on the 3rd Monday in April following their election. For an election that is held in 2016 and thereafter, supervisors shall be elected for 2-year terms at the election to be held on the first Tuesday in April next preceding the expiration of their respective terms, and shall take office on the 3rd Monday in April following their election.

(c) *Compensation.* 1. Each supervisor shall be paid by the county an annual salary set by the board. The board may provide additional compensation for the chairperson, such that his or her salary may be an amount of up to 150 percent of the salary of a supervisor, and for the chairperson of the board's finance committee, such that his or her salary may be an amount of up to 125 percent of the salary of a supervisor. Beginning with the term that commences in April 2016, the total dollar value of the annual salary and benefits that may be paid to a supervisor, other than the board chairperson and finance committee chairperson, may not exceed the annual per capita income of Milwaukee County as most recently determined by the U.S. bureau of the census and may be increased for a new term as provided in subds. 2. and 3., subject to the limit specified in subd. 4. Section 66.0505 applies to this paragraph.

2. The board may increase the salary specified in subd. 1., or as otherwise adjusted under this paragraph, by an amount that does not exceed the percentage increase in the U.S. consumer price index for all urban consumers, U.S. city average, for the period between the time that a supervisor's salary was last set under subd. 1. or by the board, and the year before the year in which the salary increase is to take effect.

3. The board may increase the salary specified in subd. 1., or as otherwise adjusted under this paragraph, by an amount that exceeds the percentage increase in the U.S. consumer price index for all urban consumers, U.S. city average, for the period between the time that a supervisor's salary was last set under subd. 1. or by the board, and the year before the year in which the salary increase is to take effect, except that such an increase may not take effect unless it is ratified by a majority vote of the electors in the county voting in a referendum on the proposed salary increase.

4. A supervisor may not receive any other benefits or compensation, including health insurance and pension benefits, not specifically authorized or required by law. The maximum total dollar value of the salary and benefits that a supervisor, other than the chairperson of the board and the chairperson of the finance committee, receives in any year may not exceed the annual per capita income of Milwaukee County as most recently determined by the U.S. bureau of the census.

(d) *Changes during decade.* 1. 'Number of supervisors; redistricting.' The board may, not more than once prior to November 15, 2010, decrease the number of supervisors after the enactment of a supervisory district plan under par. (a). In that case, the board shall redistrict, readjust, and change the boundaries of supervisory districts, so that the number of districts equals the number of supervisors, the districts are substantially equal in population according to the most recent countywide federal census, the districts are in as compact a form as possible, and the districts consist of contiguous municipalities or contiguous whole wards in existence at the time at which the amended redistricting plan is adopted, except as authorized in sub. (3) (b) 2. In the amended plan, the board shall adhere to the requirements under sub. (3) (b) 2. with regard to contiguity and shall, to the extent possible, place whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality within the same district. In the amended plan, the original numbers of the districts in their geographic outlines, to the extent possible, shall be retained. The chairperson of the board shall file a certified copy of any amended plan adopted under this subdivision with the secretary of state.

2. 'Election; term.' Any amended plan enacted under subd. 1. becomes effective on the first November 15 following its enactment, and first applies to the spring election following the plan's effective date. Any amended plan enacted under subd. 1. shall remain in effect until the effective date of a redistricting plan subsequently enacted under par. (a). Supervisors elected from the districts created under subd. 1. shall serve for 4-year terms and shall take office on the 3rd Monday in April following their election.

(3) *OTHER COUNTIES.* (a) *Classification; maximum number of supervisors.* Counties with a population of less than 500,000 and more than one town are classified and entitled to a maximum number of supervisors as follows:

1. Counties with a population of less than 500,000 but at least 100,000 shall have no more than 47 supervisors.

2. Counties with a population of less than 100,000 but at least 50,000 shall have no more than 39 supervisors.

3. Counties with a population of less than 50,000 but at least 25,000 shall have no more than 31 supervisors.

4. Counties with a population of less than 25,000 and containing more than one town shall have no more than 21 supervisors.

5. If the population of any county is within 2% of the minimum population for the next most populous grouping under this paragraph, the board thereof, in establishing supervisory districts, may employ the maximum number for such districts set for such next most populous grouping.

(b) *Creation of supervisory districts.* 1. Within 60 days after the population count by census block, established in the decennial federal census of population, and maps showing the location and numbering of census blocks become available in printed form from the federal government or are published for distribution by an agency of this state, but no later than July 1 following the year of each decennial census, each board shall propose a tentative county supervisory district plan setting forth the number of supervisory districts proposed by the board and tentative boundaries or a description of boundary requirements, hold a public hearing on the proposed plan and adopt a tentative plan. The proposed plan may be amended after the public hearing. The tentative plan shall divide the county into a number of districts equal to the number of supervisors, with each district substantially equal in population. The board shall solicit suggestions from municipalities concerning the development of an appropriate plan. Except as authorized in this subdivision, each district shall consist of whole wards or municipalities. Territory within each supervisory district to be created under the tentative plan shall be contiguous, except as authorized in subd. 2. In the tentative plan, the board shall, whenever possible, place whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality within the same district. If the division of a municipality is sought by the board, the board shall provide with the plan a written statement to the municipality affected by each proposed division specifying the approximate location of the territory from which a ward is sought to be created for contiguity purposes and the approximate population of the ward proposed to effectuate the division. The tentative plan shall not include provision for division of any census block unless the block is bisected by a municipal boundary or unless a division is required to enable creation of supervisory districts that are substantially equal in population. The board shall transmit a copy of the tentative plan that is adopted to each municipal governing body in the county.

2. Within 60 days after every municipality in the county adjusts its wards under s. 5.15, the board shall hold a public hearing and shall then adopt a final supervisory district plan, numbering each district. Territory within each supervisory district created by the plan shall be contiguous, except that one or more wards located within a city or village which is wholly surrounded by another city or water, or both, may be combined with one or more noncontiguous wards, or one or more wards consisting of island territory as defined in s. 5.15 (2) (f) 3. may be combined with one or more noncontiguous wards within the same municipality, to form a supervisory district.

3. The populations of supervisory districts under the tentative plan shall be determined on the basis of the federal decennial census and any official corrections to the census issued on or before the date that the tentative plan is adopted to reflect the correct population of the county and municipalities and blocks within the county on April 1 of the

year of the census. The populations of supervisory districts under the final plan shall be determined on the basis of the federal decennial census and any official corrections to the census to reflect the correct populations of the county and the municipalities and blocks within the county on April 1 of the year of the census, if the corrections as they affect any municipality are issued prior to division of the municipality into wards under s. 5.15, or if a municipality is not divided into wards, prior to adoption of the final plan.

4. The chairperson of the board shall file a certified copy of the final districting plan with the secretary of state. Unless otherwise ordered under sub. (6), a plan enacted and filed under this paragraph, together with any authorized amendment that is enacted and filed under this section, remains in effect until the plan is superseded by a subsequent plan enacted under this subsection and a certified copy of that plan is filed with the secretary of state.

(c) *Changes during decade; municipal boundary adjustments.*

1. After the enactment of a plan of supervisory districts under par. (b), the board may amend the plan to reflect a municipal incorporation, annexation, detachment or consolidation. The number of supervisory districts in the county shall not be changed by any action under this subdivision.

2. Within 60 days after enactment or adoption of a revised division ordinance or resolution under s. 5.15 (4) (a), the board shall amend the county supervisory district plan under par. (b) to reflect any renumbering of the wards specified in the plan.

3. The districts under the amended plan shall be substantially equal in population according to the most recent countywide federal census and shall be in as compact a form as possible. The board shall adhere to the requirements of par. (b) 2. with regard to contiguity and shall, to the extent possible, place whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality within the same district. In the amended plan, the original numbers of the districts in their geographic outlines, to the extent possible, shall be retained. An amended plan becomes effective on the first November 15 following its enactment.

4. The chairperson of the board shall file a certified copy of any amended plan under this paragraph with the secretary of state.

(cm) *Changes during decade; reduction in size.* 1. 'Number of supervisors; redistricting.' Except as provided in subd. 3., following the enactment of a decennial supervisory district plan under par. (b), the board may decrease the number of supervisors. In that case, the board shall redistrict, readjust, and change the boundaries of supervisory districts, so that the number of districts equals the number of supervisors, the districts are substantially equal in population according

to the most recent countywide federal census, the districts are in as compact a form as possible, and the districts consist of contiguous municipalities or contiguous whole wards in existence at the time at which the redistricting plan is adopted, except as authorized in par. (b) 1. In the redistricting plan, the board shall adhere to the requirements under par. (b) 2. with regard to contiguity and shall, to the extent possible, place whole contiguous municipalities or contiguous parts of the same municipality within the same district. In redistricting under this subdivision, the original numbers of the districts in their geographic outlines, to the extent possible, shall be retained. No plan may be enacted under this subdivision during review of the sufficiency of a petition filed under subd. 2. nor after a referendum is scheduled on such a petition. However, if the electors of the county reject a change in the number of supervisory districts under subd. 2., the board may then take action under this subdivision except as provided in subd. 3. The county clerk shall file a certified copy of any redistricting plan enacted under this subdivision with the secretary of state.

2. 'Petition and referendum.' Except as provided in subd. 3., the electors of a county may, by petition and referendum, decrease the number of supervisors at any time after the first election is held following enactment of a decennial supervisory district plan under par. (b). A petition for a change in the number of supervisors may be filed with the county clerk. Prior to circulating a petition to decrease the number of supervisors in any county, a petitioner shall register with the county clerk, giving the petitioner's name and address and indicating the petitioner's intent to file such a petition. No signature on a petition is valid unless the signature is obtained within the 60-day period following such registration. The petition shall specify the proposed number of supervisors to be elected. Within 14 days after the last day for filing an original petition, any other petitioner may file an alternative petition with the county clerk proposing a different number of supervisors to be elected, and, if the petition is valid, the alternative proposed in the petition shall be submitted for approval at the same referendum. An alternative petition is subject to the same registration and signature requirements as an original petition. Each petition shall be in the form specified in s. 8.40 and shall contain a number of signatures of electors of the county equal to at least 25 percent of the total votes cast in the county for the office of supervisor at the most recent spring election preceding the date of filing. The county clerk shall promptly determine the sufficiency of a petition filed under this subdivision. Upon determination that a petition is sufficient, or if one or more valid alternative petitions are filed, upon determination that the petitions are sufficient, the county clerk shall call a referendum concurrently with the next spring or general election in the county that is held not earlier than 70 days after the determination is made. The question proposed at the referendum shall be: "Shall the board of supervisors of County be decreased from members to members?". If one or more alternative

valid petitions are filed within 14 days after the last day that an original petition may be filed, the question relating to the number of supervisors shall appear separately. The first question shall be: "Shall the size of the county board of supervisors of County be decreased from its current membership of members?". Any subsequent question shall be: "If so, shall the size of the board be decreased to members?". Each elector may vote in the affirmative or negative on the first question and may then vote in the affirmative on one of the remaining questions. If the first question is not approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question, any subsequent question is of no effect. If the question is approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question, or, if more than one question is submitted, if the first question is approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question, the board shall enact an ordinance prescribing revised boundaries for the supervisory districts in the county. The ordinance shall be enacted in accordance with the approved question or, if more than one question is submitted, in accordance with the choice receiving a plurality of the votes cast. The districts are subject to the same requirements that apply to districts in any plan enacted by the board under subd. 1. If the board has determined under sub. (1) (b) to adopt staggered terms for the office of supervisor, the board may change the expiration date of the term of any supervisor to an earlier date than the date provided under current ordinance if required to implement the redistricting or to maintain classes of members. The county clerk shall file a certified copy of any redistricting plan enacted under this subdivision with the secretary of state.

3. 'Limitation.' If the number of supervisors in a county is decreased by the board or by petition under this paragraph, no further action may be taken by the board or by petition under this paragraph in that county until after enactment of the next decennial supervisory district plan by the board under par. (b).

4. 'Election; term.' Any redistricting plan enacted under subd. 1. takes effect on November 15 following its enactment and first applies to the election of supervisors at the next spring election following the effective date that immediately precedes the expiration of the terms of office of supervisors in the county. Any reduction in the number of supervisory districts under subd. 2. that is approved at a spring election shall be enacted in the form of a redistricting plan no later than November 15 following that election and shall first apply to the election of supervisors at the next spring election immediately preceding the expiration of the terms of office of supervisors in the county, and any reduction in the number of supervisory districts under subd. 2. that is approved at a general election shall be enacted in the form of a redistricting plan no later than the 2nd succeeding November 15 following that election and shall first apply to the election of supervisors at the next spring election following that November 15 immediately preceding the

expiration of the terms of office of supervisors in the county. Any redistricting plan enacted under subd. 1. or 2. shall remain in effect until the effective date of any subsequent redistricting plan enacted under sub. (3) (c) or until the effective date of a redistricting plan subsequently enacted under par. (b). Supervisors elected from the districts created under subd. 1. or 2. shall serve for 2-year terms and shall take office on the 3rd Tuesday in April following their election.

(d) *Election and term of supervisors.* Supervisors are county officers, shall be elected for 2-year terms at the election to be held on the first Tuesday in April in even-numbered years and shall take office on the 3rd Tuesday in April of that year.

(e) *Vacancies.* If a vacancy occurs on the board, the board chairperson, with the approval of the board, shall appoint a person who is a qualified elector and resident of the supervisory district to fill the vacancy. The successor shall serve for the unexpired portion of the term to which the person is appointed, unless the board orders a special election to fill the vacancy, in which case the person appointed shall serve until his or her successor is elected and qualified. The board may, if a vacancy occurs before June 1 in the year preceding expiration of the term of office, order a special election to fill the vacancy. If the board orders a special election during the period beginning on June 1 and ending on November 30 of any year, the special election shall be held concurrently with the succeeding spring election. If the board orders a special election during the period beginning on December 1 and ending on May 31 of the succeeding year, the special election shall be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November following the date of the order. A person so elected shall serve for the residue of the unexpired term.

(f) *Compensation.* Each supervisor shall be paid a per diem by the county for each day that he or she attends a meeting of the board. Any board may, at its annual meeting, by a two-thirds vote of all the members, fix the compensation of the board members to be next elected. Any board may also provide additional compensation for the chairperson.

(g) *Mileage.* Each supervisor shall, for each day that he or she attends a meeting of the board, receive mileage for each mile traveled in going to and returning from the meetings by the most usual traveled route at the rate established by the board under s. 59.22 as the standard mileage allowance for all county employees and officers.

(h) *Limitation on compensation.* Except for services as a member of a committee as provided in s. 59.13 no supervisor shall be paid for more days' attendance on the board in any year than is set out in this schedule: in counties having a population of less than 25,000, 20 days; at least 25,000 but less than 100,000, 25 days; at least 100,000 but less than 500,000, 30 days.

(i) *Alternative compensation.* As an alternative method of compensation, in counties having a population of less than 500,000, including counties containing only one town, the board may at its annual meeting, by a two-thirds vote of the members entitled to a seat, fix the compensation of the supervisors to be next elected at an annual salary for all services for the county including all committee services, except the per diem allowance for services in acquiring highway rights-of-way set forth in s. 84.09 (4). The board may, in like manner, allow additional salary for the members of the highway committee and for the chairperson of the board. In addition to the salary, the supervisors shall receive mileage as provided in par. (g) for each day's attendance at board meetings or for attendance at not to exceed 2 committee meetings in any one day.

(j) *Supplementary compensation.* The board, in establishing an annual salary, may enact an ordinance providing for a per diem for all committee meetings attended in excess of 40 committee and board meetings.

(4) **COMPATIBILITY.** No county officer or employee is eligible for election or appointment to the office of supervisor, but a supervisor may also be a member of a committee, board or commission appointed by the county executive or county administrator or appointed or created by the county board, a town board, a mosquito control district, the common council of his or her city, the board of trustees of his or her village or the board of trustees of a county institution appointed under s. 46.18.

(5) **COUNTIES HAVING ONLY ONE TOWN.** In all counties containing one town only, the board shall consist of the members of the town board and one supervisor from every village. A supervisor from a village shall be elected at the time the other village officers are elected. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum of the county board. Each supervisor shall receive compensation and mileage as provided in sub. (3) (f) and (g). The chairperson of the board elected under s. 59.12 (1) may be, but need not be, the same person who is elected chairperson of the town board under s. 60.21 (3) (a).

(6) **ENFORCEMENT OF DIVISION REQUIREMENT.** If a county fails to comply with sub. (2) (a) or (3) (b), any municipality located in whole or in part within the county or any elector of the county may submit to the circuit court for the county within 14 days from the expiration of either 60-day period under sub. (2) (a) or (3) (b) a proposed tentative supervisory district plan or a final plan for creation of supervisory districts in compliance with this section. If the court finds that the existing division of the county into supervisory districts fails to comply with this section, it shall review the plan submitted by the petitioner and after reasonable notice to the county may promulgate the plan, or any other plan in compliance with this section, and the plan shall be

in effect until superseded by a plan adopted by the board in compliance with this section.

History: 1971 c. 134, 211, 304; 1973 c. 118 ss. 2 to 4, 7; 1973 c. 334 s. 57; 1973 c. 336; 1975 c. 93 s. 113; 1975 c. 116, 200; 1977 c. 427; 1979 c. 34, 89, 122, 260; 1981 c. 4, 390; 1983 a. 29; 1983 a. 192 ss. 115, 303 (1), (2); 1983 a. 484; 1983 a. 532 s. 36; 1985 a. 29, 304; 1989 a. 56 s. 258; 1991 a. 5, 316; 1993 a. 490; 1995 a. 16 s. 2; 1995 a. 201 s. 100; Stats. 1995 s. 59.10; 1997 a. 35; 1999 a. 150 s. 672; 2001 a. 107; 2003 a. 32; 2005 a. 100, 235, 248; 2007 a. 72, 97; 2011 a. 39, 75; 2013 a. 14; 2015 a. 196. Cross-reference: See s. 17.21 (5) for provision as to filling vacancies on county boards in counties over 500,000.

Cross-reference: See s. 59.20 (1) for county supervisor residency requirements.

Cross-reference: See s. 66.0505 for restrictions on changes in compensation of county board members.

Annotation: City and county apportionment is discussed. *City of Janesville v. Rock County*, 107 Wis. 2d 187, 319 N.W.2d 891 (Ct. App. 1982).

Annotation: The trial court properly voided a city's supervisory district plan and adopted the county's plan even though the county did not adopt the plan within 60 days of receiving census data as required by sub. (3). *County of La Crosse v. City of La Crosse*, 108 Wis. 2d 560, 322 N.W.2d 531 (Ct. App. 1982).

Annotation: Sub. (3) (a) does not establish a separate minimum for each class of county. The constitutionality of sub. (3) (a) is discussed. 60 Atty. Gen. 327.

Annotation: A vacancy on a county board due to resignation may be filled by appointment by the county board chairperson when the board is not in session. 61 Atty. Gen. 1.

Annotation: An incumbent county supervisor must resign before the county board may consider his or her appointment as highway commissioner. 61 Atty. Gen. 424.

Annotation: A county board supervisor risks violations of s. 946.13 if he is appointed as counsel for indigent defendants. 62 Atty. Gen. 62, 118.

Annotation: Under sub. (3) (c) alteration of county supervisory district boundaries between decennial censuses is authorized only when ward boundaries originally relied upon in reapportioning the county have been subsequently altered by incorporation, annexation, detachment, or consolidation. 63 Atty. Gen. 544.

Annotation: Section 59.06 (2) (intro.) [now 59.13 (2) (intro.)] does not prohibit payment of additional mileage under s. 59.03 (3) (g) [now 59.10 (3) (g)]. 68 Atty. Gen. 73.

Annotation: State law does not prohibit either discontinuation of all health insurance for county supervisors in self-organized counties during supervisors' terms of office or modest but involuntary increases in health insurance premiums for county supervisors in self-organized counties during supervisors' terms of office. OAG 5-11.

Annotation: A tribal law enforcement officer who is an active duty deputy sheriff, but is not on the county's payroll, may not serve as a county board supervisor. Under sub. (4), the office of county supervisor is incompatible with the office of active duty deputy sheriff, even if the deputy sheriff is not paid by the county. OAG 3-13.

Annotation: The provision of health, dental, and life insurance and the payment of insurance premiums for county supervisors are not "compensation" under sub. (3). Thus the procedural requirements of that statute are inapplicable to motions or proposals to change those benefits. OAG 5-13.

Text of Section 62.08, Wisconsin Statutes

62.08 Alteration of aldermanic districts. (1) Within 60 days after the wards have been readjusted under s. 5.15 (1) and (2) the common council of every city, including every 1st class city, shall redistrict the boundaries of its aldermanic districts, by an ordinance introduced at a regular meeting of the council, published as a class 2 notice, under ch. 985, and thereafter adopted by a majority vote of all the members of the council, so that all aldermanic districts are as compact in area as possible and contain, as nearly as practicable by combining contiguous whole wards, an equal number of inhabitants according to the most recent decennial federal census of population. Territory within each aldermanic district to be created under the plan shall

be contiguous, except that territory within the city that is wholly surrounded by another city or water, or both, may be combined with noncontiguous territory, or island territory, as defined in s. 5.15 (2) (f) 3., may be combined with noncontiguous territory within the same municipality to form an aldermanic district. The aldermanic district plan shall not include provision for division of any census block unless the block is bisected by a municipal boundary or the division is made as required under s. 5.15 (2) (c). The populations of the aldermanic districts shall be determined on the basis of the federal decennial census and any official corrections to the census to reflect the correct populations of the municipality and the blocks within the municipality on

April 1 of the year of the census, if the corrections are issued prior to division of the municipality into wards under s. 5.15. Within 60 days after enactment or adoption of a revised division ordinance or resolution under s. 5.15 (4) (a), the common council shall amend the aldermanic district plan to reflect any renumbering of the wards specified in the plan.

(2) If territory becomes a part of any city after April 1 of the year of the federal decennial census, the limitations of s. 5.15 relating to population or area do not apply to the creation of new wards in the attached territory, or to the addition of the territory to an existing ward, but no ward line adjustment may cross the boundary of a congressional, assembly, or supervisory district.

(3) Whenever the boundaries of aldermanic districts are altered, or new aldermanic districts created, every aldermanic district or ward officer residing within the territory of a new or altered aldermanic district shall hold the same respective office therein for the remainder of the officer's term; and all other vacancies shall be filled as provided by law for the filling of such vacancies.

(4) The common council of any city may, by a two-thirds vote of all its members but not more frequently than once in 2 years, increase or decrease the number of aldermanic districts or the number of members of the city council, and in that case shall redistrict, readjust and change the boundaries of aldermanic districts, so that they are as nearly equal in population according to the most recent city-wide federal census as practicable by combining contiguous whole wards. In redistricting such cities the original numbers of the aldermanic districts in their geographic outlines shall as far as possible be retained, and the aldermanic districts so created and those the boundaries of which are changed shall be in as compact form as possible. This subsection does not apply to changes in aldermanic districts authorized under sub. (4m).

(4m) If in a city that is solely contained within one county the aldermanic districts are coterminous with the supervisory districts of the county and the county board decreases the number of supervisors in the county after enactment of a redistricting plan under s. 59.10 (3) (cm), the common council of the city may, by a majority vote of all of the members of the council, no later than November 15 immediately preceding the expiration of the terms of office of members of the council, decrease the number of aldermanic districts and the corresponding number of members of the council in the city to maintain coterminous boundaries between the aldermanic and supervisory districts and may change the expiration date of the term of any council member to an earlier date than the date provided under the current ordinance if required to implement the redistricting or to maintain classes of members. Any amended aldermanic district plan that is adopted under this subsection is subject to the same procedures and requirements that apply to decennial plans adopted under sub. (1).

(5) If a city fails to comply with sub. (1), any elector of the city may submit to the circuit court for any county in which the city is located within 14 days from the expiration of the 60-day period under sub. (1) a proposed plan for creation of aldermanic districts in compliance with this section. If the court finds that the existing division of the city into aldermanic districts fails to comply with this section, it shall review the plan submitted by the petitioner and after reasonable notice to the city may promulgate the plan, or any other plan in compliance with this section, as a temporary aldermanic district plan until superseded by a districting plan adopted by the council in compliance with this section.

History: 1971 c. 304, 336; 1973 c. 12; 1979 c. 260; 1981 c. 4; 1985 a. 304; 1991 a. 316; 2005 a. 100; 2011 a. 39.