

Board of Civil Authority Meeting
Tuesday, October 2, 2021 7:00 PM
Thetford Town Offices with virtual option

In attendance, in person and virtually:

Justices of the Peace - Chair Bill Keegan, Vice-Chair Greg Kasten, David Goodrich, Kate Van Arman, Wendy Cole, Martie Betts, Orin Pacht

Selectboard Members – Li Shen, Nick Clark, Steve Tofel, Mary Bryant

Town Clerk Tracy Borst

Guests - Representatives Tim Briglin and Jim Masland, Carolyn Hack, Tracy Johnson, Sherry Merrick

Chair Bill Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.

Agenda:

- Discuss reapportionment proposal

Bill read the letter sent to the Boards of Civil Authority from Eric Covey. The members reviewed the current apportionment map and the proposed apportionment map.

- Public comment

Jim Masland said it was unusual to have representatives that live in the same town. (*A representative must live in the district that they represent.*) Jim spoke of other attempts to change the districts in the past and cited several reasons why the Legislature works hard to keep towns intact. Jim is not in favor of the proposed districts.

David Goodrich asked Jim if his objection was changing from a multiple to single district, or the fact that Norwich gets the smallest part of the new district. Jim said he does not agree with splitting a town.

David was under the impression that the new districts were a done deal, but now he thinks that may be incorrect. Jim said that was incorrect. The proposed map passed in the board by a one vote margin. The board would like local input, which might influence the final decision.

Tim Briglin said there are a few districts currently that include a lot of small towns. This can be problematic for the representative because they have to work with all of those Selectboards, School boards and attend all the Town Meetings. It's possible those districts could be split up but keep the individual towns intact. Tim agreed that our district is not difficult for he and Jim to manage, and they work well together.

Steve Tofel commented that he didn't understand the rationale of what the proposed map was trying to accomplish. Jim said that some senators in Chittenden County found it problematic to deal with a large district and started to consider the idea of smaller districts.

Greg Kasten said as far as our district is concerned, he agrees with Jim. He doesn't see any logic in splitting, and feels we are effectively represented. He strongly recommends we keep the district as it is.

Bill Keegan read an email submitted by Selectboard Chair, Sharon Harkay, who is not opposed to the proposed district.

Mary Bryant wanted to clarify that some districts in the state could be divided, but if there was strong feeling about keeping our district as is, it could remain that way. Bill confirmed.

- Appoint representatives to the Nov 8 Norwich, Strafford, Sharon and Thetford meeting. This meeting brings together the 4 towns currently in our house district to discuss the proposed reapportionment. The meeting will be the evening of Mon Nov 8th.

The BCA appointed Tracy Borst, Martie Betts, Nick Clark and David Goodrich as representatives to Thetford at the November 8th meeting in Norwich.

- Appoint representative to submit BCA Feedback form to the Vermont Legislative Apportionment Board

The BCA appointed Tracy Borst as the representative to submit the BCA feedback form to the Vermont Legislative Apportionment Board.

Bill Keegan called for a vote on supporting the proposed map changing from a four-town district to a two-town district, with a small section of Norwich. None in favor.

Bill Keegan called for a vote on maintaining the current district consisting of four towns; Thetford, Sharon, Strafford and Norwich. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM.