

Town of Williston
Board of Civil Authority
Minutes November 8, 2021

BCA Members Present in Person: Ben Rose, Jim McCullough, Gordon St. Hilaire, Sarah Mason

BCA Members Attending Remotely: Andy Mikell, Ted Kenney, Greta D'Agostino, Terry Macaig, Charity Clark, Joanna Cole, Debbie Ingram, Tony Lamb, Ginny Lyons

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm.

Chair Andy Mikell gave a brief introduction of the agenda and turned things over to Rep. Jim McCullough to give background into the reapportionment process for House Representation across the state. Jim explained the 10-year Census Data and the need to redraw house districts with equal representation with an emphasis on creating single member districts. The BCA is able to give feedback and recommendations, but the decision is made by the LAB and House Government Operations.

Sarah explained one representative for every 4,287 residents. Two reps would cover 8,547. Williston's population according to the 2020 Census is 10,100. This is over the statistical constitutional limit.

The proposal for Williston, from LAB, is two new single member districts within Williston, known as CHI-13-1 and CHI-13-2. CHI-12-5 is a third district where approximately 1,680 Williston residents would be in a new district shared with South Burlington.

Ginny Lyons explained more of the reapportionment process and the Senate's role in the procedure. Charity Clark expressed dislike with the current split district that carves out a certain portion of the village area. Joanna Cole shared data about women and other minorities getting elected to a single member district vs a two-member district.

Much discussion ensued regarding population, the possibility of what sections of town to split off, concerns over certain citizens/voters being disenfranchised at being removed from the rest of town for their representation. There is no path forward where the town can stay together due to the population increase. We will no longer be a single district with two reps containing the entirety of Williston with nothing shared with another town.

Jim McCullough made the motion to have the Williston Board of Civil Authority recommend to the Legislative Apportionment Board and the House Government Operations to combine individual districts of CHI-13-1 and CHI-13-2 into one two-member district, leaving CHI-12-5 as proposed.

Much discussion ensued. Many exchanges about what part of town to potentially portion off and who they could be united with. The group agrees it would be more suitable and acceptable to the Board that the newly formed shared district be comprised of towns sharing common interests and a common school district, library, consolidated school budget etc.

Joanna Cole motioned to recess and reconvene at a later date. Not seconded.

Many edits to Jim's original motion followed, including splitting it into a two-part motion. The group agreed.

It was decided that with no ties to South Burlington and wanting Williston voters grouped with people within a shared school district, the motion was reworked as a second two-part motion, proposed by Ted Kenney and Charity Clark, seconded by Ginny Lyons, to read:

Whereas, the Board of Civil Authority makes a recommendation to the Legislative Apportionment Board and the House Government Operations Committee that: a) the Town of Williston remain a single district with two representatives; and b) the newly formed district consisting of Williston residents (currently conceptualized as CHI-12-5) be comprised of citizens who share similar, basic common interests and goals, including a consolidated school district, a library, a zip code and other social geographical commonalities. Aligning such communities will create a more cohesive and inclusive district; one that that will reflect many commonalities among the citizens.

Debbie Ingram, Greta D'Agostino and Joanna Cole opposed part a.

Ayes have it. Motion carried.

Next agenda item, election of Vice Chair for BCA, was postponed until a later date.
No other items brought forth.

Meeting adjourned 7:40pm.