

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING
November 8, 2021

Members in Attendance

In Person: Jan Aldrich, Chair; Seth Gardner (arrived 6:55 p.m.); Jez Harrington; Lindy Johnson; Rosie Laquerre; Edie Miller; Kate Phillips

Via Remote: Ginny Burley; Ed Deegan; Carl Etnier; Jon Jewett; Elise Thorsen; Amy Willis; Jennifer Zollner

Public Attendees: Kimberly Jessup, Michael Duane, Ellen Knoedler, Ken Trask, Ginny Callan

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Aldrich called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

1. Agenda Revisions - None
2. Public Comment – No public comment.
3. Approval of Draft Minutes – August 5, 2021: Ms. Johnson moved and Ms. Miller seconded approval of the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

REAPPORTIONMENT DISCUSSION: Local Representative Kimberly Jessup began the discussion by explaining the makeup and advisory role of the Legislative Apportionment Board (LAB). She noted that this process occurs every 10 years after census information is obtained. This year, single-member districts seemed to be the driver in the re-districting process. Ms. Jessup observed that the proposal passed with a 4-3 vote and Tom Little, the Board Chair, voted against the proposal.

Ms. Laquerre explained that having part of the town in another district would mean additional costs for separate ballots and tabulator programming. The change would also require a separate checklist at election check-in for Primary and General Elections for the roughly 350 voters. She also voiced her concerns that voters could be confused by the change and feel alienated during the voting process.

Mr. Deegan mentioned that he saw no benefit to making the change to lose the upper northeast corner of the town to another district and that it would cost the town money. Ms. Miller noted that there are no compelling benefits to get rid of multi-member districts and go the single-district route. Mr. Duane asked that the BCA object strongly to the proposal and suggested that voters on the other corner of town in Adamant would have more in common politically and geographically

with Calais than those in the Northeast corner, considering the Co-op is located there.

Mr. Etnier agreed that the proposal seems full of disadvantages for East Montpelier. He noted that (1) East Montpelier used to be part of a multi-member district after a previous re-apportionment; (2) the population deviation of our district is greater with the northeast corner removed from the rest of East Montpelier; and (3) per Tom Little's memo, the group's job is to focus not only on our Town's district, but on ramifications for neighboring districts.

Ms. Thorsen underscored that splitting off the North Montpelier segment would not allow those voters adequate representation in local matters. Mr. Jewett noted that Ms. Miller's comment earlier about creating a district with Calais instead of Middlesex would create a district of the perfect size. Mr. Trask and Ms. Knoedler emphasized their opposition to the LAB's proposal.

Ms. Miller also noted that by combining both proposed WAS-3 and WAS-4, the numbers would work to create a perfectly sized two-member district. She also saw that Mr. Little's memo suggests offering other strategies to reduce any possible ripple effect

Mr. Harrington moved and Ms. Johnson seconded generating a draft response that indicates this board's unanimous opposition as set forth. Within that response, we present other solutions that could be considered while keeping East Montpelier whole. Ms. Zollner suggested that we put forth the solutions that have been discussed, including that of a two-member district. The group asked the Clerk and Ms. Miller to draft a response to be circulated for review prior to submission on the 15th.

Mr. Deegan moved and Ms. Johnson seconded that it be on the record that the East Montpelier Board of Civil Authority unanimously opposes the LAB's proposed re-apportionment. The motion PASSED.

After further discussion, Mr. Harrington proposed an Amendment that the response emphasize East Montpelier's need to remain an intact community, while supplying other options that could be considered that would keep East Montpelier intact. Mr. Etnier proposed an Amendment that the draft be circulated to the Board individually for comment. prior to submission. Ms. Johnson seconded the friendly amendment. The amendment PASSED.

Ms. Knoedler reiterated the importance that the Board's response protect the integrity of the community as a whole.

ADJOURN: Ms. Johnson moved and Mr. Etnier seconded to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting ended at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosie Laquerre, Clerk