

Town of Londonderry
100 Old School Street
South Londonderry, VT 05155
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Board of Civil Authority Minutes
November 1, 2021

Board Members Present: Tom Cavanagh, Julie Charlton, Kelly Pajala, Tina Labeau, Debbie O'Leary, Andrew Rackear, Helena Wu, Vincent Annunziata, Jim Fleming

Members of the Public Present: Bruce Frauman

The meeting was called to order at 5:00.

Documents were shared with everyone including the map of the Legislative Apportionment Board's (LAB) proposed House District for Londonderry, the email from the LAB explaining the process and asking for feedback, the VT State Statute on reapportionment, the language in the VT Constitution about Representative districts, and maps of other proposed options for district configuration.

The Board read through the documents provided. Some questions about process were addressed. It was noted that the ideal population number for a House District is currently 4,287.

The Board decided to go through the criteria for district creation in the VT Constitution and State Statutes point by point to discuss the LAB's proposed district, the current district and the two options being considered by the BCA to be offered as feedback to the LAB.

The current House District is made up of Jamacia, Londonderry, Stratton, Weston and Winhall. (2020 census population: 5169)

The LAB's proposed District is Londonderry, Andover, and Ludlow. (2020 census population: 4659)

Option 1 being considered by the BCA is Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Weston, Winhall (2020 census population: 4432)

Option 2 being considered by the BCA is Landgrove, Londonderry, Stratton, Weston, Winhall (2020 census population: 4341)

The first point under consideration was in relation to Chapter 11, §13, Vt. Constitution: "In establishing representative district, which shall afford equality of representation, the General Assembly shall seek to maintain geographical compactness and contiguity..."

The LAB's proposed district is not compact and is barely contiguous. There is roughly 1.41 miles of contiguous border between Londonderry and Andover and that is it. The only road that connects Londonderry to Andover without leaving the district is a class 3 unpaved highway. To travel to Ludlow from Londonderry one can either leave the district and drive on Route 100 through Weston or follow Route 11 out of and back into the district, after which travel would be on a series of different classes of Town Highways, both paved and unpaved. Any route from Londonderry to Ludlow sends you over "Terrible Mountain" which is a substantial geological divide of the region and often creates hazardous travel conditions during the winter. It was noted that the proposed LAB district has a higher degree of deviation from the ideal population than both Option 1 and Option 2 being considered by the BCA. In

the interest of maintaining a district that demonstrates both geographic compactness and contiguity while remaining in an acceptable degree of deviation from the population ideal, we recommend keeping the current Windham-Bennington-Windsor District as intact as population will allow for.

The second point under consideration is 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(1) preservation of existing political subdivision lines. The LAB proposed district removes Londonderry entirely from the existing political lines of its current district. The same has been done to Andover and Ludlow which is concerning for all three Towns. Either Option 1 or Option 2 being considered by the BCA would substantially maintain the current district's political subdivision lines.

The third point under consideration is 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(2) recognition and maintenance of patterns of geography, social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests. The comments about the geographic challenges of this district were reiterated: lack of boundary continuity, geological barriers, and limited State Highway access within the district. It was noted that there is a distinct lack of close social interaction or political ties with Andover and Ludlow in comparison to the options being considered for recommendation. The following were all examples of social interaction, trade, political ties, and common interests for both the current district and options 1&2: for years the area has been referred to as the Mountain Towns or Tri Mountain area, referring to both the mountainous terrain and the ski resort industry that fuels the regions economy. Weston, Londonderry, Peru and Landgrove all share a transfer station. All the towns have school choice for at least part of their student population and Weston, Londonderry, Peru and Landgrove are in the same school district. Weston, Londonderry, Peru, Landgrove and Winhall are in the same supervisory union. Stratton is closely tied to Winhall because of shared transportation resources for students, the Stratton Mountain resort and being non-operating school districts. It was noted that school choice is a major economic driver for the region and draws families with children to become residents in the area. Early childhood education and childcare programs in the region are centered in Londonderry and Weston and are attended by children from many neighboring towns (West River Montessori, The Little School, The Collaborative). Londonderry has the largest grocery store that serves the Mountain Towns. There is a State Highway garage in Londonderry that covers most of the Mountain Town Region. Landgrove shares a zip code and post office with Londonderry and Peru is on Londonderry's mail delivery route. Stratton gets mail delivery out of the South Londonderry post office and Winhall is on the same mail delivery route as south Londonderry. Landgrove shares fire protection with Londonderry. The Londonderry volunteer Rescue Squad covers Weston, Londonderry, Landgrove and Peru. The Mountain Towns are all served by the Mountain Valley Medical Center in Londonderry. Ski resorts in the area include Magic Mountain & Viking Nordic Center (Londonderry), Bromley Mountain and Wild Wings Nordic Center (Peru) and Stratton Mountain Resort (Stratton and Winhall). The Ski Industry is the major economic driver in the region. There is an emergency shelter at Flood Brook School in Londonderry that would serve all the Mountain towns in the event of an emergency. Londonderry's Emergency Management coordinator has made a point of coordinating closely with other Mountain Town personnel during an emergency and was named the 2020 Emergency Management Director of the Year by VT Emergency Management for his efforts.

The fourth point under consideration is 17 V.S.A. §1903 (b)(3) use of compact and contiguous territory. It appears that the district was created purely based on population numbers and not at all because of proximity or continuity with one another, especially in Londonderry's case. The same comments about geography, means of travel and a lack of contiguous border were noted. It was also noted that the same circumstances exist for two of the other towns in the current district that have been moved into new

districts. That being Weston being grouped with Danby, Mount Tabor and Dorset, leaving no road that can be traveled from Weston into any of those other Towns without leaving the district. Also, Stratton being grouped with Sunderland when there is no means of winter travel as there is only one 14-mile dirt road through the National Forest that is not maintained during the winter connecting the two. It was noted that the current district was pulled apart and moved into three separate districts that all have challenges with geography and means of travel.

Tina Labeau made a motion to have Tom Cavanagh, as Chair of the selectboard, submit comments to the LAB via the online reporting form. Andrew Rackear seconded the motion. The BCA passed the motion.

Julie Charlton made a motion that Londonderry recommend Option 1: Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Weston and Winhall to the LAB rather than their proposed district of Andover, Londonderry, and Ludlow. Helena Wu seconded the motion. There was further discussion about the two options being considered. It was noted that the strong connect between Stratton and Winhall, along with their status of both currently being in the Windham-Bennington-Windsor District in Option 2 were important considerations. It was also noted that Option 2 is closer to the ideal population number for a district. Option 1 is more geographically compact. The BCA passed the motion to recommend Option 1 to the LAB.

The BCA set a meeting date for November 8th at 5:00 at the Town Office Building 100 Old School Street South Londonderry, VT to review and finalize a draft of comments for submittal to the LAB.

Tina Labeau moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:55pm. Tom Cavanagh seconded the motion. The motion passed.