



STAFF REPORT
Public Hearing 11-16-21

AGENDA ITEM #: 21-131
COUNCIL MTG OF: November 2, 2021
FROM: David R. Caron, Town Administrator
OFFERED BY: Administration
PREPARED BY: Administration
SUBJECT: Decennial Redistricting of Council Districts

PURPOSE

To provide the Town Council with information to consider redistricting Council Districts pursuant to Section 1.5 of the Town Charter.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS

Please see comments within this report.

BACKGROUND

Section 1.5 of the Town Charter requires the Council to redraw District boundaries based upon the decennial census as completed by the federal government. The Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) has provided 2020 census information on all census blocks in Derry, which reveal the current inequities:

	Total Population	34,317		
	Target Pop./District	8579		
District	Census		#	%
1	8,579		0	100%
2	8,627		48	101%
3	8,225		-354	96%
4	8,886		307	104%

Currently, all District boundaries align with census block boundaries, except for five lots on the east side of Mill Road which are included in District 1. The above numbers do not reflect the assignment of these lots into District; to maintain clean District boundaries, it is recommended that these five lots revert to District #2, which would also meet the spirit and intent of RSA 44:4-a. **Recommendation #1**

It is recommended that the Council embrace a maximum variance of 0.5% from the target population of 8579 per District, which would then allow a minimum number of residents per District of 8536 and a maximum of 8622. **Recommendation #2**

Based upon the results of the census, 8579 citizens reside in District 1, which matches the target number; thus, no changes are recommended for District 1. **Recommendation #3**

District 2 has approximately 48 more residents than the target. Based upon data provided by SNPC, the following census blocks should be moved from District 2 to District 4:

- South side of Humphrey Road between South Main Street and Cemetery Road – 26
- North side of Island Pond Road between South Main and Cemetery – 21

This action results in 8580 residents remaining in District 2. **Recommendation #4** to amend the District 2 boundaries by adding the following to District 4:

Northerly by the south side of Humphrey Road, Westerly by the east side of Cemetery Road, Southerly by the north side of Island Pond Road and Easterly by the west side of South Main Street.

District 4's population is now 354 residents above the target (307 from the census and 47 from Recommendation #4); District 3 per the census has 354 residents below the target. To resolve this inequity, the following census blocks movements from District 4 to District 3 are recommended:

South side of Brewster and East side of Scobie Pond	11
North side of A Street to South side of Manchester Road	8
South side of Manchester Road by East Side of Folsom Road by North side of Franklin Street Ext by West side of B Street	295
West side of B Street by South side of Franklin Street Ext by East Side of Folsom Road by North Side of Beaver Brook to the Londonderry town line	16
South side of Beaver Brook by East side of North High Street by North side of Ash Street Extension to the Londonderry town line	<u>40</u>
	370

This action results in a revised District 4 census of 8563 and District 3 census of 8595. Thus, **Recommendation #5** is to move the following boundaries from District 4 to District 3:

Westerly by Londonderry town line; Northerly by south sides of Brewster and Manchester Roads, Easterly by west sides Scobie Pond Road and North High Street, Southerly by north sides of Folsom and Ash Street Extension.

DISCUSSION

Section 1.5 of the Town Charter allows the Council to establish rules and procedures governing the conduct of redistricting. The recommendations contained herein are:

- 1) Nonpartisan.
- 2) Did not review or consider party affiliations in any areas of the Town.
- 3) Relied upon logical extensions to or deletions from Districts.
- 4) Maintained geographical integrity.

- 5) Produced recommendations within the recommended variances to the target District population.
- 6) Avoided disruptions to neighborhoods.

The New Hampshire Municipal Association has advised the lack of any statutory guidance regarding the Town redistricting process. NHMA did, however, point to a letter sent by the House Special Committee on Redistricting which points to RSA 44:4-a Boundaries of Wards:

All boundaries of wards, other than those boundaries which are coterminous with the boundaries of municipalities, shall follow easily identifiable physical features. For the purposes of this section, physical features include public and private ways, public utility lines, railroad tracks, and surface waters. Ward lines shall be clearly shown on a map of suitable scale. Those portions of physical features with names and used as ward boundaries shall be clearly labeled on the ward map.

Although RSA 44 is applicable to cities only, the recommendations contained herein meet the spirit and intent of that statute.

The Town Charter requires the Council to hold a public hearing on the proposed changes, which can occur on November 16, 2021, and, if approved, the Town will be notifying all impacted residents.

The Supervisors of the Checklist have advised that there are no special requirements for the Supervisors to follow after District boundaries are redrawn; thus, if approved at the November 16, 2021 meeting, the Town Clerk will notify all residents impacted by the changes in advance of 2022 sign-up period (January 19 – 28, 2020) for Council seats and the March 8, 2022, Council elections.

FISCAL IMPACT

Anticipate approximately \$2,000 in mailing costs to notify impacted residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY COUNCIL

Please see Resolution #2021-072 for action after the November 16, 2021, public hearing.

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