

**BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES (DRAFT)
January 25, 2022**

Members Present (the meeting was held in-person and with a remote option for participation):

Sue Buckholz, Chair; Nancy Howe, Vice-Chair; Kevin Christie; Bonnie Fields (left at 6:30pm); F.X. Flinn; Don Foster; Gabrielle Lucke; Mike Morris; Gayle Ottmann; Nancy Russell; Lisa O'Neil, Clerk; and the following members were present until 5:55pm to attend the Select Board Meeting: Dan Fraser; Kim Souza; Lannie Collins; Joe Major and Dennis Brown.

Meeting was called to order at 5:34pm by Chair, Sue Buckholz. She asked the Clerk to provide a summary of the current status of the Legislative Apportionment process. The Clerk recapped the steps to date as follows: the BCA met on November 4th and voted to recommend to the Legislative Apportionment Board (LAB) to adopt the Alternate Plan consisting of some multi-member districts and some single member districts, leaving Hartford essentially unchanged. The BCA recommendation was submitted to LAB in November. In mid-December, correspondence was sent to Hartford's Legislators and State Senators, both by e-mail and USPS, containing the BCA's recommendation and requesting their strong support throughout the legislative process. On January 10th, e-mail correspondence outlining the Hartford BCA's position was sent to all members of the House Government Operations Committee. On January 20th, the Clerk received correspondence outlining the next steps: 1. The opportunity to testify before the GovOps Committee on January 28th and, 2. Submit final, written recommendations to the Govs Ops Committee no later than February 15th.

Sue expressed frustration with the limited response from our legislators. Kevin Christie commented he had attended the BCA meeting in November and has been in regular contact with the Chair & Vice Chair of GovOps. He will continue to lobby for the Hartford BCA's position. He also stated it is good to have a Plan B at the ready, if needed. He indicated amendments supported by Hartford can be offered from the floor to the bill when it is presented in the event the direction from the committee is not supportive of the BCA's position.

Sue asked how many multi-member districts exist now so we can collaborate on advocating for retaining the multi-member districts. Kevin indicated he could get that information but also recommended we focus on working with Windsor County communities because there is collective horsepower there. Gabrielle Lucke stated the origin of the statewide single-member districts may be to break up the larger voting blocks, such as Chittenden County. F.X. was able to pull up a map showing multi-member vs. single member districts statewide.

F.X. commented three single member districts in Hartford would wreak havoc with civic organization. He has closely reviewed both of the proposed maps. He supports advocating for the LAB Alternate/Minority Plan with one minor technical change to one census block impacting one person (note: on January 26th, F.X. submitted by e-mailed an amended minor technical change after further review of the LAB's map that had changed since his initial recommendation. The technical change involves two census blocks in the same vicinity: total population of 18) to the House GovOps committee. F.X. also strongly suggests having a developed Plan B in case the legislature heads in the direction of statewide single-member districts. He provided several technical changes to include four census blocks moving from the proposed WSR-7 to WRS-6.

Nancy Howe expressed reservations making a technical change to the BCA's recommendation; she fears it is a slippery slope to open the door to broader changes by the legislature negatively impacting Hartford. Sue asked to clarify if we are still advocating for our preferred Plan (Alternate/Minority Map includes multi-member districts) but also preparing a Plan B. Gayle asked why we are having the discussion for a technical change impacting one person; Bonnie asked the same. She expressed people move more now than in the past and trying to get the numbers right is more important than focusing on just one voter.

F.X. explained the technical correction makes sense and is in keeping with the district the individual is currently aligned (part of the Barnard, Pomfret, portion of Hartford District). F.X. further explained, developing a Plan B is like a "P.S." to the Committee if the Single-Member district gains traction in the legislature. The Plan B technical changes attempt to keep a neighborhood together rather than divide it in an unnatural/confusing way. F.X. illustrated his Plan B technical changes on the map. Lisa asked if it is possible to try to move the lines to create a more logical single-member map for Hartford based on common neighborhoods. F.X. had tried that previously and tried adjusting the lines as suggested by Lisa, but it left one district too large and one too small.

There was general consensus of the BCA to have those testifying before the GovOps Committee on Friday to focus only on the BCA's recommendation/preferred plan. Don Foster agreed. F.X. suggested we need to note the one technical change in the testimony to be clear about our position.

Lisa asked what the consensus of the BCA is about how/when to develop a Plan B. Several BCA members indicated they would like to see how the Committee testimony goes. Gabrielle indicated, at this point, we may already be putting more energy into this effort than the Federal Government. Kevin stated the GovOps Committee meetings will be taped for those who are unable to attend but wish to watch later.

Gabrielle and others requested there be talking points/notes available for those who are testifying on behalf of the BCA. Lisa will prepare and distribute talking points/script.

Mike Morris moved to adjourn; Nancy Russell seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa O'Neil, Town Clerk.