

MINUTES OF THE WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
January 19, 2022 – 5:00 p.m.

Committee Members present:        Martin Pepin, Chairman  
   Richard R. Michaud, Vice Chairman  
   David A. Witham  
   Martin P. Dumont, Sr.

Administration/Staff present:       Mayor Dana Hilliard  
   City Manager Bob Belmore  
   Finance Director Scott Smith  
   City Clerk Jonathan Slaven

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Chairman Pepin called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

APPROVE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – May 20, 2019

***Councilor Dumont made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 4-0.***

REVIEW CENSUS DATA AND ANY OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Manager Belmore informed the Committee that a member of the State Redistricting Committee, Paul Bergeron, has reached out for information on the City's timeline for reviewing ward boundaries and City Clerk Slaven has been corresponding with him. Mr. Slaven indicated a state filing date of June 1 to be able to include the referendum question on a ballot during the State Primary Election in September, 2022. He is still awaiting a response on the specifics of whether the question needs to be on a separate ballot during that election or if it can be included on the State's ballot.

Manager Belmore indicated the Planning Department has a map of the Somersworth population by ward and is currently working on obtaining a similar map utilizing the 2020 census data. Councilor Pepin mentioned that when they went through this process last time, the changes seemed miniscule, though he acknowledged the numbers have changed since that time. Councilor Witham stated the imbalance of the wards drives our local conversations. The thought of tweaking ward boundaries makes sense to make them more equitable.

Councilor Dumont said we already put together a proposal and questioned why we would redo what we have already done. He also stated doubt of the State accepting a plan we submit. Manager Belmore clarified that the City was instructed to wait until the 2020 census data was made available, which is also outlined in the City Charter.

Mayor Hilliard stated that it is extremely important the Public know that what is not taken into consideration whatsoever during this entire process is party affiliation. We are committed to ensuring that the elected bodies will maintain a high level of fairness; partisanship has nothing to do with this process.

*The Committee reached a consensus to have staff research the numbers obtained from the 2020 census data to review at the next meeting.*

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Michaud made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dumont and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk