

Legislative Apportionment Board

Approved Meeting Minutes

Remote Meeting

Thursday, December 17, 2020 at 9:00a.m.

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 9:04 AM

Members present: Tom Little, Mary Houghton, Rob Roper, Jeanne Albert, Ed Adrian, Tom Koch

Absent: Jeremy Hansen

Others present: Chris Winters, Michael Chernick, John Adams, Mia Kro, Kendal Smith, Peter Taylor, Bill Embick, Jaye Johnson, David Flemming, James Whitehorne and one unidentified caller.

Chair Tom Little pointed out ACT 92 as authorization to meet remotely to satisfy the Open Meeting Law and asked that this Zoom meeting be recorded.

2. Approval of Minutes of October 22, 2020 Meeting. Motion by Tom Koch to approve, second by Rob Roper. Motion carried; minutes approved.

3. Public Comment (per 1 V.S.A. sec. 312(h)). No public comment was offered.

4. Updates on Topics Discussed at October 22, 2020 Meeting

- **Guest James Whitehorne, Chief of Census and Redistricting at the Voting Rights Office of the United States Census.** Mr. Whitehorne joined the Board to discuss the Census and the responses to it. He made a presentation summarizing response rates and methods and answered board member questions. He also discussed the census data program, delivery of data to the states and COVID-19s effects upon this year's data gathering and distribution. The data and geographic support materials are expected to be available no later than 2/28/21, with products to include . Shape files, maps, block assignment files, and block to block relationship files.

- **Website Content** – Tom Little briefly discussed the website and encouraged members to let the Secretary of State's Office know if they had suggestions for changes or content. Recordings of the last two Board meetings are now available on the website. Opportunity for public comment through the website is a feature the Board is still considering adding in the future.

- **Maptitude** – The Board briefly discussed training and the various challenges in learning and using the Maptitude software. Members discussed alternate programs that might be free and easier to use and be manipulated with a more simple "point and click" functionality. Other comments: Maptitude does have a simple point and click functionality once you are up to speed with it. Also, the Legislature has chosen this program and will be using it in creating its own maps so it is in everyone's best interest to use the same program.

5./6. What Work Can the Board Start on Now? / Discussion of Methodology and Scope. Tom Little prompted a discussion about using an incremental vs a "start from scratch" approach. Consensus was

to use a bit of both using the incremental approach to satisfy a goal of deviating as little as possible from existing districts and with the “start from scratch” approach with the goal of ensuring the equality of voting rights.

Rob Roper suggested the Board start with some public input first rather than putting maps out first and having the public react. He suggested some form of a communications piece from the Board, perhaps an Op-Ed explaining the goals of the board and seeking public input. The Board was receptive to this idea.

Jeanne Albert suggested the Board be careful about how it describes the process so as not to set off unnecessary alarm. She and the Board chair also suggested this could be tied into a Civics and public education.

The Chair also suggested we have 2-3 members on a subcommittee to begin brainstorming the approach to House maps and 2-3 members on another committee to tackle Senate maps.

7. Other Business. Board members discussed assistance with email and contacting the Secretary of State’s Office to make sure they can access their partner accounts. Chris Winters noted that using the state account makes it easiest for record keeping and answering public record requests and avoids the board members having to search their own email accounts should we receive a records request. Please contact the Secretary of State’s Office if you need assistance with your email account.

9. Adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 10:47 AM. The next meeting is November 12 at 9:00AM. The December meetings will be held on January 14 and February 18 at 9:00AM. Agendas will be posted on the LAB website: <https://sos.vermont.gov/apportionment-board/>