



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 18, 2021

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Kendall Lane
Chairman - ad hoc Redistricting Committee

Through:

Subject: **Redistricting of Ward Lines - ad hoc Redistricting Committee
Ordinance O-2021-15**

Recommendation:

That Ordinance O-2021-15 relating to City Ward Lines be referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, and that the Mayor set a public hearing date for Ordinance O-2021-15.

Attachments:

1. Ordinance O-2021-15
2. Streets Impacted by Ward Line Redistricting
3. Ward Map_Redistricting

Background:

On August 19, 2021, Mayor Hansel appointed the following individuals to serve on the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee: Kendall W. Lane, Chairman, Councilor Jan Manwaring, Michael Giacomo, Alexander (Sparky) VonPlinsky, and Marilyn Huston. Mayor Hansel charged the Committee with the assignment to reapportion the City's five wards based upon the 2020 census population data to reflect a reasonable deviation of populations between each other and to make a report to the Keene City Council.

On September 28, 2021, the Committee held its first meeting. The Chairman reviewed the charge of the Committee and explained the City had anticipated receiving the census data from the US Census Bureau by March of 2021, but because of the pandemic, the data was not expected to be released until September 30, 2021. Because of this significant delay there was not sufficient time to determine the necessary changes to the ward lines and to follow the required statutory notice for a charter amendment on the November 2, 2021 Municipal General Election ballot. As a solution to this delay, the Council voted to propose a charter amendment that would remove the ward descriptions from the City Charter and provide that in order to comply with any Constitutional requirement to equalize ward populations, the City Council would have the authority to adjust ward boundaries through the adoption of an Ordinance.

Assuming that the charter amendment would receive a favorable vote at the election, the Committee began its work by identifying any criteria that would be used in the 2021 redistricting process. They

determined that the following criteria would guide their efforts:

- All wards would originate from the Central Square Common
- All wards would be contiguous to each other
- All wards lines would follow physical features
- Aim for a deviation of ward populations of less than 1%, but no more than 2.5%
- All of Keene State on-campus housing would be located in Ward One
- Avoid moving any polling locations out of its ward
- Avoid moving any elected Moderator out of their ward to avoid difficulty in administering Federal elections
- Ignore any impact on incumbent State Representative or City Councilors

It was noted that since the 2020 census, 350 residents had moved from the City. Keene’s population is now 23,047. It was also reported that when the census takers were in Keene, the KSC students were not on campus. The Committee recognized that this created a significant underreporting of KSC students in Keene for this ten-year census, but there was nothing that the Committee could do to address this at this time.

The Committee reviewed the deviations in each ward as compared to the average or “ideal” population of 4609 residents per ward. This initial review of the data showed the following:

Ward	Total Population	Deviation from the Average or “Ideal” Population of 4609 Residents per Ward	% Deviation from the Average or “Ideal” Population of 4609 Residents per Ward
1	3472	1137	-24.68%
2	4725	-116	2.51%
3	4720	-111	2.40%
4	5104	-495	10.73%
5	5026	-417	9.05%

With the aid of a software application, the Committee moved census blocks and their associated populations between the City’s five wards. The Committee recognized that the -24.68% deviation in Ward One’s population was their primary focus. At the conclusion of the Committee’s efforts, the following ward populations as well as their deviation from the “ideal” population of 4609 showed the following:

Ward	Total Ward Population after Redistricting	Deviation from Ideal Population
1	4643	.7%
2	4558	-1.1%
3	4550	-1.3%
4	4620	.2%
5	4676	1.4%

The charter amendment which authorizes the City Council to redistrict ward lines as constitutionally required passed at the November 2, 2021 Municipal General Election on a vote of 1648 in favor and 505 opposed. As provided for in the Charter amendment, the boundaries of the five wards would be

described in an Ordinance, A Public Hearing would be required before the City Council. The Charter provision also requires that the City Council's vote on the Ordinance occur within 30 days of the Public Hearing.

In terms of the effective date of ward lines adjustments, typically the ward lines go into effect the day before the filing period starts for State offices. Because the census delay is also impacting the House and Senate redistricting efforts, the House and Senate Committee Redistricting Chairs have requested that the City attempt to have its new ward lines in place by January 1, 2022. With the City Council's normal process for considering an Ordinance, it is anticipated that the City will be able to comply with the State's request with an effective date of the Ordinance anticipated for January 1, 2022.

A listing of the streets that will be impacted by the redistricting of the ward lines is attached. There will be no impact to polling locations or elected Moderators in each of the City's five wards. Although not an identified criteria in the Committee's efforts; the 2020 redistricting will not affect any incumbent Ward Councilors or Ward election officials.

After the new ward lines go into effect, any voters who are impacted by the redistricting will be notified of their new ward designation and polling locations.