

MEMO

TO: Karen Adelman-Foster, Chair, Select Board

FROM: Jamie Errickson, Town Administrator

RE: 2020 Census Reprecincting Process

DATE: October 13, 2021

As Board members are aware, the decennial redistricting process is well underway. This year has been unique and the process has experienced significant delays due to a number of factors, including delays in releasing Census data, state redistricting processes, changes in guidance and dissemination of information from state and federal partners.

Local voting precincts are established in accordance with legal guidance, typically forming the building blocks for legislative districts. The accompanying presentation from the Secretary of State's Office provides more detailed information on this process. For the 2020 Census, however, approval of legislative districts by the House and Senate may precede the local "reprecincting" process in which cities and town establish local voting districts. The legislature allows for subsequent adjustments to align local precincts with legislative districts, but this should be avoided if possible.

As part of this process, the Town must establish voting precincts that are equivalent to each other in population (+/- 5%), no greater than 4,000 residents, and which conform to other requirements described in the presentation. For example, minority populations may not be diluted in the precincts. The Town may also seek to maintain existing precinct boundaries to the extent population trends allow. The updated precincts provided the basis for Town Meeting, as well as voting location. All Town Meeting members must run for election (or re-elections) in the subsequent Town Election following the reprecincting process.

The Town only recently received 2020 Census Block level data to inform the creation of updated precinct maps. We have also received guidance to submit precincts by October 30th, leading the review process of updated precinct maps having to be completed on an accelerated timetable. (For comparison, in 2011, the Town initiated this process in April, and received approval in July.) As such, the Select Board must certify a number of documents (to be provided by staff) confirming the updated precinct boundaries by the end of October in order to submit the precinct map to the Local Election Districts Review Commission in the Commonwealth's Secretary of State's office for approval.

Completing this process promptly will help the Town Clerk's office to propose new polling locations, if necessary, and will facilitate participation in Town Meeting elections.

The following schedule was developed in an effort to meet the October 30th deadline, and provide for public input and visibility.

- October 13: Board review of this memo and endorsement of process
- October 20: Public meeting to review draft voting precincts
 - Select Board meeting room from 4pm – 6 pm
- October 27: Board review & certification of revised precincts

In addition, the information will be posted on the Town's website and available upon request through the Clerk and Town Administrator's offices.

This schedule has the benefit of allowing for notice at the start of Fall Town Meeting, which begins on October 19.

Thank you for your consideration, and for any questions or comments.