

Letter to All Cities but Portsmouth

June 3, 2021

The Honorable _____
Mayor of _____
Address _____

Dear Mayor _____,

The Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives has appointed a committee to develop new voting districts for state representatives and certain other state offices. The process for revising state representative districts requires coordination between the House Special Committee on Redistricting and the cities.

The Census Bureau has announced that the state population data for the purpose of redistricting will be released by September 30, 2021. This new data will provide us with city, town and ward population breakdowns so we may begin the redistricting process. As you know, every ten years we must redraw lines for the districts for State Representatives, State Senators, our two Congressmen, as well as County Commissioners and Executive Councilors. We must maintain the principle of “one man/one vote” in all of our work.

Our work will proceed under the assumption that all cities will realign their wards so as to be as equal in population as possible. After all, if you elect local officials on a ward basis, you fall under the “one man/one vote” mandate as well.

Many state representative districts within cities are established using ward boundaries. Therefore, we need information from you relative to your redistricting plans as we prepare for redistricting at the state level. We are aware that not every city uses the same process to revise ward lines – some must be revised pursuant to the charter amendment process outlined in RSA 49-B and others are revised by a vote of the city council or the board of aldermen. The charter revision process, including notice and public hearing requirements, must be completed 60 days prior to the date of the municipal election in which the amendments are on the ballot. In order to make the state redistricting process as smooth as possible, it will be important for us to have the following information as soon as possible:

- Do you plan to revise your city ward lines to create an equal alignment?
- What process will your city be using to amend ward lines, if necessary?

- What is the anticipated timeline for the adoption of an initial proposal, conducting a public hearing, and adopting a final proposal for ward line revisions?
- What is the earliest possible date by which you expect to be able to submit updated ward line data to the Legislature?

In order to integrate your data into our software, we would like a listing of all the census blocks that are in each ward in the new plan by tract and block number. It would also be helpful for you to provide the population of each ward in the new plan. While we do not need to know the exact street lines you use as demarcations, we will also need to know which wards are contiguous since wards included in any floterial must be contiguous. We will make every effort to keep districts within cities, but as in the past, it is likely that in a limited number of instances, some city wards will have to be combined with surrounding towns, especially in floterial districts.

It is also important to note that there is a state law that addresses the establishment of ward lines. This law, RSA 44:4-a, requires all ward boundaries to follow easily identifiable physical features.

44:4-a Boundaries of Wards. – All boundaries of wards, other than those boundaries which are coterminous with the boundaries of municipalities, shall follow easily identifiable physical features. For the purposes of this section, physical features include public and private ways, public utility lines, railroad tracks, and surface waters. Ward lines shall be clearly shown on a map of suitable scale. Those portions of physical features with names and used as ward boundaries shall be clearly labeled on the ward map.

The delayed release of the Census data for redistricting will make it extremely challenging to complete our work in time for the 2022 elections. It is our intention to adopt a plan for the new House districts as early as possible in the 2022 legislative session. Your cooperation is certainly appreciated.

Responses can be e-mailed to our Committee Assistant, Lindsay Oestreich, at lindsay.oestreich@leg.state.nh.us or mailed to Room 409, House Committee Services, Legislative Office Building, 33 North State Street, Concord, NH 03301.

Sincerely,

Rep. Barbara Griffin, Chairman
House Special Committee on Redistricting

cc. _____, City Clerk

Portsmouth only

June 3, 2021

The Honorable Rick Becksted
Mayor of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Ave,
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Dear Mayor Becksted,

The Speaker of the New Hampshire House of Representatives has appointed a committee to develop new voting districts for state representatives and certain other state offices. The process for revising state representative districts requires coordination between the House Special Committee on Redistricting and the cities.

The Census Bureau has announced that the state population data for the purpose of redistricting will be released by September 30, 2021. This new data will provide us with city, town and ward population breakdowns so we may begin the redistricting process. As you know, every ten years we must redraw lines for the districts for State Representatives, State Senators, our two Congressmen, as well as County Commissioners and Executive Councilors. We must maintain the principle of “one man/one vote” in all of our work.

Our work will proceed under the assumption that all cities will realign their wards so as to be as equal in population as possible. After all, if you elect local officials on a ward basis, you fall under the “one man/one vote” mandate as well.

Many state representative districts within cities are established using ward boundaries. Therefore, we need information from you relative to your redistricting plans as we prepare for redistricting at the state level. We are aware that not every city uses the same process to revise ward lines. As you know, the lines for the Portsmouth wards have traditionally been adopted and revised in session law. If it is your intent to continue to use this process, please provide the necessary revisions to Chapter 9:4, Laws of 2012 (see attached) so that it can be included in legislation adopted in 2022. If there have been any revisions to the Portsmouth ward lines since 2012 using a different process, please let us know. We will also need to know the population of each ward in the new plan and which wards are contiguous since wards included in any floterial must be contiguous. We will make every effort to keep districts within cities, but as in the past, it is likely that in a limited number of instances, some city wards will have to be combined with surrounding towns, especially in floterial districts.

In order to make the state redistricting process as smooth as possible, it will be important for us to have the following information as soon as possible:

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It is also important to note that there is a state law that addresses the establishment of ward lines. This law, RSA 44:4-a, requires all ward boundaries to follow easily identifiable physical features.

44:4-a Boundaries of Wards. – All boundaries of wards, other than those boundaries which are coterminous with the boundaries of municipalities, shall follow easily identifiable physical features. For the purposes of this section, physical features include public and private ways, public utility lines, railroad tracks, and surface waters. Ward lines shall be clearly shown on a map of suitable scale. Those portions of physical features with names and used as ward boundaries shall be clearly labeled on the ward map.

The delayed release of the Census data for redistricting will make it extremely challenging to complete our work in time for the 2022 elections. It is our intention to adopt a plan for the new House districts as early as possible in the 2022 legislative session. Your cooperation is certainly appreciated.

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Sincerely,

Rep. Barbara Griffin, Chairman
House Special Committee on Redistricting

cc. Kelli Barnaby, City Clerk

Current Portsmouth Ward lines

Section 4, Chapter 9, Laws of 2012

9:4 City of Portsmouth; Wards. 1895, 183:1, as amended by 1947, 390:1; 1957, 412:1; 1971, 582:1; 1983, 424:1; and 1989, 210:2, is repealed and reenacted to read as follows:

Section 1. The city of Portsmouth in the county of Rockingham is and shall be divided into 5 wards which shall be constituted as follows:

Ward 1 shall contain all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Beginning at a point in the Piscataqua river on the boundary of the city of Portsmouth, the state of Maine, and the town of Newington; thence southeasterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the state of Maine to the point where U.S. route 1 crosses the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the state of Maine; thence southwesterly along U.S. route 1 to a point where U.S. route 1 passes over Daniel street; thence southwesterly along Daniel street to the intersection of Daniel street and Congress street; thence southwesterly along Congress street to the intersection of Congress street and Maplewood avenue; thence northwesterly along Maplewood avenue to the middle of a bridge crossing the so-called North Mill pond; thence southwesterly along a line following the midpoint of the so-called North Mill pond until it intersects Bartlett street at a point 300 feet north of the intersection of Bartlett street and Cate street; thence northwesterly along Bartlett street to the intersection of Bartlett street and Woodbury avenue; thence northwesterly 10,000 feet along Woodbury avenue to the intersection of Woodbury avenue and Gosling road; thence northeasterly along Gosling road to its terminus; thence northeasterly along the boundary of the town of Newington and the city of Portsmouth to the point of beginning.

Ward 2 shall contain all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Beginning at the middle of the Maplewood avenue bridge at the northeast end of North Mill pond; thence southeasterly along Maplewood avenue to the intersection of Maplewood avenue and Middle street; thence southerly along Middle street to the intersection of Middle street and Court street; thence northeasterly along Court street to the intersection of Court street and Rogers street; thence southerly along Rogers street to the intersection of Rogers street and Parrott avenue; thence southerly along Parrott avenue to the intersection of Parrott avenue and Richards avenue; thence northerly along Richards avenue a distance of 150 feet; thence southwesterly along a line until said line reaches the intersection of Merrimac street and Miller avenue; thence southeasterly along Miller avenue until it reaches the intersection of Miller avenue and South street; thence westerly along South street until it reaches the intersection of South street and Middle road; thence southwesterly along Middle road until the intersection of Middle road and U.S. route 1 bypass; thence northwesterly along U.S. route 1 bypass to a point where it is crossed by a railroad track; thence northeasterly along said railroad track until a point where it crosses Bartlett street; thence northwesterly along Bartlett street until a point 300 feet north of the intersection of Bartlett street and Cate street; thence northeasterly along a line following the middle of the so-called North Mill pond to the point of beginning.

Ward 3 shall contain all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Beginning at a point at the intersection of the boundary of the city of Portsmouth, the town of Newington, and the town of Greenland; thence northerly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Newington a distance of 8,400 feet; thence continuing northeasterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Newington to the intersection of the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Newington and Woodbury avenue; thence southeasterly along Woodbury avenue a distance of 10,000 feet to the intersection of Woodbury avenue and Bartlett street; thence southerly along Bartlett street to a point where a railroad line crosses Bartlett street; thence southwesterly along said railroad line to a point where it crosses U.S. route 1 bypass; thence southeasterly along U.S. route 1 bypass to a point where it intersects Greenleaf avenue; thence southwesterly along Greenleaf avenue to the intersection of Greenleaf avenue and Peverly Hill road; thence southeasterly along Peverly Hill road to the intersection of Peverly Hill road and Lafayette road; thence southwesterly along Lafayette road to a point at the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye; thence northwesterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye to the intersection of the boundaries of the city of Portsmouth, the town of Rye, and the town of Greenland; thence northerly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Greenland to the point of beginning.

Ward 4 shall contain all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Beginning at a point at the intersection of South street and Summit avenue; thence southerly along Summit avenue to the point where Andrew Jarvis drive crosses Summit avenue; thence westerly along Andrew Jarvis drive to the intersection of Andrew Jarvis drive and Lafayette road; thence southerly along Lafayette road to a bridge over the so-called Sagamore creek; thence easterly along a line following the center of the so-called Sagamore creek to a point at the boundary of the city of Portsmouth, the town of Rye, and the town of New Castle; thence southwesterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye to a point where the boundary between the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye turns northwesterly; thence northwesterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye to the intersection of the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye with Lafayette road; thence northeasterly along Lafayette road to the intersection of Lafayette road and Peverly Hill road; thence northwesterly along Peverly Hill road to the intersection of Peverly Hill road and Greenleaf avenue; thence northeasterly along Greenleaf avenue to the intersection of Greenleaf avenue and U.S. route 1 bypass; thence northwesterly along U.S. route 1 bypass to the intersection of U.S. route 1 bypass and Middle road; thence easterly along Middle road to the intersection of Middle road and South street; thence easterly along South street to the point of beginning.

Ward 5 shall contain all that part of the city included within the following boundaries: Beginning at a point where U.S. route 1 intersects the boundary between the city of Portsmouth and the state of Maine; thence southeasterly along the boundary between the city of Portsmouth and the state of Maine to the boundary of the city of Portsmouth, the state of Maine, and the town of New Castle; thence southerly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of New Castle to the boundary of the city of Portsmouth, the town of New Castle, and the town of Rye; thence southwesterly along the boundary of the city of Portsmouth and the town of Rye to the midpoint of the so-called Sagamore

creek; thence westerly along a line following the center of the co-called Sagamore creek to the Lafayette road bridge over the so-called Sagamore creek; thence northerly along Lafayette road to the intersection of Lafayette road and Andrew Jarvis drive; thence northeasterly along Andrew Jarvis drive to the intersection of Andrew Jarvis drive and Summit avenue; thence northerly along Summit avenue to the intersection of Summit avenue and South street; thence easterly along South street to the intersection of South street and Miller avenue; thence northwesterly along Miller avenue to the intersection of Miller avenue and Merrimac street; thence northeasterly along a line to a point on Richards avenue 150 feet northerly from the intersection of Richards avenue and Parrott avenue; thence southeasterly along Richards avenue to the intersection of Richards avenue and Parrott avenue; thence northeasterly along Parrott avenue to the intersection of Parrott avenue and Rogers street; thence northwesterly along Rogers street to the intersection of Rogers street and Court street; thence westerly along Court street to the intersection of Court street and Middle street; thence northerly along Middle street to the intersection of Middle street and Congress street; thence northeasterly along Congress street to the intersection of Congress street and Daniel street; thence northeasterly along Daniel street to the point where it is crossed by U.S. route 1; thence northerly along U.S. route 1 to the point of beginning.