

House Special Committee on Redistricting

Strafford County Public Hearing
Strafford County Superior Court
Court Room 1, Dover, NH
October 25, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Rep. David Bates (Vice Chair), Rep. Steve Vaillancourt (Clerk), Reps. Warren Groen, Sandra Keans and Robert Perry

There were approximately 25-30 people in the audience.

Materials made available to the public:

1. Map of Strafford County with 2010 populations
2. State and federal constitutional provisions and state laws addressing redistricting
3. The algebraic formulas for calculating deviation with the aggregate method and the component method
4. Instructions for finding the House Special Committee on Redistricting website
5. The schedule for all of the county public hearings.

Rep. Bates called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Rep. David Bates – Read usual prepared remarks and distributed handouts. State Senate will do its own. No plans created yet. Purpose here is not to speculate, but to collect information from you, the public.

Rep. Peter Schmidt, Dover, Wards 1 and 2 (Straf. 4) - Chairman, Strafford County Delegation. Attended meeting in Rockingham County (90 reps there). Strafford - 37 Reps. As currently do? Population up here as elsewhere. Looked at map and have done calculations. Some parts fall neatly into 3291 (give or take 5%). Somersworth and Rollinsford currently have 5 reps but don't have enough population to justify that now. Borders Maine.

Rep. Vaillancourt – Dover – groupings of wards.

Rep. Schmidt – Dover realigned wards. City will vote to accept in November. Six wards – largest and smallest 100 people apart. Approx. 5000 per ward. Good grouping for floterial districts are (1-2) (3-4) (5-6). Commonalities. Best interest of city of Dover
Right now 3 reps from Ward 4 – won't work anymore.

Someone in Crowd – Strafford does border New Durham.

Rep. Bates – Your testimony illustrates purpose of these hearings. Great benefit, unique characteristics.

Rep. Schmidt –Dover ward and Somersworth ward – problem – 2 cities live next to each other but no natural connection. Hardship. Artificial and unnatural. Conundrum is that 1100 extra people in Somersworth/Rollinsford who would be unrepresented if they have 4 reps.

Rep. Bates – Figures in retained bill – Not a proposed plan, merely a place holder for House deadline which was prior to release of census numbers.

Hon. Al Dionne, Rollinsford (former state representative and Rollinsford selectman) – “problem child” Rollinsford. Up until 10 years ago we’ve always had our own Rep. Have Maine border and 2 cities of Somersworth and Dover bordering. Have had rep in past 10 years, but now we have none.

Rep. Bates – “Too small.” Nowhere near 3291 (2527 population).

Mr. Dionne – Now we’re Somersworth. No history with Dover. Rollinsford was once part of Somersworth.

Rep. Phil Munck, Somersworth (Straf. 2) – (Handout - See Att. A) - Five Somersworth wards spread out like pie. 4 and 5 abut Rollinsford (2353 and 2075). No interest in substantially changing boundaries. Two years from now change wards. Municipal elections are next month. Ward 5 closer to Rollinsford.

Rep. Tim Horrigan, Durham, Lee and Madbury (Straf. 07) – Advise Madbury with Durham (better than with Lee). Student voting – resist pressure to tamper with counts. Lee and Barrington – share commercial district, culturally not that dissimilar. Madbury hard to distinguish from Durham unless you know where the lines are.

Jack Cochrane, Barrington – Are people talking about dividing Barrington into wards? Confused.

Rep. Bates – The Constitution says legislature cannot divide cities or towns. Towns could do that if they choose. Barrington is a town – no subdivisions. Filing period 2nd Tuesday in June. Plan must be approved by Department of Justice – 60 days to approve. We must be done by end of March. “We’re in a real time crunch.” We will do our best.

Rep. Roger Berube, Somersworth (Straf. 2) – Most densely populated in state. Ward 4 is largest ward in city (geographically). Suggest Rollinsford go with Dover. Can we still go at large? No land left. Ward 5 borders Rollinsford. “We are unique.”

Rep. Bates – overriding principles State and Federal Constitutions. School districts – secondary.

Rachel Burke, Farmington – Entitled to 2 reps.

Mike McClurren, Durham – Madbury, Lee and Durham right at 5%. Oyster River School District. Leave Strafford, Dist. 7 alone. Believes new constitutional amendment allows Lee to request to be in with Durham and Madbury. Doesn't like constitutional amendment. Nobody from Madbury or Lee will complain. “It's not implementable.”

Hon. Larry Brown, Milton (former state representative) – Your comments indicate a great deal of work has already been done. “If you don't know where you're going, don't be surprised if you get there.” “Work goes poorly without a plan.” “What will you do with the issue of geographic tribalism?” Those of us in Milton don't see problems of Somersworth. Cultural similarities and boundaries - people look just the same on both sides of border.

Joseph Cicirelli, Strafford – Three kinds of people in the world – those that know math and those that don't. How do we protect 2600 residents of New Durham from 3900 of Strafford?

Caitlin Rollo, Rollinsford, Political Director of Granite State Progress - Will you be coming back when plans are done? Ten years ago – 1 democrat and 1 republican for each county.

Rep. Bates – That's up to the committee chair. Four separate bills like any other piece of legislation.

The public hearing adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

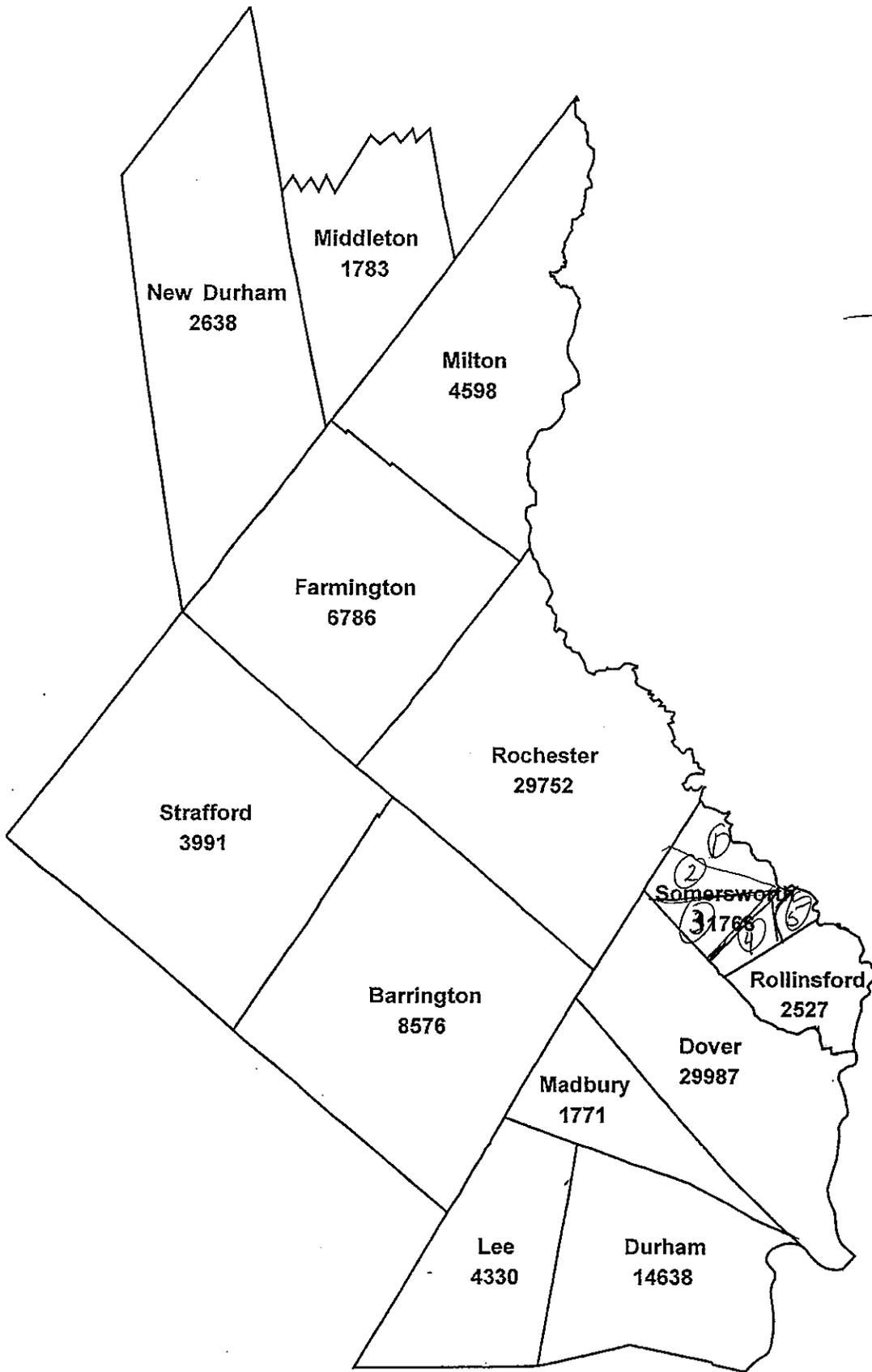
Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Steve Vaillancourt, Clerk



Strafford County

Att. A



$$\begin{array}{r} 11766.5 = 2353 \\ \underline{2527} \\ 14,293 \end{array}$$

Rep Phil Munch