



**DOVER TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE**  
**102 Route 100, P.O. Box 527**  
**West Dover, VT 05356-0527**

**Andrew R. McLean**  
**Town Clerk**  
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February 15, 2022

House Committee on Government Operations

Re: Reapportionment

Dear good folks,

I am writing to you as a representative of the Board of Civil Authority, which met last week to review the redistricting proposals for our area. Per the memoranda of October 15, 2021, from the Office of the Secretary of State,

"But the law also directs the Board to consider other specified factors, including following town/city borders and creating districts where the included towns share common interests."

So, while the primary goal is to create districts with "substantially equal populations", those districts should share common interests.

- BEN-WDM-1, historically, has seen substantial changes every ten years with reapportionment and we do not believe that, in this cycle, it should change again. Being subjected to redistricting nearly every decade, particularly when we remain relatively stable in terms of population, is unnecessarily disruptive.
- The population of our district, currently, is 4,422, which is approximately 3% over the target population of 4,287 per district. If the fraction of Whitingham currently in our district is removed, our population would be 4,362, or approximately 2% over the target. This means we are very close to an ideally-sized district. Changing the makeup of our district addresses neither the need for substantially equal population nor that the towns share common interests.
- Our current configuration is covered by the same local newspaper, a more important factor than folks from more populated areas might appreciate. We share a primary information source, and so are made aware of the concerns and actions in the other towns in our district.
- Our district is currently covered by two school supervisory districts. Your proposal would mean that there would be three different supervisory districts. This would represent a move away from the towns sharing common interests.
- Our district roughly defines the 'spine' of the Deerfield Valley. Travel between district towns is fairly direct and there is economic and social interconnectedness between towns.
- The people of our district share the concerns of rural mountain communities, such as higher-than-average rates of poverty, lack of last mile internet connectivity, cellular dead zones, transportation issues unique to rural mountain towns, inadequate housing availability, and low wage service industry jobs. In particular, our towns are significantly impacted by inequities in per-pupil weighting and share a common goal of reducing or eliminating those inequities.



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- With the exception of two towns (Searsburg and Somerset), all our member towns operate their own public elementary schools but not middle or high schools. This is a significant social and economic similarity. We do not share this similarity with Stratton or Winhall.
- Our voices are typically diluted and over-shouted by the population centers through jerrymandering districts, in contradiction of the statutory mandate for districts to share socio-economic and cultural ties.

While we recognize that towns to the east and west of us have suffered population losses, disrupting our district for the purpose of shoring up those districts, rather than combining population-lost towns into districts that share common roads, access, and concerns, would further dilute our representation, reducing the effectiveness of our representation at the state level.

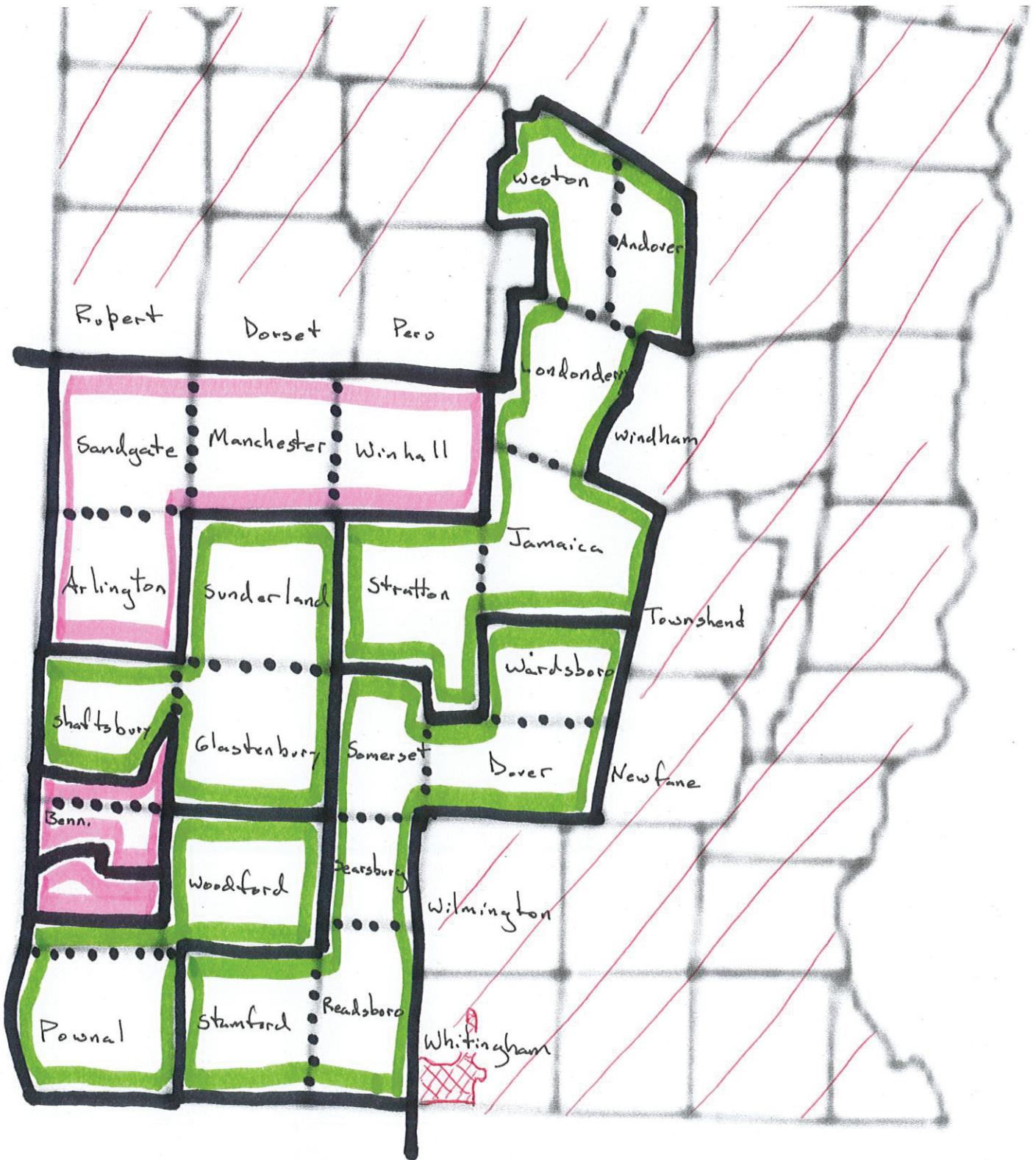
Attached are two maps. The first is our idea for redistricting Southwestern Vermont. The second is a map proposed to Towns by the LAB which is neither the LAB Approved nor the LAB Alternate but is included to show possible district boundary detail in Bennington.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. McLean', written over a horizontal line.

Andy McLean  
Dover Town Clerk



Lab Alt. Map  
remains as is



2 member districts



Little piece of  
W.-Ben in Whitingham  
goes to WDH6

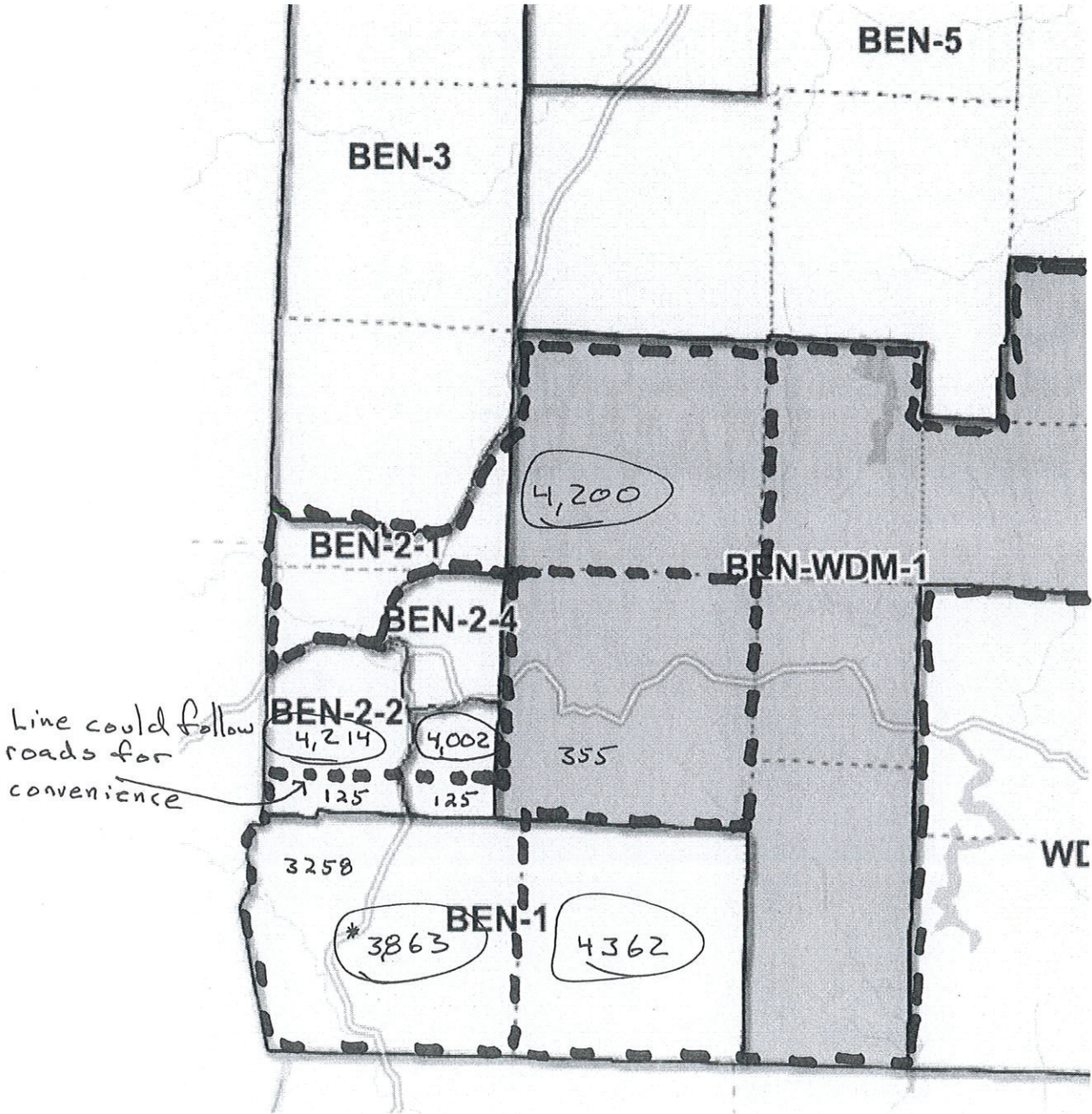


1 member districts

6

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Handwritten scribble in red ink.



\* same as current proposed wdh - Ben

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