

Ward Apportionment Working Group – Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details

- **Date:** October 1, 2025
- **Time:** 10:00–11:00 a.m.
- **Format/Location:** Hybrid meeting, Teams and 128 State Street, Montpelier VT. Recording is posted on the Secretary of State's Act 73 Ward Working Group webpage
- **Chair/Facilitator:** Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas

Participants

- **Sarah Copeland Hanzas** – Vermont Secretary of State (Chair)
- **Mark Koenig** – School Board Association Appointee, Chair, Addison Northwest School Board
- **Marlon Verasamy** – School Board Association Appointee, Vice Chair, Essex Westford School Board
- **Diana Vachon** – Town Clerk Appointee, Shelburne Town Clerk
- **Kathy Sarder** – Town Clerk Appointee, Sharon Town Clerk
- **Sarah Mason** – Town Clerk Appointee, Williston Town Clerk
- **John Adams** – Director, Vermont Center for Geographic Information (VCGI)
- **Staff Present:**
 - **Dylan Broderick** – GIS Expert, ADS
 - **S. Lauren Hibbert** – Deputy Secretary of State
 - **Bryan Mills** – Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State

Key Topics Discussed

1. **Introductions and Roles:** Members introduced themselves, highlighting their roles and affiliations. The Chair emphasized the group's diverse expertise in school governance and election administration.
2. **Review of Statutory Charge:** The group's responsibilities under Act 73 were outlined, including consulting with the School District Task Force, recommending school board sizes and ward boundaries, and respecting municipal boundaries to minimize election complexity.
3. **VCGI Tools Overview:** John Adams and Dylan Broderick presented existing mapping tools and a prototype Ward Builder. The tools aim to facilitate ward creation by providing population metrics and allowing public interaction.
 - a. **Discussion on Metrics and Boundaries:** Members discussed the importance of using population as the primary metric, with additional data on students and voters for comparison. Emphasis was placed on aligning any necessary intra-municipal splits with legislative district lines.

4. **Update on School District Task Force:** The Task Force is exploring various districting approaches, with no actionable proposals expected until mid-to-late November. The Working Group's detailed work will begin once district boundaries are available.
5. **Other Topics:**
 - a. **Election Timing Concerns:** Members expressed concerns about potential off-cycle elections, emphasizing the need for adequate preparation time to ensure smooth implementation.
 - b. **Future Meeting Planning:** The group tentatively agreed to meet on the first Wednesday of November at 10:00 a.m. to continue background learning on board governance and apportionment principles.
 - c. **Open Meeting Law Reminder:** Members were reminded to avoid group deliberations via email and to route communications through designated staff.
6. **Meeting Adjourned at 10:54 a.m.**