

In our town we vote on whether to accept the town report at town meeting. What happens if the town votes not to accept it?

To put it bluntly, nothing. Under state law the auditors are required to prepare the report and it must be “mailed or otherwise distributed” to the voters prior to town meeting. 24 V.S.A. § 1682. The report also must be submitted to the town clerk. 24 V.S.A. § 1682. Typically the auditors’ report becomes part of a more comprehensive town report that is distributed to the voters.

While town reports have become excellent sources of information, all that is required to be in them is the auditors “detailed statement of the financial condition of the town and school district for their fiscal year.” 24 V.S.A. § 1682. There is simply no legal requirement that the voters act to accept the town report at town meeting. Rather, the voters are voting on whether to approve the proposed budget. While the report may certainly guide the voter’s decision in terms of how much money to authorize for the ensuing year, it is not specifically subject to town approval. If the report is voted down it represents voter dissatisfaction, but no specific action must be taken as a result of the vote.

VLCT News, March 2002