

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING CHECKLIST TOWN MEETING

This checklist is designed to assist Selectboards that are transitioning to Australian ballot voting for Town Meeting Day 2021, but those already using this system may also find it helpful. For other election related actions and deadlines, see VLCT's Vermont Municipal Calendar 2020-2021 at <https://www.vlct.org/resources/vermont-municipal-calendar-2020-2021>. For additional assistance, you can also contact the Vermont Secretary of State Elections Division at <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections>.

SELECTBOARD VOTE

- Provide advance public notice of meeting. The vote to switch to Australian ballot voting must be included on the Selectboard's meeting agenda. See VLCT Model Notice, Agenda, and Informational Handout for Remote Public Meetings: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-notice-agenda-and-informational-handout-remote-public-meetings>.
- Selectboard votes, by approval of a majority of its total membership, at a duly warned Selectboard meeting to adopt the Australian ballot system of voting for the 2021 annual town meeting. The vote should occur as soon as possible but must occur prior to Selectboard approval of the town meeting warning, which must be posted between 40 and 30 days before Town Meeting Day.

TOWN MEETING WARNING AND NOTICE

- Approve warning for 2021 Town Meeting. The warning must include the:
 - date, location, and time of all polling places when voting by Australian ballot;
 - nature of the meeting (whether it is a town meeting, school meeting, or both);
 - business to be transacted and the questions to be voted upon;
 - article(s) requested by petition signed by at least 5% of the voters received not less than 47 days before Town Meeting Day; and
 - signatures of the town Selectboard, School Board, or both for a combined meeting.
- The warning must also be accompanied by information on voter registration and information on early or absentee voting.
- See VLCT Model Town (& School) Meeting(s) Warning – Australian Ballot Only: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-town-meeting-warnings>.
- See VLCT Model Town Meeting Articles, which provides a detailed list and sample language for mandatory vs. optional articles: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-town-meeting-articles>.
- Majority of Selectboard must sign original warning and file it with the Town Clerk to be recorded.
- Post warning and notice (town meeting warning and notice must be posted between 40 and 30 days before town meeting. In 2021, the earliest day that these documents may be posted is

Thursday, January 21; the last day to post them is Sunday, January 31):

- in at least two public places in town;
- in or near the Town Clerk's office; and
- to town's website, if actively updated on a regular basis.
- If the town has more than one polling place and they are not in the same building, the warning and notice must be posted in at least two public places within each voting district.
- ☐ Publish warning and notice in a newspaper of general circulation in town at least 5 days before town meeting, unless otherwise published in the town report that is distributed according to 24 V.S.A. § 1682.

INFORMATIONAL HEARING WARNING

- ☐ Determine if the informational hearing will be held remotely, which will impact contents of the warning and agenda.
- ☐ Approve warning for 2021 town meeting informational hearing.
- ☐ Post warning (informational hearing warning must be posted at least 10 days in advance of the hearing):
 - in at least two public places in town;
 - in or near the Town Clerk's office.
- See VLCT Model Australian Ballot Informational Hearing Notice: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/model-australian-ballot-informational-hearing-notice>

HOLD INFORMATIONAL HEARING

- ☐ Hold informational hearing (must be held within the 10 days preceding Town Meeting Day).
 - The selectboard, not the moderator, is statutorily responsible for the administration of this hearing, although informally many selectboards will defer to the moderator once such an informational hearing begins.
 - See VLCT Model Remote Public Meeting Toolkit: <https://www.vlct.org/municipal-assistance/municipal-topics/remote-public-meeting-toolkit>.

AFTER INFORMATIONAL HEARING

- ☐ Post hearing minutes.
 - Must be posted no later than 5 calendar days from the date of the hearing to an official website, if one exists, that is maintained or has been designated as the official website of

the Selectboard.

- In the event of a staffing shortage during the declared emergency, the Selectboard may extend the time limit for posting meeting minutes from 5 to 10 calendar days.