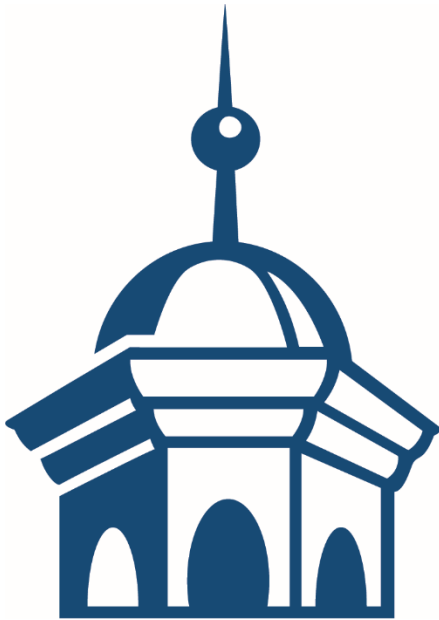

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

SUSAN SENNING, STAFF ATTORNEY II
MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE CENTER



**Vermont League
of Cities & Towns**



Basics

Ballots

Public Info Hearing

Polling Places

Statutory Deadlines

Resources



**ABV
SESSION
TOPICS**

BASICS

WHAT IS IT?

Floor voting =
default for local
elections

Australian ballots =
default for statewide
elections

Electing officers

Budget articles

Public questions

BASICS

SWITCHING TO THIS METHOD

■ Why?

- Promote public safety
- Increase voter participation
- Allow secretive versus public voting

■ How?

- Town vote
- Temporary until July 1, 2024: switch annual meetings by legislative body vote **(if H.42 passes)**

BASICS

WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE?

Voter-backed petitions

Articles

Warnings

BASICS

WHAT DOES IT REQUIRE?

Title 17, Chapter 5, Subchapter 3: Local Elections Using
The Australian Ballot System

MAC Australian Ballot Info Sheet

BALLOTS TIMING



- Made available at least 20 days before local election.
- Early and absentee voting allowed:
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/chapter/17/051>.
- Selectboard can vote to mail ballots without request.

BALLOTS TIMING



- Candidate petitions.
- Candidate consent forms.
 - Sample at <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/election-info-resources/candidates/local-office-candidates/>.

BALLOTS CONTENTS

- Produce yourselves if hand count; use vendor to produce if tabulators.
- Text must be black.
- Yes or no question format.
- Model Town Meeting Articles.



BALLOTS CONTENTS

- Voter-Backed
Petitions FAQs.
- Model Social
Service
Appropriation
Policy.



PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING

- Held within 10 days preceding the election.
- Temporary law (H.42): can be held entirely remotely (**if it passes**).



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PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING NOTICE

- Warned at least 10 days in advance
- Posting in at least two public places within municipality and in town clerk's office.
- Model Australian Ballot Informational Hearing Notice
- Remote Public Meetings Toolkit



- Open anytime between 5am and 10am
- Must remain open until 7pm
- Conducted like statewide elections
- Refer questions to Secretary of State Elections Division

POLLING PLACES

STATUTORY DEADLINES

VLCT Municipal Calendar 2022-2023

Secretary of State Elections Division calendar

STATUTORY DEADLINES

Voter-backed petitions due	Thursday, Jan. 19
First day to post warnings & notices	Thursday, Jan. 26
Candidate consent forms due by 5pm	Monday, Jan. 30
Last day to post warnings & notices	Sunday, Feb. 5
Ballots prepared and available	Wednesday, Feb. 15
Post warning for info hearing	Wed., Feb 15 – Fri., Feb. 24
First day to hold info hearing	Sat., Feb. 25



- ❖ Watch for updates on temporary law H.42. If it passes and the legislative body chooses to switch, the entire meeting moves to Australian ballot voting, not just one or two of the three categories. When the law expires, your method of voting reverts to “normal.”
- ❖ Adoption of Australian ballot voting does not mean you automatically mail a ballot to voters; the selectboard must vote (more than 20 days before the election) to do so or a request is needed (which may be done in person, online, by phone, by email, or by mail).

TIPS

VLCT MAC RESOURCES

Municipal Calendar 2022-2023

Town Meeting homepage

Quick Guide to Town Meeting

Model Town Meeting Articles

Model Town Meeting Warnings

Voter-Backed Petitions FAQs

VLCT MAC RESOURCES

[Australian Ballot Info Sheet](#)

[Australian Ballot Checklist](#)

[Model Australian Ballot Info Hearing Notice](#)

[Remote Public Meetings Toolkit](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

VT Secretary of State Elections Division

Local Elections page

Calendar

Vermont Statutes Online Title 17

H.42 (an act relating to temporary alternative procedures for annual municipal meetings and electronic meetings of public bodies)

**MAC INQUIRY
SERVICE:**
INFO@VLCT.ORG
(802) 229-9111

