

**TOWN OF GREENSBORO
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
JUNE 30, 2026
MINUTES**

The legal voters of the Town of Greensboro are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Highland Center for the Arts in said Town, on June 30, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. to transact the following business:

Article 1: Shall the Town of Greensboro adopt all budget articles by Australian ballot?

Article 2: Shall the Town of Greensboro vote on all public questions by Australian Ballot?

Article 1: Gary Circosta moved, Renee Circosta seconded.

Gary Circosta opened that with the Australian ballot, voters have the opportunity to vote, where presently they want to vote but do not have the opportunity. With Australian ballot, people can vote with no peer pressure. We can still have a town meeting to get together and discuss issues, we will just vote on a different day.

Renee Circosta moved to vote this article by paper ballot. More than seven voters agreed. Renee Circosta, Gary Circosta, Amelia Circosta, Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Jennifer Ranz, Meagha Meacham, Adam Forelig

Renee Circosta continued with historically the Women's Right to Vote was ratified even though there was opposition, we need to change traditions.

Janet Long stated that this was a drastic and fast change. Other towns have taken more time to think about this. She stated she would vote no on this article.

Bridget Collier stated that for 200 plus years we have had town meeting. With Australian ballot, we lose the ability to change budget items at town meeting. Even though this is how much of the rest of the country votes, we don't want to do this. Also with Australian ballots, the number of people going to informational meetings drops off as we see with school budgets.

Meaghan Meacham stated she never has the opportunity go to Town Meeting as she works on that day. Please consider changing the time of day, possibly 7:00 pm. This makes it inclusive. Also maybe use a different structure completely.

Penny Bretschneider thought we should do both, not either/or. We do need the institutional knowledge as it is important. Can we make it a hybrid situation?

Jed Feffer asked for discussion and clarification, if possible. How do we have both Australian ballot and Town meeting?

MacNeil stated that no changes can be made to the budget at Town Meeting if the budget is voted on by Australian Ballot. We have to hold an informational meeting 30 days prior to Town Meeting, but changes cannot be made to the budget at that time. We would need to meet and have a budget discussion much earlier to make changes.

Valdine Hall stated that a public meeting is required to make changes.

Bill Smith asked to change the day of Town Meeting.

Tim Brennan discussed New Hampshire's SB2 legislation, which is not legal in Vermont. This legislation allows towns and school districts to replace traditional, single-day town meetings with a two-step voting process: an in-person deliberative session and then approval by Australian ballot.

Ellen Celnik offered that the Selectboard held weekly budget meetings from September until the budget was finalized in January which were open to the public and publicly warned. The Selectboard also held two hybrid informational meetings.

David Kelly stated that the Board did what we could to get participation. The informational meetings only had minimal people. We need to increase participation. David moved to amend the article as follows: table the article and establish a committee to look further into and study Australian Ballot voting. It was then amended to refer this article to committee. Janet Long seconded.

Gary Circosta called point of order, saying that David Kelley's motion was not germane, because he is trying to introduce a new, independent question.

Tim Nisbet stated that "referring to committee" is a "subsidiary motion" that takes precedence over the main motion, according to Robert's Rules.

Karl Stein asked if Gary is referring to statute, or to the VLCT Guide for Moderators. Do either of these overrule Robert's Rules of Order?

Mavis ruled that the proposed amendment is not germane to the Article.

Alice Perron stated Vermont has had Town Meeting for over 200 years, it is tradition. She expressed concern that Australian ballot voting could lead to mis-information being sent out. We need fair coverage for both sides of the issue.

Carolyn Kehler offered that according to the VLCT Guide for Moderators, any motion can be referred to committee.

Tim Brennan had asked VLCT if there could be a motion to refer these articles to committee and he was told that no, that would not be germane because the meaning would be too far afield from the Article.

Naomi Ranz-Schleifer stated that Town Meeting is too long. She also felt that people's voices are not heard because they cannot get to Town Meeting as they work. All residents have the right to vote and Australian Ballot will provide an opportunity for them to vote.

Tim Nisbet stated that he was opposed to the Articles. He suggested we take a measured approach, and requested that the Town explore making changes to Town meeting. Remote participation would be good, but this is not available at this time. We could use electronic voting (clicker system) to speed up the voting, but this comes with a cost. For 200 "clickers" it would be approximately \$10,000, plus an annual update fee of approximately \$50. We should research to learn more.

Charlie Peck (non-resident) stated that we should not give up the power of legislation here. Other communities elsewhere do not have this power, we should not surrender it.

Karl Stein stated that he put up a poster in the gallery about Australian Ballot voting. There are ways to improve Town Meeting. North Hero had the largest participation of voters until they changed to Australian Ballot, then participation went down.

Harold Gray offered that we need to look at the bigger picture, and preserve town meeting to allow discussion of issues.

Susan Shulman stated that she had never voted at Town Meeting, but loved that there was discussion and we should find a way to keep it alive. She was presented with the petition for the Articles but was given incorrect information. What is the hurry to make this change?

Jackie Tolman believes there are two good points: a comprehensive process for the budget is needed, and so is a more equitable democracy in town, with more participation.

Mateo Kehler offered lines from Susan Clark's book "All Those In Favor". Changing to Australian Ballot, we may get more participation in the short term, but not long term. We should work to come up with the best of both worlds.

Sandra MacLeod stated that she had not been available to come to Town Meeting, as she lives across the country: is there a way to vote Australian Ballot now?

MacNeil stated that currently, the only absentee ballot available is for elected officers.

Warren Hill II stated there will never be a good time and place to hold Town Meeting that works for everyone. There needs to be a way for everyone, from all walks of life, to have the opportunity to discuss budget and officers but also vote.

Nancy Lammert called the question, Rod Kerr seconded, passed on a voice vote. Most of the room voted in favor - only 2 to 3 voices voted against.

Vote Results on Article 1:

No: 101

Yes: 77

Article defeated.

Article 2: Gary Circosta moved, Renee Circosta seconded.

Karl Stein asked how “public questions” are defined. MacNeil read from the 2026 Town Report a few of the questions that represented “public questions; i.e. shall the voters make the ball field exempt from taxes, Shall the Town approve having the treasurer serve as collector of current taxes, etc.

Kathy Newhouse said she cannot hear well so it is impossible to understand discussions at public meetings. She is in favor of Australian ballot.

Janet Long said that Hardwick had the same Article and it was amended, is this a difference of opinion between the Hardwick and Greensboro moderators? Mavis stated that it was.

David Allen asked if the public questions would include zoning questions.

MacNeil said that there were recent legislative changes that now give the Selectboard the authority to approve zoning bylaws. They can choose to put it to the voters, but it is not required.

Erika Karp said she appreciated Bill Rogers’ article on Front Porch Forum regarding voting from the floor.

Renee Circosta moved that this vote be held by paper ballot. More than seven voters agreed. Renee Circosta, Gary Circosta, Jennifer Ranz, Dede Stabler, Joann Hanowski, Nancy Lammert and Mike Lammert.

Alice Perron stated that some people can’t come to Town Meeting, and some choose not to come. Sometimes only one side is represented. Some people have the means to send out documents without return address, check where mailings are coming from. There is a lot of anger, lets get back to getting along, discussing things. Some people won’t come to Town Meeting; some won’t vote a paper ballot. People can choose to take time to come to Town Meeting. We should look into the clicker voting model.

Susan Shulman asked if the question is successful, what is the method for studying or a committee going forward to address this issue?

MacNeil referred to Susan Clark's book about some towns forming a task force/committee that was set up by volunteers to investigate the issues. The Selectboard would appoint the task force to look into expanding the options. MacNeil said that the Selectboard is interested in this, going forward.

Tim Nisbet spoke about the voting by the "clickers". The initial cost for 200 clickers is \$10,000. They are a small remote with a "yes" or "no" button. Individuals would make their choice and it would be instantly counted.

Tim Brennan said that forming a committee or task force should be put on the next agenda for the Selectboard.

Bridget Collier stated that when petitions are submitted for Town Meeting, there is no opportunity to get information on it before it is put on the warning.

Stuart LaPoint moved to call the question. Warren Hill II seconded. Voice vote in approval. Majority in favor - 1 to 2 votes against.

Vote results for Article 2:

Yes 59

No 85

Article 2 is defeated.

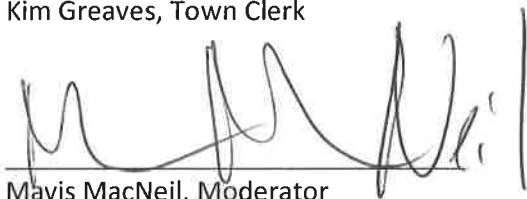
Karl Stein announced that the Highland Center for the Arts will be open Wednesday July 1 as a cooling shelter because of the predicted heat wave.

Mike Cloutier moved to adjourn. Karl Stein seconded. Unanimous vote.

Adjourned at 9:30 pm



Kim Greaves, Town Clerk



Mavis MacNeil, Moderator