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—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special  
—Dateline.....Brattleboro  
—Article Number:.....42993



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Trust begins by listening to the voters

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2

####END SUBHED####

3 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

4 As an elected member of Brattleboro’s Representative  
5 Town Meeting (RTM), I consider it my responsibility to listen  
6 closely to the residents of my district and to represent their views  
7 with integrity. I am honored that my District 7 neighbors have  
8 entrusted me to vote on their behalf.

9 The responsibility and integrity of RTM members was put  
10 to the test during the 2025 vote on human services funding. In a  
11 general vote, the residents of Brattleboro were clear: 58% of

12 voters advised that funding should be set at less than 2% of the  
13 budget. Yet when the matter came before RTM, the final vote  
14 approved a 2% allocation, with some members advocating for  
15 increases as high as 4%.

16 The clearly communicated preference of the voters of  
17 less than 2% was not just adjusted, it was ignored.

18 This unfortunate but expected outcome highlights a  
19 deeper and more troubling issue.

20 The RTM was designed to be a representative body, one  
21 that reflects the priorities and values of the community in which  
22 we all live. It has become increasingly disconnected from the  
23 very people it is meant to serve. Meetings that stretch beyond 10  
24 hours without producing better representation is simply not the  
25 answer. These meetings aren't representative, as the name  
26 implies, but are forums for individual agendas and platforms.

27 Democracy depends not only on participation but on  
28 accountability. When the town votes to advise one course of  
29 action and the RTM proceeds in the opposite direction, the  
30 legitimacy and viability of the system needs to be questioned.

31 Brattleboro deserves and needs a system that values the  
32 voice of its voters directly and transparently. Adopting an  
33 Australian (secret) ballot system would give every voter a voice,  
34 strengthen participation, improve accountability, and restore  
35 confidence in our local governance.

36 I will vote to eliminate the "Representative" Town  
37 Meeting in Brattleboro on Tuesday, March 3 and to adopt the  
38 Australian ballot system. And I strongly urge you to do the same.

39 This is about more than meetings — this is about trust.  
40 And trust begins by listening to the voters.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

41

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

43      #####BEGIN LINKS#####  
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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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