

—Slug:..... COMM-0854.opin.letter.a00\_franks  
—Contributor..... Tom Franks  
—Contributor email..... snwbkr@gmail.com  
—For section..... Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format..... Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special  
—Dateline..... Brattleboro  
—Article Number:..... 43194



**Notes from editor (not for publication):**



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 A hybrid Town Meeting could be possible — but only by  
2 passing Australian ballot

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 A recent post to a Brattleboro forum asked, “Do I dare  
6 vote ‘yes’ on Town Meeting and ‘yes’ on Australian ballot?” The  
7 thought behind this was to achieve a “synthesis proposal so that  
8 we get both/and rather than either/or.”

9 The short answer is that voting this way would not get  
10 what the writer wants.

11           There is no hybrid option on the ballot. A “yes” vote for  
12 both Australian ballot and open Town Meeting does not create a  
13 blended system; it simply indicates support for either structure,  
14 with one ultimately prevailing. You cannot combine them.

15           If you value both meaningful public deliberation and  
16 broad voter participation, the Australian ballot is the only option  
17 on the March 3 ballot that can permit a true hybrid meeting.

18           Here’s how it could work:

- 19           • The Selectboard prepares a budget and warns a  
20 meeting 45 to 60 days before Town Meeting Day.
- 21           • This meeting would be open to all voters and  
22 moderated by the elected town moderator. The meeting would  
23 follow a modified Robert’s Rules of Order.
- 24           • At this meeting the Selectboard would present and  
25 explain the budget.
- 26           • Next, the voters would have the opportunity to ask  
27 questions.
- 28           • After all of the questions have been asked and  
29 answered, any voter present could propose revisions to the  
30 budget by means of a motion. After the motion seconded, there  
31 would be discussion, etc. as is currently practiced at  
32 Representative Town Meeting (RTM).
- 33           • Approved motions in this informational meeting will  
34 not be binding, but then, neither are any motions regarding the  
35 budget binding now at RTM. These approved motions would be  
36 much more informative than simple dollar amount change RTM  
37 offers.
- 38           • The Selectboard would then have until the warning  
39 deadline (within 30 days before the Town Meeting, per [state law](#))  
40 to revise the budget based on the advice of the voters who  
41 attended the meeting.
- 42           • All town voters would have the opportunity to vote on  
43 the revised budget.

44           This is just one scenario for a hybrid meeting. There are  
45 probably others. However, any hybrid form is possible in the

46 short term only if both Article 2 (discontinuing RTM) and Article  
47 3 (adopt Australian ballot) pass and Article 4 (adopt open Town  
48 Meeting) fails. This is a “yes, yes, no” vote.

49 Please, let’s give everybody a chance to vote.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

50

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

*LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:*

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

51

0

####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

52

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

53

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

54

####END LOGLINE####