



Town of Danville
P.O. Box 183 - 36 Route 2 West
Danville, VT 05828

H.510 Information Paper - Danville Charter Repeal

Danville's charter repeal should be a simple matter of eliminating a special constraint to vote on Town and highway budgets by Australian ballot. This will save future Town and Legislative time if and when Danville ever wants to change how it conducts budget votes. Danville is not asking for special authority; simply to have the same voting options and procedures as other towns.

Summary

- Our charter, [24 App. V.S.A. ch. 114](#), only does one thing: it requires us to vote on Town and highway budgets by Australian ballot, which we have been doing since 2011
- In our 2023 Town Meeting there were articles to switch all voting to Australian ballot, which failed but generated a lot of good discussion
- From 2023-2024 an ad hoc Town Meeting committee did research, conducted many public meetings, continued the discussion with a survey at 2024 Town Meeting, and recommended holding a town-wide vote to repeal the charter at 2025 Town Meeting
- The Selectboard followed the charter repeal process, with one small mistake in public hearing scheduling but relatively high public engagement in the hearings, and the vote passed 150-112
- **As of March 2025, the Town of Danville proposes the General Assembly forgive the procedural error and repeal its charter**
- If our charter is repealed, Danville will continue to vote the same way - unless and until voters want a change, in which case by [17 V.S.A. § 2680\(c\)\(2\)\(D\)](#) we would propose a change one year, by Australian ballot, and if that passes the following year could use a different system – at least a 1-year process

Charter Repeal Process (January to March, 2025)

- ✓ Selectboard made charter repeal proposal (as Town Meeting article)
- ✓ Selectboard filed copy of proposal
- ✓ Selectboard warned 2 public hearings
- ✓ Selectboard held 2 public hearings (24 days and 1 day before vote)
 - ✓ ... by [17 V.S.A. § 2680](#) for Australian ballot; WITHIN 30 days
 - X ... by [17 V.S.A. § 2645](#) for charter change; first one 30+ days BEFORE
- ✓ Australian ballot vote passes at Town Meeting, 150-112

Voting and Public Hearing Numbers

- Danville Australian balloting, 2011-2025 (not including 2021-2022):
 - Average (mean) number of voters was 353
 - Median (this 2025 vote) was 280
- Danville has held 14 public hearings (for 7 Town Plan and Zoning Bylaw updates) since 2017
 - Only once did a member of the public attend one (someone interested in joining the Planning Commission)
 - For the charter repeal / Town Meeting info meetings, there were ~12 people at the first meeting (usually 2) and ~30-40 (usually 15-20) at the second meeting
 - By the floor meeting discussion of the charter repeal article, there was little discussion and no one offered arguments for keeping it

Charter changes are esoteric questions for most voters. Many people at first thought this was an effort to get rid of Australian ballot, but on attending the hearings the near-universal reaction was "well of course we should get rid of that".