



H.510 - Danville Charter Repeal

- In our 2023 Town Meeting, there was a lot of discussion over voting at floor meeting vs Australian ballot
- 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 (as best they could), with one small mistake but relatively high public engagement in the hearings, and the vote passed
- As of March 2025, the Town of Danville proposes the General Assembly forgive the error and repeal its charter

Danville is not asking for special authority for a new charter element; we are asking that the legislature remove special limitations, so we have the same voting options and procedures as other towns.

Selectboard puts question on ballot, warns and holds 2 public hearings 24 days and 1 day before vote

Rep Burt submits [H.510](#) to repeal charter

House GovOps committee considers [H.510](#)

Please do not return this to Danville to conduct the entire charter change process again because of a 6-day error; this is a straightforward request that makes the law simpler.

Town Meeting committee holds public meetings, conducts survey as part of 2024 meeting, and makes recommendations

2023

2024

2025

2026

Town Meeting - articles to change to all Australian ballot fail

Town Meeting - committee discusses progress and surveys residents

Town Meeting - voters approve charter repeal by Australian ballot

...if kicked back for procedural error, Danville will have to repeat the proposal, hearings, vote, and request to legislature in 2027-2028

Charter Request Process (JAN-MAR 2025)

([17 V.S.A. § 2645](#) and [17 V.S.A. § 2680](#))

Selectboard makes charter repeal proposal	Y
Selectboard files copy of proposal	Y
Selectboard warns public hearings	Y
Selectboard holds 2 hearings (24 days and 1 day before)	Y
... by law for Australian ballot ; WITHIN 30 days	Y
... by law for charter change ; first one 30+ days BEFORE	N
Australian ballot vote passes at Town Meeting, 150-112	Y
Town forwards charter repeal proposal to Secretary of State, Representative and Senator	

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**".

This is the mistake we made - following the Australian ballot rules for hearings and missing that the charter change rule is different.

Danville Australian balloting: from 2011-2025 (not including 2021-2022):

- Average (mean) number of voters was 353
- Median (for this 2025 vote) was 280

Danville has held 14 or so 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 hearings as part of Town Meeting info meetings, there were ~12 people at the first meeting (usually 2) and 30-40 (usually 15-20) at the second info meeting
- By the floor meeting discussion of the charter repeal article, there was little discussion and no one offered arguments for keeping it