

Town of Royalton  
Special Town Meeting Minutes  
November 5, 2019  
Royalton Academy Building, 4266 Vermont Route 14

The Special Town Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. at which time Moderator Allison Fulcher led the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectboard members were introduced: Chair Sandra Conrad, Vice-Chair Tim Dreisbach, Clerk Chris Noble and Tim Murphy. Fulcher noted Robert's Rules of Order would be followed and read **Article I: Commencing at the March 3, 2020 annual town meeting of The Town of Royalton, shall the Town vote on all public questions by Australian ballot? Motion made and seconded.**

Discussion ensued detailing many pros and cons, including: Australian balloting would allow more voter participation, hence allowing the selectboard a better understanding as to what townspeople want. Townspeople should make all attempts to make time for important meetings such as town meeting to promote a healthy government. Australian ballot articles are legal to discuss at town meeting, however others are concerned about diminished public attendance and discussion leading to the breakdown of Vermont's traditional and uniquely community-centered government. Floor meetings allow for opportunity for changing the course of voting on important issues amongst townspeople, should they feel the necessity, vs. Australian ballots being a more privatized voting process. One resident surmised that both participation and involvement were very good values; the dilemma being choosing the best system. Another noted not everyone would be pleased with either decision. Arguments for both change and tradition were abundant. It was noted that while employers are legally bound to let employees vote at town meeting, there had been instances where employees felt they could not leave. From the floor, the Town of Randolph was held up as an example of a town that has diminished town meeting turn-out due to increased Australian balloting while the selectboard noted Williamstown experienced the opposite. The possibility of future Saturday or evening town meetings was discussed. The board said that voting on this single article tonight was important because much would need to be accomplished (town plan) at next year's town meeting.

**Dorothy Chap-Rikert motioned to postpone the question until town meeting, and the motion was seconded by Jeff Knudsen.**

Moderator Fulcher stated the motion on the floor is whether the question should be postponed and decided at town meeting. Fulcher explained that this was a privileged motion, which takes precedent. Fulcher also clarified that the main question can no longer be discussed; only whether to postpone or not to postpone. Tim Dreisbach questioned the wait, noting the possibility of disenfranchising voters since the evening's turnout of about 100 was comparable to a town meeting turnout.

**Charlie Bascom called question and Delbert Thurston seconded.** Moderator Fulcher explained that calling the question would require a 2/3 vote and that voting yes would mean all discussion would end and the question of postponing would be voted on. If you vote no on calling the question more discussion on the motion to postpone could be had. Fulcher then asked for the vote on calling the question. When Fulcher determined that it appeared too close to call from a show of cards, she asked the BCA to come up and count. The BCA counted and the **Motion carried by required 2/3 of voters present.**

Moderator Fulcher explained that the body would now vote on the following motion: Should the question that was warned for tonight's meeting be postponed until town meeting? If you vote yes, the question will be addressed at town meeting. If you vote no, the instant motion to postpone will be

defeated and we will go back and discuss and vote on the original motion of whether public questions shall be voted on by the Town by Australian ballot.

Jeff Knudson called for paper ballot, Bruce Post seconded. Moderator Fulcher acknowledged more than seven by show of hands. Use of paper ballot carried.

Moderator Fulcher called upon the Board of Civil authority to conduct a paper ballot vote. Results were reported in favor of postponing addressing the question until Town Meeting 2020. 57 Yes to 49 No.

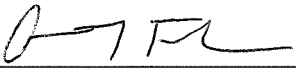
Moderator asked if there was a motion to adjourn and it was so moved by Jim Martino and seconded by David Barker. The motion to adjourn carried.

Meeting adjourned 7:55 p.m.  
Voting members present: 116  
Total registered voters: 2,349  
Respectfully submitted

Karmen M. Bascom, Town Clerk

  
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Allison N. Fulcher, Town Moderator

  
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Joshua Bushrod Powers, Board of Civil Authority Chair

  
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