

# Adopt Charter Commission to Propose All Day Ballot Voting on Warrant Articles

By Eric Pauer

## Why This Article Matters

Brookline's traditional in-person town meeting draws **about 5%** of voters. Many residents cannot attend long, sometimes multi-day meetings due to:

- Work schedules or travel
- Health limitations
- Military service
- Being away for the winter
- Childcare needs
- Second- or third-shift jobs

By contrast, **20–25%** of voters participate on election day—**four to five times more** than at town meeting. Many residents have expressed a strong preference for **all-day voting on warrant articles**, which would allow far more people to participate. New Hampshire law allows this through either **SB2** or a **municipal charter** under RSA 49-D:3, II-a. A charter gives the town more flexibility and avoids some of the concerns some voters have with SB2. This warrant article simply asks whether voters want to explore this charter option.

## 1. What the Ballot Question Means

The March 10 ballot asks: “**Shall the town establish a charter commission to draft a municipal charter?**”

A **YES** vote does *not* change Brookline's government. It only authorizes the town to study the idea of a charter that could allow **all-day and absentee voting on all warrant articles**. A **NO** vote ends the process.

## 2. If Approved: A Charter Commission Is Elected

If the question passes, voters elect a **9-member charter commission**. The commission's job is to:

- Study Brookline's current system
- Hold public meetings and gather input
- Draft a proposed municipal charter

The stated intent of the citizens who proposed this question is for the commission to consider:

- An **official ballot town meeting** (RSA 49-D:3, II-a)
- **All-day and absentee voting** on all warrant articles

## 3. The Commission Drafts a Charter

Over the following year, the commission studies options and writes a proposed charter. Once complete, the full text is published for all voters to review. Several NH towns already use similar charters, providing models for Brookline.

## 4. Voters Decide at the 2027 Election

The proposed charter appears on a future election ballot.

- Charter adoption requires a **60% supermajority**
- If it passes → the new voting system takes effect
- If it fails → Brookline keeps its current system

## In Summary

Voting **YES** on this warrant article:

- **Does not** change Brookline's government
- **Does** give voters the chance to decide whether to form a charter commission
- **Could** lead to all-day and absentee voting on all warrant articles
- **Expands participation** so every voter has a fair chance to be heard