

Adopt Hollis Brookline Co-Op Charter Commission to Explore Proposing Charter for All Day Ballot Voting on Warrant Articles By Eric Pauer

Why This Article Matters

The Hollis Brookline Co-Op traditional in-person school district meeting draws **about 2% to 3%** 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 **school district charter** under RSA 197:5-b (**Budgetary Official Ballot**). A charter gives the school district 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 the Hollis Brookline Co-Op School Board, Budget Committee, or Articles of Agreement. It only authorizes the school district 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 the Hollis Brookline Co-Op current meeting system
- Hold public meetings and gather input, review charter of Kearsarge Regional School District who use this charter
- 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 197:5-b)
- **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. At least one school district and one town use similar official balloting charters, providing models the commission.

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 → Hollis Brookline Co-Op School District keeps its current system

In Summary

Voting **YES** on this warrant article:

- **Does not** change Hollis Brookline Co-Op School Board, Budget Committee, or Articles of Agreement
- **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